

ZLATA RYBCHENKO

BUILD A LIFE OF LUXURY

With over a decade of experience, Zlata Rybchenko is an award-winning interior and architectural designer in London. Known for her work in residential and hospitality design, Zlata launched her career in Brussels before relocating to London in 2019. Her expertise in creating timeless, functional spaces is enhanced by a keen eye for detail and 3D technology. As the Founder of Ohra Studio, she offers a range of services, including interior and architectural design, space organization, and bespoke solutions.

Happiness, tailored to you



Zlata, can you share your journey from Ukraine to Belgium and eventually to London? How have these moves influenced your perspective as a designer?

My journey began in Ukraine, where I developed a deep appreciation for heritage, craftsmanship, and detail. At 18, I moved to Belgium to study architecture in Brussels, immersing myself in a culture rich in art and design, which taught me to blend form with function. In 2019, I relocated to London, where the city's diversity and energy redefined my approach to design. Each chapter shaped me: Ukraine instilled respect for tradition, Belgium sharpened my skills, and London sparked my entrepreneurial spirit. These experiences guide my philosophy—creating spaces that honour local context, enhance well-being, and reflect individuality.

Your projects span Europe, the UK, Africa, and the Middle East. How do you adapt your designs to reflect the unique cultural and environmental contexts of these regions?

My work has taken me to some incredible places! And it's fascinating how each region whispers a different design language. In Europe, I find myself drawn to the echoes of history – the grandeur of a Parisian apartment or the clean lines of Scandinavian minimalism. The UK, especially London, is a delightful puzzle of maximizing space while honouring heritage. It's about creating a sense of flow and light within those charming, sometimes quirky, layouts. Then there's the Middle East, where design dances with the sun. Courtyards become havens, and the play of light and shadow is an art form itself. I find myself thinking about how to invite breezes, how to create cool, tranquil spaces where life unfolds both indoors and out. And Africa! The vibrancy of the culture just explodes with inspiration. There's such a rich tapestry of textures and colours, and a deep connection to the natural world. It's about celebrating those traditions while introducing a contemporary edge. Ultimately, it's about listening to the spirit of a place and the dreams of the people who'll live there. Whether I'm in a bustling city or a tranquil countryside, the goal is to create spaces that feel both grounded and exhilarating, a true reflection of the lives they hold.

Winning prestigious awards, including the SBID Awards 2023, is a remarkable

achievement. What do you believe sets Ohra Studio apart and drives its success?

