

BUSINESS OF HOME



A tonal living room by Dart Studio Niamh Barry

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How do you deal with conflict within your firm?



By Aidan Taylor

Whether it's design disagreements or different working styles, interpersonal conflict within your firm is inevitable. This week, we asked nine designers—Olivia Botrie, Meghan Jay, Brandon and Summer Jensen, Stephanie Larsen, Susan Marinello, Britany Simon, Diana Wagenbach and Emily Winters—how they address the collaborative challenges that arise at the office.



Olivia Botrie Courtesy of Dart Studio

CONSTRUCTIVE DISAGREEMENT

“Conflict is a natural part of working in a creative, fast-moving environment—and we don’t shy away from it. At our studio, no one works in a silo. Our process involves a lot of collaboration across roles, so we really depend on each other, and make a point of staying aligned throughout each phase of a project. That level of teamwork means occasional friction is inevitable, but it also means we’re constantly learning how to communicate better and support one another. When something does come up, we try to address it early and directly. Most conflicts stem from unclear expectations or miscommunication, and

those are things we can fix. We’re big believers in honest, respectful conversations that keep the focus on what’s best for the project. We’ve also found that some of our best ideas come out of constructive disagreement. As long as everyone feels heard and supported, a little friction can actually push us to do better work. At the end of the day, we’re all working toward the same goal: creating great spaces for our clients.” —*Olivia Botrie, Dart Studio, Toronto*