


Soul Singer





You'll no doubt recognize her face from *'Scotland's Home of the Year'*, but **Anna Campbell-Jones** has an impressive pedigree when it comes to making a home 'sing', having been immersed in the industry for 30 plus years.

BY LINDSAY DOHERTY

She's shot to fame as one of the three judges on *'Scotland's Home of the Year'* show, so we thought it was time for a chat about her thoughts on the houses she's seen, her love of design and what her own home says about her.

With short blonde hair, tattoos and a passion for sustainability, Anna Campbell-Jones is quite a character. She's been vocal on having no ambitions of being the 'next Kirsty Allsopp', however, the London-born designer has made an impact since she moved to Scotland, twenty years ago. After studying at Glasgow School of Art, Anna moved back to London to work at various leading design practices. She returned to her 'forever home' of Glasgow, in the early 2000s to be director of Rehab Interiors. In 2016, she took the leap to set up the design consultancy, Habitus. That led on to her lecturing in design at her alma mater, Glasgow School of Art.

This year saw her complete series three of the hit show *Scotland's Home Of The Year* and Anna and the other two judges have filmed most of series four, although we have to wait until next year to see the houses!



"I obviously need to keep under wraps any specifics about what delicious treats are in store for SHOTY4, but over the last three years of making the programme, we have seen such variety," Anna says. "I think as the show has become more well known, people have felt increasingly comfortable about having us look around their homes, which has meant that we get more and more applicants every year. With this volume, we can choose the very best to film, so the homes just keep getting better and better. As usual, we seek everything from ancient castles, modernist masterpieces, tiny cottages to urban apartments and in terms of the design approach, anything goes!"

With the judging taking the trio of judges around Scotland, she's become quite close to her fellow judges.

"You can imagine that being on the road for weeks at a time, we have got to know each other, and the crew, very well!" she laughs. "SHOTY feels like a family, and I have made

lifelong friends both on the production team and with the judges. Kate and I have become especially close, we have the best time working out our outfits for the show and she has helped me up my Instagram game!"

The three judges bring very different skills to the show. Michael Angus is an architect and Kate Spiers is a lifestyle blogger, so Anna's 30 years of interior design means her experience of dealing with individual's tastes is her expertise.

"As an interior designer with 30 years under my belt, 20 of which have been doing residential design, I have accumulated a level of knowledge about interiors and refurbishing older properties, which I enjoy sharing with the viewers," she says. "My personal design approach has always been about collaborating with clients and trying to understand their lives and tastes, which is a skill I hope I bring to bear when assessing people's homes on the show."



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experience of doing up a castle in Aberdeenshire recently for the Channel 4 pilot of *Hire My Home*. I would also love to see super compact homes such as Airstream trailers, boats or treehouses. Although they would be a challenge for Michael and a whole film crew!”

A big passion for Anna is that the houses that she judges on SHOTY, and the houses she consults for interior design, are homes. For SHOTY, she is particularly keen that people enter the show regardless of how ‘finished’ their houses are.

“We have filmed homes where every room isn’t complete,” she says. “I would hope that anyone who watches the series will have seen that all styles and all budgets are assessed on a level playing field. The most important criteria is HOME.”



If you ask Anna about any favourites from the shows, she just laughs. “When it comes to choosing a favourite home on the show it’s like choosing a favourite child!” she says. “There are a few that I have particularly connected with. The new build on Skye in the first series; last year’s winner, Hugh Berry’s stunning apartment in Glasgow and this year ‘The Double House’ in Orkney. The last one made my eyes sting a little because it reminded me so strongly of the home in London, I was brought up in.”

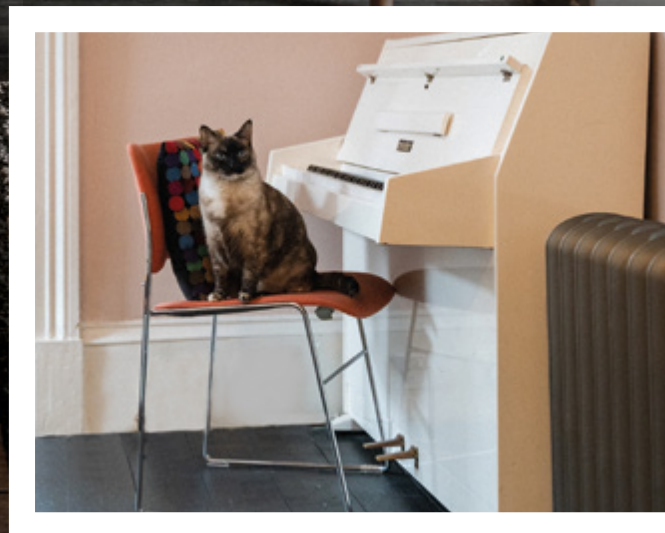
“I think we have seen most types of typically Scottish homes,” she says. “We have only had one castle so I would love to see another in the show, especially after my

Anna has lived in her own home, in Glasgow’s West End for over twenty years, having moved in with her husband when their first child was born. She now resides with her cat, Ivie, after her two sons flew the coop.