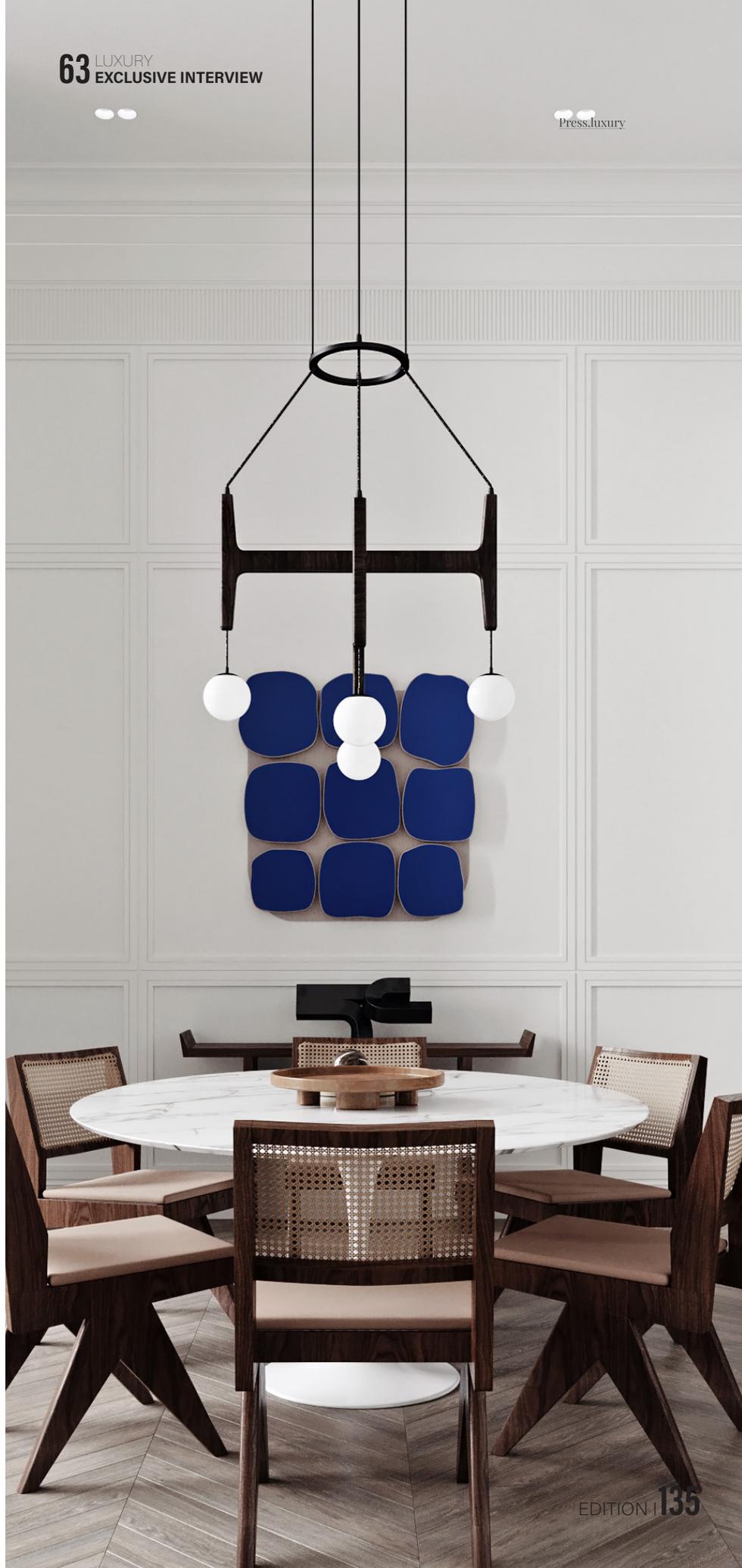
In just three years, Ohra Studio has gained remarkable recognition. Our work has been featured in prestigious design books, and in 2023, we won the SBID Awards for our hotel project near Barcelona. In 2024, we are SBID finalists again and ranked among the 100 Best Interior Design Studios globally. These milestones reflect our team's dedication and passion. What sets us apart is our commitment to surpassing expectations, selecting projects that align with our values, and fostering a people-focused approach. We truly listen to clients and prioritise mutual respect within our team. We also believe in enjoying the process—balancing hard work with fun and pride in what we create. This philosophy fuels our motivation and ensures us to deliver impactful results while loving the journey.

With sustainability and health at the core of your work, how do you integrate these values into your designs?

Sustainability and health are core principles in my work, shaping every project I undertake. These go beyond eco-friendly materials; they're about creating spaces that respect the environment and enhance well-being. I prioritise natural, durable materials that age beautifully, avoiding imitations for their higher environmental impact and lack of authenticity. Collaborating with local suppliers and artisans reduces carbon footprints while supporting communities and preserving crafts. Health is equally vital. I focus on air quality, avoiding VOC-emitting materials, and maximising natural light for its physical and mental benefits. Thoughtful ventilation and shading solutions ensure comfort, especially in urban settings. Holistically, I design spaces that promote balance and calm—through natural textures, soft lighting, and layouts that reduce stress. By integrating greenery or creating adaptable spaces, I tailor designs to enrich lifestyles. This approach reflects a responsibility to craft environments that feel good, function well, and leave a lighter footprint for the future.

What role does storytelling play in your approach to interior design and architecture? How do you ensure your work maintains high standards of creativity and innovation?

Storytelling is central to my approach to design. Every space has a narrative—





whether rooted in the history of a building, a client's journey, or the culture of a location—and my role is to bring that story to life. Through materials, textures, colours, and flow, I create spaces that resonate emotionally and reflect the essence of the story.

I delve deeply into each client's lifestyle, passions, and values to tailor designs that are not only functional but deeply personal. This transforms a space from merely beautiful to truly meaningful—turning a house into a home or a workspace into a source of inspiration. To maintain creativity and innovation, I push boundaries while staying true to principles like authenticity and sustainability. Exploring new materials, collaborating with artisans, and drawing on diverse influences keep our work fresh. Within my team, collaboration is a key. By sharing ideas, experimenting, and refining, we craft clever solutions that reimagine what a space can be.

