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A Good Read

With the release of his second book, renowned landscape designer James Doyle charts the evolution of his work while looking at the relationship between nature and art.



a look at the evolution of his company's work and the ever-changing world of landscape architecture.

'I released my first book about eight years ago and hadn't really thought of a second one until my publishers reached out and suggested it a couple of years ago. The more I thought about it the more I thought the timing was right.'

'There's a lot of art in the book in the form of outdoor sculpture and architecture but I also think there's a lot of artistry in the way we design and put our plans together. There's a great juxtaposition between something natural and an art piece, it can be really dramatic while providing a great sense of balance.'

For James the design process always starts with the house and the architecture. 'I'm fortunate enough to work with some really great designers and architects,' he says. 'I'm

the two, but now more and more people around the world are embracing that.

'Creating a really nice outdoor space is much more attainable now – as it should be. Everyone deserves great design, whether they are working with half an acre or a small back yard.'

With the release of his second book, *Intersection of Art and Nature*, James takes

Cork-born James Doyle has made a career out of transforming outdoor residential spaces. The renowned landscape designer is known for his high-profile work and world-class designs, though he's the first to admit he stumbled into this industry almost by accident.

'My path wasn't exactly linear,' he laughs. 'I moved to the States in 1989 and was offered a job as a gardener. I took it out of sheer desperation and was then amazed to find I loved it. After a few years I was offered a position back in Ireland as a head gardener on an important project which I did for about a year before returning to the US in 1994. By 1995 I had started my own design business and I've never looked back.'

Based in Connecticut, James Doyle Design Associates aims to create beautiful and innovative landscapes that enrich the lives of the people who use them.

'Outdoor space has always been very important to my clients but I think over the last few years there has definitely been a shift in mainstream thinking,' James explains. 'Particularly on the West Coast of America there has always been this fusion of indoor and outdoor living and a unity between



always thinking about the views from the interior to the exterior and the physical and visual connections, inside and out. After that it just depends on my client's aspirations.'

And when it comes to inspiration there are many sources. 'I grew up in the 80s so music, fashion and other associated art and artwork have always influenced what I do. I also travel a lot which influences my interests and my work.'

While James' career continues to soar and his services are in demand globally he believes it is his gardening roots that have helped reach this point. 'I never set out to conquer one geographic location and I think it's because of my horticultural background that I'm able to work all over the place,' he muses. 'I can work in Los Angeles, France or Dublin and understand they'll all require different approaches.'

Though his work may take him far and

wide he's still a regular visitor to home soil and has seen first-hand how landscape design in Ireland has gone from strength to strength over the years.

'It's undoubtedly been hugely elevated by print and TV and more recently by covid. People were forced to stay home for two years so invested in their own spaces. Also our world is so much more global now, people travel a lot more and we're exposed to a lot of nice things that we then want to recreate for ourselves.'

'I always think how lucky people in Ireland are with the long summer days, that's something we just don't have in the US.'

The designer isn't a fan of trends as such, instead favouring a lasting and sustainable approach to any design.

'I like my work to be timeless,' he says. 'Something that I'm really enthusiastic about though is the fact that people are becoming

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much more aware of that connection we should all have with nature. There's an increasing respect for the environment and a focus on organic living. As a gardener and a bee-keeper that's something that's very dear to my heart.'

And when it comes to advice for creating a beautiful outdoor space? 'Everything scaled down and a good mix between hardscape and softscape. There's a great opportunity for an emotional connection with the garden and a lot of joy to be found in it.'

'There's a budding designer and gardener in everyone and the only way to learn is by getting your hands in the soil. In theory what you want to do is put the right plants in the right place but sometimes the only way to learn is through trial and error. Everyone will have failures, you just have to learn to move on. My advice is turn your phone off for a while and get out there.'



James Doyle *Intersection of Art and Nature* is out now