“When we first moved in, the flat had been fire damaged and we only had a few bits of furniture,” she says. “We painted everything white and kept things minimalist, but over the years I have added colour, and accumulated furniture and art. I feel like my home has evolved as I have. It’s definitely not high design and that’s how I think a real home should be - telling the narrative of your life and who you are.”

The use of colour has become something of a trademark for Anna. Her take on it could be borderline geeky.

"The colours have been added over the years as I moved away from white minimalism," she says. "I chose them from the British Standard BS4800 range, which evolved from the Schedule of Paint Colours for Building Purposes first prepared by the Pigments, Paints and Varnishes Standards Committee in 1972. It's quite a weird palette and I enjoyed the challenge of limiting myself to it. Similarly, the bright carpets in the studio and TV room are Tretford Cord, made from goat hair in Ireland. I believe the colour range hasn't changed much since the 1950s. I think both work well with my interest in vintage and antique furniture."



Her love of vintage and antiques is apparent in her home, she loves things because she loves them. Her best advice is not to overthink design.

“My home is eclectic and has evolved over time,” she says. “I have built the schemes around favourite pieces of furniture or art. Some are family heirlooms, some vintage finds, and others are contemporary. All were chosen because I love them. Not with any kind of master plan. I believe that we each have an innate palette of colours, shapes, patterns and textures and that if we choose things because we truly love them then they will generally work well together - best not to overthink it!”



Sustainability is something particularly because she believes that vintage furniture is often made from high quality materials and well constructed. “You need to think about the longevity as well as the provenance of any furniture,” she says. “Some of the items I have were bought from antique dealers, some were inherited and some I found on the street, in skips or charity shops! If I want to change it up, I can re-sell or give the items away, sending nothing to landfill. My favourite pieces are the Saarinen table and PEL chairs in my kitchen, which are design classics. They date from the early 30s and I love the cantilevered and tubular design. My dad had them in his office and when he retired, I snaffled them. He bought the table new in the 1970s, but he found the chairs in a skip and had them re-chromed and reupholstered, so I guess the apple didn’t fall far from the tree!”



“Your home should be about what brings you joy.”

Although her flat had lost its fireplaces when Anna and her family moved in, the cornice and shutters were intact. "It was sad that the fireplaces had all been ripped out, but it did mean I was free to design the master bedroom with the wardrobes spaced off the wall," she says. "That allowed me to create a dressing area and to locate the bed perfectly in the centre of the room. The original floorboards were sanded and painted black. I have since added carpet in the studio and TV room and I have enjoyed going for strong colour. The only room with a muted palette is my bedroom. I did this to help with that transition to a more peaceful time of day, from the more vibrant spaces in the rest of the home."

The pandemic has changed Anna's work-life dramatically. "All my meetings are online," she says. "Doing presentations

via screen-sharing has proved to be brilliant because I can update drawings and mood boards live. This has fed into my collaborative approach to designing people's homes. I took the (enforced) time at home to re-evaluate how I use my own space. I converted the spare room into my studio, putting a sofa bed in the TV room for guests. When you are busy dashing about and working you can't see the obvious in your own home. I think many people have made similar discoveries during lockdown, which has caused a huge upsurge in people looking to reimagine their spaces for a different way of living and working."

For Anna, a home is never completed.

"I don't think a home is ever finished," she says. "Mine has been through so many changes. I am happy with it, but I would never rule out making dramatic changes in the future, that's a big part of the joy of making your home your own. For example, my favourite spot keeps changing! I have just had my garden completely redone so at the moment it's the bench on my new elliptical deck, but that could change!"



Anna's top tip for anyone wanting to be brave with interior design?

"Do not be a slave to fashion, and do not worry about what other people will think of the decisions you make. Your home should be made to suit you because even if you do put in a boring kitchen because of concerns about resale, the chances are new owners would change it anyway. Your home should be about what brings you joy."

Follow Anna Campbell-Jones on Instagram [@anna.hab](https://www.instagram.com/anna.hab) and visit Habitus Design www.habitus.design. Look out for season 4 of *Scotland's Home Of The Year* on the BBC in 2022.

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