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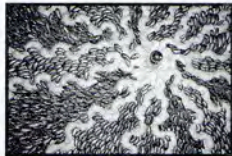
SHELL-SHOCKED

Victoria Flint investigates the maritime splendours of Charlotte Kerr-Wilson's (Fine Art 1987-90) bathroom that has won her a prestigious award:

ANYONE TAKING A bath in Charlotte Kerr-Wilson's bathroom would be forgiven for launching into a rousing rendition of 'Cockles and mussels alive, alive oh!', for what was once a dark, gloomy and cramped bathroom in a top floor council flat in Peckham has been transformed into a maritime treasure trove. A recent Goldsmiths graduate known affectionately as 'Blot', she covered the walls and ceiling with intricate patterns of shells, mussels, pebbles and plastercast fish and has won top prize in a 'Design-a-Room' competition run by *World of Interiors* magazine.

Blot has fond memories of her time spent at Goldsmiths: "I loved the freedom we were given to experiment with different media and I was lucky to have some wonderful tutors," she says.

Starting work on the bathroom in her first year, Blot did not finish until she had left: "I started covering just one wall with shells but friends thought it was such a success that I knew I would have to do the whole room".



Each part of the bathroom has an artistic theme of its own: the ceiling is a swirl of mussels and shells; the door is covered with a geometrical pattern of gravel and shells; embedded in the walls are plastercast fish and petits fours formed from jelly moulds; and the lavatory cistern and pipes have

been painted gold with a plastic starfish as a chain pull. The overall effect is that of a sea grotto and there is a marvellous timbre for bath-time warblings.



"I'm not one for singing in the bath," says Blot, "but I love to lie in the bath and watch how the steam darkens the cement and intensifies the colours of the shells."

The bathroom is also a handy record of Blot's travels. Her passion for collecting shells began when she collected shells washed up on Southend beach after the hurricane in 1987. Other shells and pebbles come from Dungeness, Alderney and a naturist beach in the South of France, and the scallops are from a tiny island just off Oban in Scotland. The mussels are from closer to home: "They are leftovers from a restaurant at Elephant & Castle; they put them out for the bin men once a week, so I helped myself."

Blot trained as a cook before going to Goldsmiths and her interest in

cooking has formed a significant theme in her work. Currently, she makes her living casting plaster of Paris mirror frames decorated with plaster vegetables sprayed gold.

"My real idea of heaven is to combine two passions and open a cafe with an art studio at the back," says Blot.

But first it's off to London's KLC School of Interior Design where she has won one year's free tuition. Judging by the stylishness of her flat, Blot shows the makings of an accomplished interior designer. The walls of her lounge are a resplendent scarlet and emerald, and one wall sprouts a profusion of brilliantly coloured plastic flowers to great effect. In the kitchen, the nostalgia of the Bloomsbury world is effortlessly created in rustic blossomings of colour on roughened wood. The interior design course will provide her with valuable skills whatever creative venture she decides to pursue next.

"You need to be so hard-headed as a self-employed artist. I'm looking forward to learning all about the business as well as the creative aspects of interior design."

Min Hogg, editor-in-chief of *World of Interiors* is full of admiration for Blot's work and is sure that this award is only the beginning:



"The moment I saw the bathroom, I knew it was the winner. It is just so incredibly clever and well done. The room is tiny, but she has transformed it into a grotto. It has a real sense of colour and pattern and most of the shells are from this country. I just loved it" she said.