

At Home with the FT Interiors

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Artist Georgie Hopton's potato-printed home: 'It's not too much is it?'

A grand Georgian townhouse — The Spectator's former offices — is a riot of bold-patterned wallpaper that calls to mind Arts and Crafts, the Bloomsbury Group and Wiener Werkstätte



'To relax, I go online and I look at fabric, wallpaper and ceramics. I scroll away, hypnotising myself': Georgie Hopton with some of her bold fabric prints

Artist Georgie Hopton has a thing for [wallpaper](#). Every inch of her London home — a smart Georgian townhouse in Bloomsbury — is patterned. Textiles, too, make her tick. As do the assorted, often handcrafted objects she has picked up over the years in junk shops and antique stores: a pair of brass serpent-shaped wall lamps; a growing collection of majolica plates dedicated to Joan of Arc (“my latest obsession; I’ve set majolica alerts on eBay”); or ceramic jugs that resemble coiled ropes (“I think they’re 1950s; I’ve got three of them”).

“In another life, I’d be a patron and a collector,” she says with a smile. “I genuinely love to get involved in what people make. To relax, I go online and I look at fabric, wallpaper and ceramics. I scroll away, hypnotising myself.”

The decorative tone of her home is set at the front door, where the top-step threshold features a marble and mosaic floor panel she designed herself. Its bright bursts of red and yellow are inspired by an 18th-century fabric, while the central motif of two intertwining artist’s palettes is a symbol for Hopton and her husband, fellow artist [Gary Hume](#).

The couple — who met in 1993, and both have solo shows running concurrently at London’s [Lyndsey Ingram Gallery](#) — bought the house together 15 years ago. Its previous incarnation was as the offices of The Spectator magazine. “It was totally magnolia; full of cream boxes with wires; and the garden was famous for parties,” recalls Hopton. “There was a lot of Victorian detail on top of the Georgian; we got rid of all of that.”

Born in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, in 1967, Hopton moved to London in the 1980s to study fine art at Central Saint Martins. Her multimedia practice spans collage, printmaking, photography and sculpture, and institutions such as Tate and the Government Art Collection have acquired her work — including “Keep the Home Fires Burning” (2005), an installation of mosaic floor tiles and bronze sculptures set into walls, located in between buildings at the Home Office in London.

Increasingly, her output also includes textiles and wallpaper. It’s an approach that resonates with William Morris’s Arts and Crafts ethos, the *gesamtkunstwerk* (“total work of art”) of the Wiener Werkstätte, and the decorative declarations of the Bloomsbury Group’s Omega Workshop. Hopton refers to this element of her output as “Produce — like a greengrocer”. Her language hints at how her repeat patterns are often created: using sliced up vegetables.

At Lyndsey Ingram’s newly opened second gallery — a former 19th-century stable two doors down from her original space on Bourdon Street — Hopton’s original framed prints are hung alongside and over the top of the subsequent, digitally printed wallpapers: blocky, bold and brightly coloured. There are fabrics too, shown as curtains, cushions and upholstery — including on a built-in bench as well as for-sale poufs and chairs.

When the work was first installed, “I said to Gary, ‘It’s not too much is it?’”, she says. “He went: ‘Well, it’s quite a lot . . .’ But it’s not to me. There would be more if I had my way.”

At home, there is certainly more. Her maximalist *gesamtkunstwerk*, naturally, features her own wallpaper designs, which line the hallway and the kitchen-dining room. But there are papers by other makers in the mix too: William Morris in the loo (as well as an oak-lidded Thomas Crapper toilet); Robert Kime in a bedroom; and two different de Gournay prints in the interconnected ground-floor living rooms.

“This is my ode to Arts and Crafts,” she says, showing me around the larger of the two spaces. “We call this the music room — because it’s got the record player in it.” Alongside the aubergine and dusky pink floral wallpaper are a collection of chairs, sourced from a specialist dealer in Norfolk, but not made by any of the movement’s major names. “I think they’re all almost and not quite,” says Hopton. “Some of [the furniture] I did get in junk shops because not a lot of people liked brown furniture at the time.”

On one wall is a series of her *Harvest* photographs, combining close-ups of her own body with various fruit and vegetables — all home grown by Hopton at the former chicken farm that she and Hume bought in upstate New York, surrounded by the Catskill Mountains, in 2002, which they sold last November.



“We went there specifically to work longer hours without all this socialising nonsense, but I became so devoted to the garden that I was working less and less and less,” she recalls. “I thought, somehow life and art have to conjoin. So I literally took a wheelbarrow of vegetables into the studio. I really felt a symbiosis between me and them.”

The relationship has continued into prints. “I thought, ‘well, what about potato printing?’ And it was so liberating, so joyous.” The results can be seen around her home, not only as wallpaper, but also as prints, fabric on a sofa, and a sculpture of the printing potatoes cast in bronze.

There are works by Hume, of course, too — as well as his signature paintings wrought in household gloss-paint, there is a head-height (and rather phallic) limestone “Bud” sculpture and a mural, in marble and lead, in the garden — an urban oasis planted with hazelnut and medlar trees. “The garden looks fantastic, and it’s all down to Gary,” says Hopton.

In 1988, Hume was among the artists featured in the seminal *Freeze* exhibition organised by Damien Hirst. One of the so-called “Young British Artists”, Hume represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1999, and, 25 years on, currently has three solo shows open at the same time in London: prints (from 1994 to 2022) at [Lyndsey Ingram](#); new work at [Sprüth Magers](#); and paintings from the 90s at Hazlitt Holland-Hibbert.

Unsurprisingly, the couple’s own collection of “lovely art from friends”, includes some major names, including Sarah Lucas, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Rebecca Warren, Cecily Brown and Don Brown — all clustered together in the kitchen. In the hall, a glass-cased and taxidermied hybrid hare/lamb is the work of German artist Thomas Grünfeld. A chunk of amethyst, displayed on a table, is a remnant of an installation by Anya Gallaccio — who will open a solo show at [Turner Contemporary, Margate](#), later this month. A single paintbrush once belonged to Lucian Freud.



When it comes to the house's interior design, Hopton has been the driving force. "It's not my forte, but it is a passion," she says. "My dear friend Meriel Scott, who died recently, was an interior designer. She would take me sometimes to Chelsea Harbour to look at fabric, and it was heaven." The result of one outing was a flamboyant, floral yet geometric silk by historic French maker Prella, which Hopton used to upholster two angular, orange-framed chairs.

She travelled to Lucca, Italy, to seek out reclaimed tiles for the kitchen splashback, and bought three rugs in Morocco. "Before we moved into the house, I was like, 'What is with these middle-aged ladies who like everything about rugs?'" she recalls. "But then we went to Morocco and I completely got the carpet malarkey, because of course they're all like paintings."

Most days, she cycles from home to her studio in east London, and is in the process of moving to a new, bigger space. "I don't linger at home because I know all I'll be doing is tweaking. I'm definitely a potterer."

She has plans to replace a number of her original wallpaper choices with her own designs, but baulks at the idea of an overhaul. "I could never do it again," she says. "I don't think I made any art for months and months. I remember somebody who had an enormous Georgian house saying to me, 'Your house is amazing, please will you do mine?' I went, 'You've got to be fucking joking'."

'Produce. Repeat.' is at [Lyndsey Ingram](#) until November 8