

# A Week In The Life Of Aiveen Daly

Aiveen Daly was born in Cork, Ireland and lived in Moscow, St Petersburg and Sydney before moving to London in 1998 to take up a role at Newsweek magazine, followed by a senior marketing role at Expedia.co.uk. In 2003, craving a new challenge, she enrolled at London Guildhall University throwing herself into an intensive, full-time traditional furniture upholstery course. Aiveen now operates a highly successful upholstery and design business from her studio in North West London

## Monday

I have a very busy week ahead but I make sure I find time first thing to meet with Alex our studio manager to discuss some experimental techniques we are working on.

We start by looking at pleating across arcs and curves. It sounds easy but it's actually very tricky to master well! We use a mixture of technology – drawing everything and measuring our allowances very precisely with CAD combined with old fashioned hand craftsmanship and simply manipulating things by hand. We also spend some time playing with laser cut leather and hand beading. Having just recently moved into a new light filled workshop such precision work is now far easier to perform.

After a quick sandwich at my desk I get in my car to meet with a metal worker to discuss some chair legs we have commissioned. We have designed hand cast rose gold claw feet for an over-sized study chair that we are making for a penthouse

apartment in Knightsbridge.

Arrive back at my desk late afternoon with enough time to trawl through a huge ▼



▲ pile of drawings for a new boutique hotel in St James and pull together a quotation for

work which includes luxurious lined drawers, upholstered walls and leather doors. The leather doors have been inspired by a hand-embroidered vintage Lanvin gown where the doors have been appliquéd with satin and tiny nickel nails to give a beaded effect. This detail works brilliantly on doors, walls or headboards.

**Tuesday**

This morning I meet specialist hand weaver Eleanor Pritchard to discuss some

wonderful fabrics, in particular some classy reversible wools. We're looking to upholster some mid-20th century furniture for the beautiful stores of our new client, contemporary British clothing designer Margaret Howell.

After a charming meeting with Eleanor I head into town to meet a gorgeous client of mine, Maria Speake from Retrouvius, in a penthouse apartment in Regents Park which fantastically overlooks the giraffe enclosure at London Zoo. We discuss hoisting in an oversized hand-made bed via the 10th floor window and confirm specification and measurements for some hand woven silk doors for a luxurious dressing room in the same project.

After work I take the opportunity of being in central London to meet an old friend for a margarita at the Berners Tavern in the Edition hotel, Fitzrovia. I always like checking out the decor of amazing hotels in London and it doesn't disappoint!

**Wednesday**

I've set up an early morning visit to our lovely clients at Katharine Pooley to



Aiveen's Olympus Chair





The Aiveen Daly Showroom,  
Kensal Green

▲ show them some new details we have been working on. Thankfully Katherine loves the new feather supplier I have found in Italy who does all of the amazing feather work for Alexander McQueen couture. She orders several cushions on the spot for their showroom window on Walton Street, choosing a beautiful cappuccino colour which we will dye specifically for her with painted gold tips.

We've recently been embracing the use of metal trims to give a sense of luxury, weight and glamour to our furniture pieces. So, following the meeting I hop on a flight to Milan to see a supplier of our metal trims and view some possible new items. I'm shown some amazing detailing and high quality finishes and feeling very inspired. I can't wait to get back home and start experimenting with them. I arrive home just in time to put the kids to bed. An exhausting but exciting day - I slump to bed but with a head full of creative ideas.

**Thursday**

After taking my two daughters to school ▼



Stiletto Chairs in showroom

▲ and nursery I spend the morning at home catching up on some admin and setting up some appointments for the following week.

I am keen to book in a photoshoot with photographer Simon Bevan, who I've worked with before, to photograph some of my new collection, Aiveen Daly Jewels. The collection is full of haute couture inspiration, unique craftsmanship and applying many of the rules of couturiers – hand stitching, embroidery and beading. Delicate embellishments and detailing

ensures each piece stands out. There's the Ice Diamond sofa, inspired by the iconic Chanel handbag hand quilted with over 250 perfectly symmetrical and meticulously placed diamonds, and the Olympus fluted chair, hand sculpted and featuring one of my exclusive metallic trims on the back.

Early afternoon I go to the home of a private client, a beautiful five storey property – two houses knocked together in the heart of Mayfair. I experience the most gracious Indian hospitality, and regret grabbing a sandwich before the meeting as their



Appliquéd leather doors, with the Stiletto Posy Chair



The Ice Diamond sofa



Trims add a sense of luxury

▲ chef emerges from the kitchen with an enormous banquette of delicious home-cooked food! We discuss their new build in Mumbai and the feature dining chairs they would like to commission. They opt for silver metallic vinyl and glossy satin with silver hand embroidered leaf detail inspired by a much loved Chanel dress.

I get back from my meeting just before 3pm, in time to take my eldest daughter to her swimming lesson. After dropping her home (and removing my mascara panda eyes) I head back to the studio to tie some loose ends up. I find a delivery has arrived from Spina, a supplier of ours who create gorgeous sophisticated interior accessories, of some beautiful pearl and crystal tassels. These will be used to adorn the suede

stiletto chairs we're making for Oliver Burns Interiors for a luxury Mayfair development.

### Friday

Spend the morning visiting showrooms in the Design Centre Chelsea Harbour, sourcing luxurious hand woven textiles for a Russian client's country mansion. I pop into Rubelli, Dedar and Abbot Boyd looking for detailing to match a decadent new painting that my client has just invested in.

I then head back as I have an appointment with a new luxury property developer who comes to our showroom to see some of the embroidery and pleating work we have been experimenting with. I also show them some of our new ideas in leather that we'd been trialling on Monday, using laser-cut

leather panelling.

As it's Friday we decide to have a team lunch in our local Italian. It's always nice to have some time out from the workshop and catch up on things other than work for an hour (or two – work allowing!).

It's then back to the workshop to wait for some shippers who are coming to take a hand pleated Empress bed in cream satin to a luxury new development in Baku. I also receive a delivery from Italy of some beautiful new silk raffia trims to adorn cushions we are working on and a headboard for a little girl's bedroom, something I know both my little girls would adore!