

“ I find inspiration in puddles, pebbles and the silhouette of branches ”

British fine artist Jessica Zook

East Sussex-based Jessica trained at the Central School of Art and Nottingham University. She worked as a theatre designer, making sets and costumes, and has always loved beautiful fabric, something passed down from her textile designer mother. Since 2000 she has worked exclusively as a contemporary artist from her home in Lewes. Jessica's passion for nature has inspired the new Black Edition collaboration with Romo, where she has recreated her paintings for printed fabrics, wallcoverings and cushions.

What do you like most about where you live?

I moved from London to Lewes and live in an unassuming end-of-terrace 19th-century house that has a particularly lovely atmosphere. Lewes is a pretty town. It's wonderful to stroll down the high street and be able to see the Downs all around. I can be up there walking within five minutes of leaving my house, looking to the sea beyond. It is also very safe – perfect for bringing up my daughters, Ana, 18, and Kat, 15.

Describe your perfect country home.

A farm with outbuildings to work in. I'm not bothered about the house – any house can be made beautiful – but what I really want is to create an amazing garden and keep chickens and ducks. I crave meadows, a lake, woodland – in fact, my big dream is to create a nature reserve where birds, butterflies, bees and all manner of flora and fauna can



thrive. I don't mind where this fictional farm is but ideally at the end of a winding track.

What inspires you most about East Sussex?

That feeling of being connected to the seasons by noticing how the light and the landscape change. Even on the most grey day, the Downs are beautiful, because they appear luminous in that chalky light.

Where do you find artistic inspiration?

I see paintings everywhere I look – in the fields, the cliffs, the sea, the sky and the »



The beach at Birling Gap where Jessica (opposite) enjoys walks on the Downs above and in summer swims in the sea.



The tools of the trade. Jessica's palette mirrors the colours of the East Sussex sea and sky.



Linen curtains hang beside the painting from Jessica's Endless Love series that provided the inspiration. The effortless translation of her artwork by Black Edition/Romo has impressed Jessica.



What better showcase for these cushions from the Passion collection than the artist's home.



Pleasure Gardens (below) was inspired by lotus flowers. In digitally printed velvet it looks romantic on Jessica's younger daughter Kat's bed.



Jessica's studio, housed in a farm nearby, ushers in pools of light.

My kind of country

shape of the hills. I find inspiration in puddles, pebbles, the silhouette of branches against the sky. I love the texture of weathered things, whether craggy rocks on the beach or the distressed surface of an old brick wall. It is as if life is telling stories all around me. One of the best things about the way Romo has interpreted my work is the care that has been taken to be faithful to the original colours and the feel of the paintings. It's such a joy to live with this new take on my work.

What is your favourite local shop? I like Flint in Lewes, a mini concept store with beautifully curated fashion and homeware. I also like Wickle, which is akin to a small department store – quirky and great for gifts, with a café and Fairtrade produce.

What is your earliest country memory? Walking with my grandmother in bluebell woods in Somerset. When I was little, we three children would go to stay with her and she would take us out for long walks, telling us fairy tales. I knew from when I was tiny, stomping along beside her in my wellies, that I was a country girl at heart.



“ I couldn't live without...
My eyesight. I see beauty everywhere – it is
my work, my life and my passion ”

Describe your perfect weekend. I love lazy Saturday mornings baking treats with Kat; the girls and I also do craft projects, such as sewing or collage. Then I have lunch with a friend in one of our lovely country pubs, such as The Ram Inn at Firle. In the evening I invite friends for a simple dinner. On Sunday, I go to the farm shop in Offham, where they rear their own meat, and buy delicious treats. Then my partner Karl and I set off for the beach at Birling Gap and swim, shell-hunt and generally chill. We build a fire and have a barbecue, then stay to watch the sun set.

Favourite seasonal food? In late summer, Karl catches mackerel and we cook them on the beach with just a squeeze of lemon.

Your favourite country pub? I love The George Inn in Alfriston. It's about 500 years old, very pretty and does English food extremely well. A favourite walk is from Firle Beacon to Alfriston for lunch at The George, followed by a leisurely stroll back.

📞 **For more details about Jessica Zoob and her printed fabrics for Black Edition, contact jessicazoob.com, romoblack.com.**

ABOVE LEFT Jessica at work in her studio - her enthusiastic layering of paint allows her to express nature's vibrant textures beautifully.

ABOVE RIGHT AND LEFT Lewes is a treasure trove of interesting independent shops. Jessica loves browsing in the stores Wickle and Flint.