

HOMESTEAD

HOUSES & INTERIORS FOR THE HAM & HIGH AREA



ISSUE IV

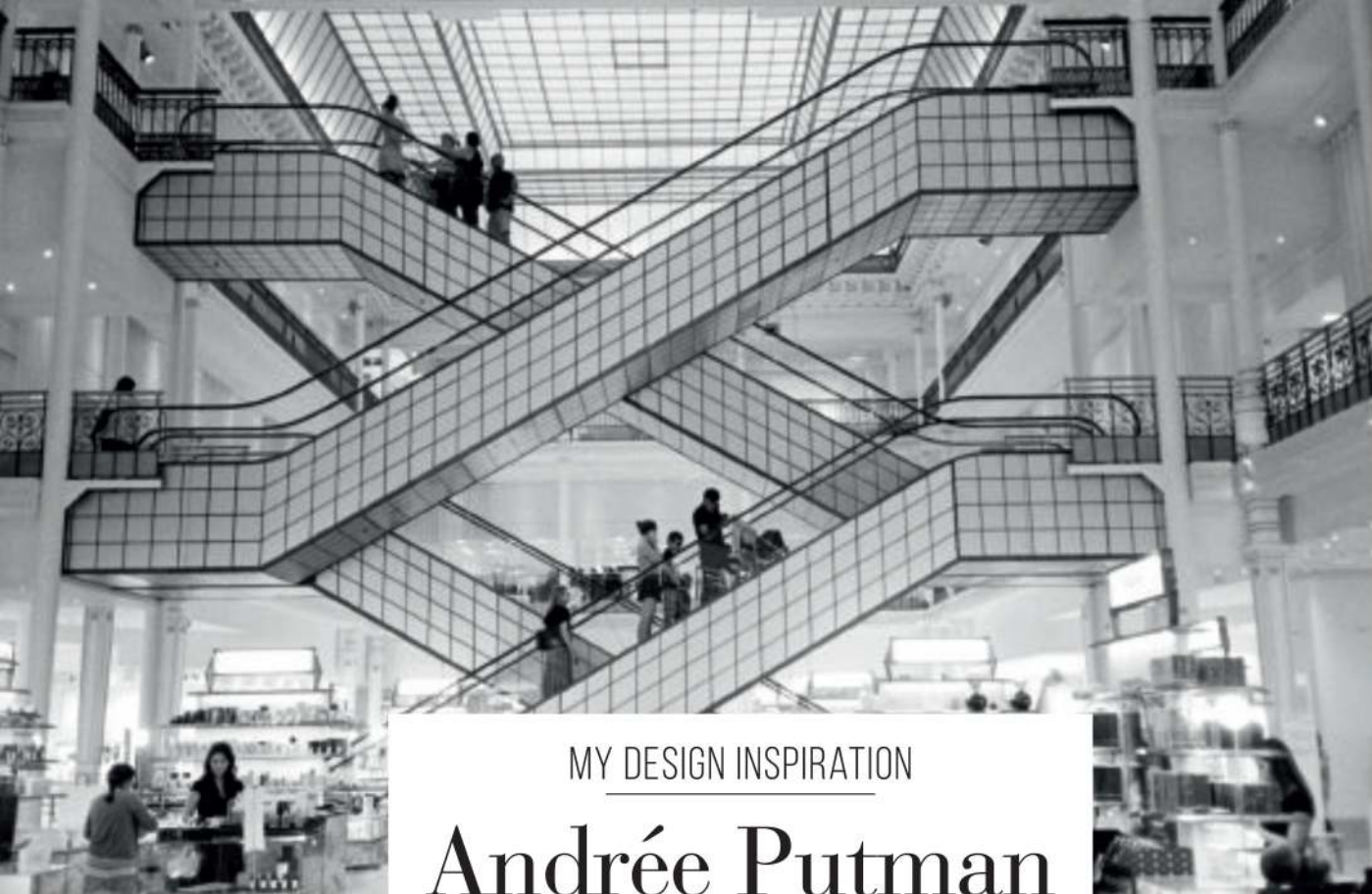


PHOTO CREDIT: STAIRS OF LE BON MARCHÉ IN PARIS, DESIGNED IN 1986 BY ANDRÉE PUTMAN, PHOTO COURTESY OF BY STEPHANE HAMEL

MY DESIGN INSPIRATION
Andrée Putman

Interior designer Roselind Wilson on why the inimitable Andrée Putman is her design icon.

ROSELIND WILSON is the the owner and creative director of Rose Wilson Design, an NW6-based interior design studio providing luxury turnkey solutions for discerning clients. They also have an outpost in Cape Town. Wilson, who lives in Hampstead, combines a Business Management degree with an Interior Design diploma and over 16 years of experience designing bespoke homes around the world. She chooses the designer that shaped her own career.

My design inspiration is firmly rooted in intangible aspects like attitude, self-expression and individuality. For this reason, I find my inspiration in people who exhibit these qualities.

My design icon has always been Andrée Putman for her striking sense of individuality and such strength of character. I discovered her work in the early days of my career. I was constantly stumbling upon products and interiors that I found myself irresistibly drawn to and found the common thread to be this amazing designer.

Born into a wealthy French family in the winter of 1923, she was the descendant of the inventor of the hot air balloon. A trained classical musician, she was considering a career

as a composer when a serious bicycle accident at the age of 20 almost ended her life. She survived, but developed a characteristic posture - rigid and straight backed - that stayed with her all her life.

She embraced a strident, austere aesthetic. One day, legend has it, she emptied her own bedroom of everything but an iron bedstead, a single chair, and a Miró poster.

Abandoning her music career, she took a job as the office messenger at magazines in Paris such as *Elle* and *L'Œil*, where she was introduced to the leading artists and designers of the day. Every day she walked by the *Café de Flore*, where she'd spot the likes of Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

Her career as a designer began in 1958, when she was appointed art director of the home department of *Prisunic*, where she realised her desire to "design beautiful things for nothing". In 1971 she set up her own company, *Créateurs & Industriels*, championing the textile industry, where she worked with young talents including Ossie Clarke, Issey Miyake and Thierry Mugler.

One bankruptcy and one divorce later, at the age of 53 she doubled down on her interior design work and

founded *Ecart*, *Trace* spelt in reverse, where she revived works of forgotten 1930s designers and espoused the rejection of "pompous luxury".

Her designs for the new interiors of the *Morgan Hotel* on New York's Madison Avenue in 1984 won her international renown. She did the offices of the French culture minister Jack Lang, and designed the sets for Peter Greenaway's 1996 film *The Pillow Book*. She redesigned the interiors of the *concorde jets*, and created retail stores for Yves Saint Laurent, Karl Lagerfeld and Balenciaga. Her favourite work, however, was her memorial for *Martyrs de la Déportation*, commemorating the 200,000 Jews deported under the Nazi occupation. A modernist legend in her own time, she died in Paris in 2013 at the age of 87.

Andrée Putman's remains more of an inspiration than a reflection of my work, as what I enjoy most is the stunning balance between person, product and place.

Andrée Putman found harmony and balance in her design and it reflected exactly who she was. Her personality resonated through her work, and that is always an impactful statement to make. ♦

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