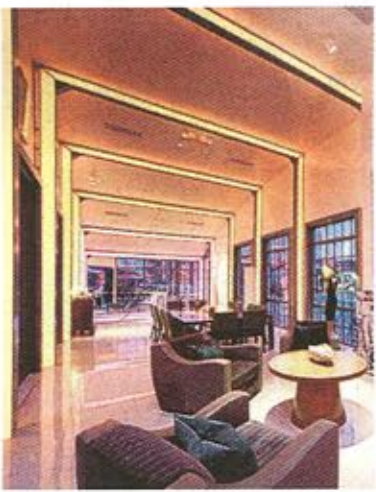


# METRO Property Interiors



**L**IGHTING couldn't be more important in the home and there is one person who knows illumination better than most: Rebecca Weir. Founder and creative director of Light IQ, as well as being a KLC School Of Design alumni and guest lecturer, Weir pushes the boundaries of illumination and has more than 1,000 residential and commercial projects, both in the UK and abroad, under her belt, with several industry awards. The company offers a bespoke service to create lighting environments, even creating innovative light sculptures. We talked ghostly changing rooms, lighting language and The Doors.

**Why is lighting so important in our homes?**

Lighting will make or break a space. From the purely functional side of having the lighting correctly positioned so that you can fulfil tasks such as chopping vegetables, applying make-up and reading in your favourite chair, to the aesthetic. The simplest lighting schemes are often the most effective – a well-placed lamp, a beautiful chandelier, discreet spots highlighting your favourite art. A well-lit space will often create a journey, leading you through corridors and into the rooms beyond with focal points and areas of interest.

The least interesting lighting is where uniformity dominates, where there is no accent or highlights, no focus to your favourite objects. Subtle highlights draw the eye and dominate our attention. We have a physiological response to light and are drawn to the brightest parts of a room, so the accents need to be carefully considered.

**Do you often walk into places and lament the bad lighting?**

The most successful lighting scheme is often invisible, seamlessly blending with the interiors and architecture. 'Bad' lighting is often brought to our attention through frustration with our environment. This often includes badly lit hotel rooms, with either not enough lighting or too many switches in the wrong places. Ill-considered lighting in restaurants often creates an uncomfortable atmosphere, where, for example, a misplaced spotlight shines on to your head for the duration of the meal, allowing your friends to see you in the most unflattering light. Changing rooms are often the worst offenders,



## FULL OF LIGHT IDEAS

**Oliver Stallwood meets Rebecca Weir, who is revolutionising the way we use lighting in our homes**

**Guiding light:** Rebecca's work can transform spaces

with lighting that casts ghostly shadows so you are too distracted to see the clothes. Given how shopping has become such a popular past-time, I'm astonished that more effort is not spent on creating these environments.

**Do people underestimate the importance of lighting?**

The concept of a well-lit space is still relatively new. Lighting design as a profession is not as established as that of an architect or engineer. However, the great news is that many home owners, as well as property developers, see lighting designers as a huge asset in creating their perfect home. Great lighting will create a distinguishing feature to the property, ensuring a resale of more pounds per square foot.

**What are your best tips for perfect lighting?**

Layers and flexibility. Introduce varying layers of light on different circuits that can be dimmed to different levels, ensuring further interest and ambience. Layers might include decorative wall lights and pendants which create focal points, picture lights to highlight artwork, low-level up-lights to frame views and doorways and accent lighting in

niches and bookshelves. Your greatest asset will be the ability to visualise your space without light, in its 3D form. Then imagine the various lights turned on, within your mind's eye, so that you can start to 'feel' the light caress surfaces and embrace textures, a layer at a time.

**Where do people normally go wrong?**

Everyone leaves the lighting to the last moment. Often an architect or electrician will provide a basic layout on a project, which works well to provide a ball park for costs. However, more often than not that same lighting scheme is being installed 12 months

later and it has not had any further attention.

**What's the first thing you tell your pupils when they arrive?**

The most important lesson is that light is fundamental to life on earth, without it we could not exist. And never to underestimate its importance or the impact it has on our lives.

**Is there a place for coloured lights and colour-changing bulbs?**

Never underestimate the subtle use of colour. Colour and its impact on us is little understood at a physiological level. I believe we will start to see

some very interesting research which will reinforce how important colour is in our lives.

**What's your favourite song to do with lights?**

As a teenager it would have been Light My Fire by The Doors. Now I am not so cool and my heart melted when my children recently sang Love Shine A Light by Katrina And The Waves at a school assembly.

■ **Rebecca Weir's new book *The Languages of Light: A Creative Approach To Residential Lighting* (Artifice Books, £29.95); [lightiq.com](http://lightiq.com); [klc.co.uk](http://klc.co.uk)**



**Innovative:** Rebecca Weir

**What did you think of Lumiere London?**

It was a great success. My favourite, by Grosvenor Square, was the Aquarium [pictured] by Benedetto Bufalino and Benoit Deseille. This playful installation, a traditional London phone box filled with tropical fish brought traffic to a standstill. I have several clients who introduce large-scale aquariums into their homes and we consider these very much part of a decorative lighting scheme.



PHOTOS: RICHARD BRYANT/ARCAID.CO.UK; PETER KOCINA PHOTOGRAPHY