As a passionate admirer of ceramics, art, and surfing, how do these hobbies influence or complement your work as a designer?

My hobbies—ceramics, art, and surfing—are more than passions; they deeply influence my approach to design and life. Curiosity drives me, along with a belief that if others can master something, so can I. Surfing, for instance, started as a challenge to me. The ocean teaches resilience, adaptability, and the importance of flow—qualities that directly shape my designs. Its rhythm reminds me to create spaces where movement and stillness coexist in harmony. Ceramics came from a desire to work with my hands, sparked during architecture school when I considered pursuing fashion. Years later, ceramics fulfilled that need for tactile creativity. Now, I create sculptures that often become part of my interiors, adding a personal and artistic layer to my work. These hobbies bring balance and depth to my designs.

In such a competitive industry, how do you stay inspired and continue to innovate?

Staying inspired and innovative in a competitive industry requires curiosity, discipline, and a commitment to lifelong learning. For me, inspiration often comes from life outside work—travel, art, surfing, and ceramics all bring fresh perspectives that fuel creativity. Innovation thrives when you step out of your comfort zone,









embrace challenges, and ask, “What’s next?” Clients are another source of inspiration. Every project is collaboration, shaped by their unique stories, lifestyles, and visions. A dynamic team environment is also essential. I’ve built a team where ideas flow freely, and we challenge each other to think bigger and better. Collaboration sparks creativity and pushes boundaries in ways solo work cannot.

How has having a supportive husband and a 12-year-old daughter influenced your journey as a business owner and designer?

My greatest achievement in life is my daughter. At a young age, she writes incredible songs and has recently been recognised as one of the 10 best songwriters in the UK for her age group. She inspires me daily with her creativity, and our bond is unbreakable. We call each other “besties,” sharing everything—the highs and the lows—and motivating one another to strive for more. My husband is my rock, best friend, and biggest supporter. During a career crisis marked

by burnout and depression, I was ready to quit. He never gave up on me, believing in my potential when I couldn’t. His faith gave me the strength to rebuild my studio from scratch. Today, Ohra Studio thrives, and it wouldn’t have been possible without my family. Their support is the foundation of everything I’ve achieved, reminding me of what truly matters and driving my resilience and passion.

What strategies do you use to balance running a successful international business with your family life?

Balancing a successful international business with family life is challenging, but deeply rewarding. For me, it’s about harmony, not perfection. Both work and family are important, and I’ve learned to approach them with intention and flexibility. I focus on being present at the moment—fully immersed in work when at the office, and completely dedicated to my family when I’m at home. Quality time, not quantity, matters most. Setting and respecting boundaries is crucial. I schedule family time like a meeting and protect it

fiercely. My family is a priority, and they understand the ups and downs of my work because I share openly with them. At work, I trust my team and delegate, which prevent burnout and give me some space to be present at home. Flexibility is also a key; for some days family comes first, for other ones work is first. Ultimately, balance is about cherishing what matters, with my family fueling my drive and keeping me grounded, allowing me to navigate both worlds with purpose and gratitude.

What is your vision for Ohra Studio in the coming years? Are there any particular challenges or goals you’re excited to tackle?

I want to see the studio continue to grow—not in size, but in the impact we make. Ohra Studio will always remain a boutique studio, offering a highly personalized approach, whether we’re designing for a private client, a corporate office, or a boutique hotel. For us, it’s about quality, not quantity, and ensuring that every project reflects our commitment to excellence and individuality. A key focus for the future is sustainability. I want us to push even further in integrating sustainable practices, materials, and technologies into our work. Another exciting goal is expanding into new markets while deepening our presence in regions like the Middle East and Africa. These areas are rich with design opportunities, and I’m eager to work on projects that celebrate their cultural heritage while offering fresh, contemporary perspectives. It’s both a challenge and a privilege to design for such diverse environments.

Finally, do you have a special holiday message for our readers?

As we approach the holiday season, I want to wish all your readers a time filled with warmth, joy, and meaningful connections. The holidays are a beautiful reminder to pause, reflect, and cherish the moments that truly matter—whether it’s time spent with family, friends, or simply taking a moment for your own self. Let this season be an opportunity to recharge, dream big, and embrace the possibilities of the coming year. Surround yourself with love, light, and inspiration, and remember that even the smallest acts of kindness and gratitude can make this time of year even more special.

Wishing you all a magical holiday season and a wonderful start to the New Year!