

Telegraph magazine

8 March 2014

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Pithers, Ellie. "The world of Faye Toogood, designer," *Telegraph Magazine*, March 2014.

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The world of Faye Toogood, designer



Faye Toogood, 37, founded Studio Toogood, a design studio producing everything from installations and interiors to collections of furniture, in 2008. She has also recently launched a collection of coats with her sister, Erica, which will be available at Hostem in London from April, and her latest furniture collection, Roly-Poly, will be shown at Milan's Salone Internazionale del Mobile on April 8. She lives in north London with her husband, Matt Gibberd, an estate agent specialising in architecturally significant properties, and their one-year-old daughter, Indigo.

Routine I get up at 7am and we have a family breakfast. This is a new thing; I used to be up at 6 and at my desk by 7.30, but now that we have a baby we have lots of toast and jam together. My days vary hugely: I can be on a project abroad, meeting clients, or designing in my studio, which is 15 minutes away. I am home by 5pm to do tea, bath and bed with Indigo. We don't go out much in the evening now. My husband cooks and we're in bed by 10pm. I can't believe how boring that sounds!

Wooden sculptures I have acquired three wooden sculptures [pictured], all of which are assemblages of

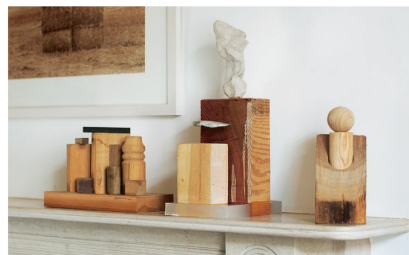
raw and found bits of wood. The raw with the precious is very much what I'm interested in, and that comes out in my work. The one on the left is by the playwright Jonathan Miller, and the other two were Secret Santa

presents from designers who have worked in the studio. Secret Santa is a test in our studio – we have a £5 limit but the gift has to be handmade.

Lamp This is a Snoopy lamp by Castiglioni [pictured

above, far right]. They mostly come in black; I've never seen another in green. I was using it on a shoot when it got broken, so I was able to buy it. It has a big chip in the top so I'm sure it's devalued, but I love the extreme shape.

Childhood I had quite a rural upbringing, in Rutland. My parents were very make-do-and-mend – it was quite a wholesome 1970s background, and my mother made everything from muesli to clothes. If she had had a son, she would have made and embroidered him a football kit. I was a collector from a young age; as a child I had a table in my room full of objects



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Ming cup This is a Ming stem cup [pictured]. I bought in an antiques shop. It wasn't that expensive, weirdly, possibly because it's very wonky, but I think it's a stunning silhouette. It looks really modern in my eyes, like a piece of modern sculpture from the 1930s. It is ancient but has a contemporary relevance that appeals to me.

Stone with a bone I'm not the easiest person to buy presents for, but my father-in-law managed to nail it with this beautiful white stone with a cat bone in it [pictured]. It is apparently an example of how some of the walls are made in rural parts of the south of France. It is one of my favourite objects.

Folk star I think this is a 1950s, probably Swedish, star [pictured], but it could be earlier. I found it in a junk shop and I thought it was a beautiful sculpture: all this time spent welding a metal star and then it's just been stuck on a copper pipe and jammed into a piece of rough wood. Perhaps it was an apprentice piece. I keep it in my bedroom.

Coats Last year I started the Toogood clothing brand with

my sister, Erica. She's the scissorhands, the trained pattern-cutter, and we have designed a range of coats together. I love fashion but I was looking for a uniform that I could wear at the weekend that didn't prescribe me as a certain



type of person. The coats are based on trades – a beekeeper, an oilrigger, a milkman, a roadsweeper – and it's very much about celebrating manufacture and craft. Everything is made in Britain, which I feel very strongly about.

Made in Britain It is entirely possible to manufacture in Britain, but people have to be prepared to spend their money on it. Sometimes I am asked why I don't make furniture in recyclable materials; my answer is that these pieces are not to be thrown away next year. I want to create heirlooms that are passed down through generations – for me that is more environmentally friendly.

Reinvention I am really interested in reinvention. When I was at *The World of Interiors* a colleague used to say she never knew whether she was going to be sitting opposite a dragonfly or a nun. One day I'd be in loads of colour; the next day I'd be totally in black. A while ago I was into all white – clothes, hair, shoes. Whenever I see people I haven't seen for ages, they always say, 'Oh, I didn't recognise you.'

Interview by Ellie Pithers. Photographs by Vici Watkins

Next week: Agnes Obel, singer-songwriter



that I had collected – rocks, birds' eggs – which I constantly rearranged.

First job My first job after university was a huge eye-opener. Min Hogg, the founding editor of *The World of Interiors* magazine, hired me as a stylist when I was 21, after an interview process during which I presented her with a suitcase full of stuff that I liked: bits of packaging, graphics, fabrics, sketchbooks, rocks that I'd collected. She gave me a really big break. I loved that the magazine wasn't about trend or fashion – it was about architecture, art, culture. Whether it's a hut in Mali or a Swedish palace, everything is relevant.

Current job I set up Studio Toogood because I wanted to create things that were more permanent and three-dimensional. I wanted to have people experience the stories that I was creating in my head for the two-

dimensional page. At the time the idea of multidisciplinary design didn't really exist. You were either an architect or a product designer or an interior designer. I wanted to bring together people to work on projects that varied considerably in medium. What we do now at the studio ranges from experiential installations – they might involve scent, for instance – to fashion shows for clients, to interiors for residential homes. Stylistically, the studio is quite schizophrenic. I think spaces have an emotional content that goes beyond just a colour scheme.

Husband I met Matt when we were working together at *The World of Interiors*. He was a writer and a sub-editor. We are very much

soulmates but have quite different tastes. When I met him I was very acquisitive and he was almost the opposite. His father and grandfather were both architects, so he grew up with a very purist, clean, minimal background. When we moved in together he made me edit everything down, and he struggled when I painted the house dark grey and blue. But I think our tastes are starting to merge. He likes it now.



I designed a series of door furniture called Sticks and Stones and Broken Bones for a company called Izé in 2010. I collected sticks, stones and bones from the banks of the Thames and we cast them in bronze. This is a fox-skull door knocker. I have lots of found items in my house; things that I've collected on walks.