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December 2026

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AT HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

with Alice Palmer • India Hicks • Nicky Haslam • Rita Konig • Rachel de Thame

Beyond the frame

The inspiring creatives continuing the Arts and Crafts ideal of artist-designed homewares

TEXT **FIONA McKENZIE JOHNSTON** | PHOTOGRAPHS **JOSHUA MONAGHAN**

'I do wish you wouldn't always paint your best things just to decorate odd corners of your house,' wrote Roger Fry to Vanessa Bell in 1920. The house was Charleston in East Sussex, where the muralled interiors reflect a belief in the importance of art's place in the everyday. Fry was partly responsible. A curator, critic and artist, between 1913 and 1919 he ran the Omega Workshops with Bell and her partner Duncan Grant, where he encouraged post-Impressionist colour and form to be applied to fabrics, furniture and ceramics.

It wasn't a new idea: prior to the Renaissance, fine and decorative arts were united under the guild system, and they were later reunited in the Arts and Crafts era. Some Omega designs – printed linens, marquetry trays – were outsourced, but the belief in the merit of artist-designed homeware was the same. It has proven to have lasting value. An inspiring new exhibition at Tate Britain, *Vanessa Bell & Duncan Grant: Inside Bloomsbury* (November 12–April 11; tate.org.uk), celebrates the artists' relationship with each other. As well as paintings, it includes original pieces designed and decorated for Omega and Charleston, which still cast a cross-disciplinary spell. The oeuvre of the artists featured over these pages similarly spans the genres, affording us the enduring joy of daily incidentals imbued with a visionary beauty.



Georgie Hopton

The breadth of Georgie Hopton's practice is emphasised by the transformation of her split-level studio on the Islington-Hoxton border into a domestic space, complete with a bedroom in which she sleeps three nights a week. A pleasing cohesion is granted by distinctive hues and an evident interest in the abstraction of form. On the back wall is a sequence of works inspired by Fra Angelico's 15th-century frescoes for the Convent of San Marco in Florence, which hang adjacent to a series of ornate collages that reveal an obsession with auriculas.

'I'm fascinated by the overlap between natural and manmade, and they're the ultimate manufactured flower: they've been bred into perfection,' says Georgie. A new body of these collages is the focus of her third exhibition with the Mayfair gallery Lyndsey Ingram, *Floating Lawns* (until November 13).

The conception of Georgie's furnishings can be dated to her own propagation efforts in the garden of the upstate New York farmhouse she used to own with her husband, artist Gary Hume. She created monoprints using vegetables as blocks, and 'it was an obvious extension to use those shapes for repeat patterns'. Initially tried and tested in her own house and within art installations, a collection of wallpapers and fabrics entitled ▷



THIS PAGE Georgie Hopton at her London studio with her designs, including a screen in her 'Decorations' fabric and the 'Dropped Cherries' wallpaper. **OPPOSITE** (*clockwise from top left*) *The Handkerchief Trick*; *At Home She's a Tourist*; and rugs created with Peter Page



'I wanted to get to *the nub of* something,' says Nancy. 'A rug is the *foundation of weaving*'

Georgie Hopton Produce is distributed by Common Room.

Two more fabric and wallpaper designs, originally created for a show in Bath, are produced with Rapture & Wright, and a partnership with the carpet specialist Peter Page has seen Georgie's shapes woven into rugs and runners. She is working on lighting designs: a prototype for an appealingly sculptural floor lamp has been adapted from a vegetable print, and a portfolio holds a quantity of further ideas. 'One thing always leads to another, and I've always wanted to make a whole world,' she says. *lyndseyingram.com*

Nancy Nicholson

Nancy Nicholson says that functionality inspired her to pivot her practice: 'I had been painting and working in set design, but I wanted to get to the nub of something: a rug is the foundation of weaving.' It was, perhaps, innate: the great-granddaughter of Winifred and Ben Nicholson, pre-eminent leaders of inter- and post-war British abstraction, she grew up observing 'art and the home being intertwined, with pictures and rag rugs by Winifred, and curtains in a fabric by Ben'. Five years ago, she and her husband, Tim Blanchard, a chef who trained at St John restaurant in Smithfield, moved from London to Devon, and her studio is in rooms above the pub that Tim now runs, The Church House Inn in Harberton.

Nancy's designs begin as appealing watercolours that commissioning clients have been known to frame. Then, 'pages of maths' map the intuitively conceived and calmingly spaced geometrical abstractions that, she says, 'doubtlessly owe in part to the art I grew up with'. She works with wool that comes from known herds, including her mother's in Cumbria. It is spun for her, and some lengths dyed according to her specifications. 'I'm interested in how colours sit alongside each other,' she explains, adding that there are means of manipulating the depth and movement. ▷





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Textile artist Nancy Nicholson in her Devon studio, with 'Logwood Stripes' hanging behind her. 'The Ives Hearth' in the peat colourway hangs to the left of two pieces from her 'Colour Conversation' series. 'The San Marco Runner'