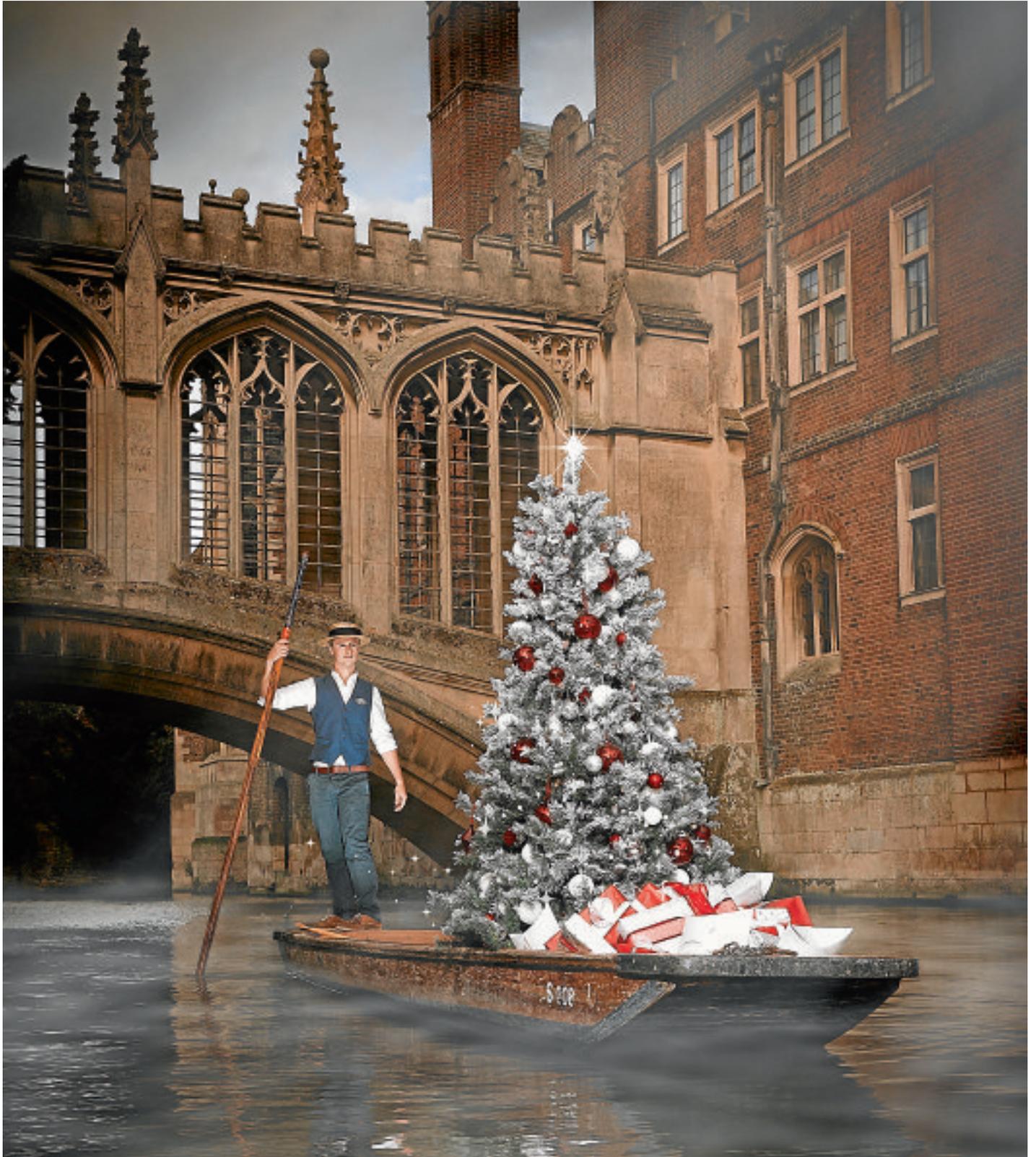


# CAMBRIDGE

peoplehomesfashionfoodmotoring magazine



Picture: Martin Bond

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- RIGHT**
- Folk museum pop-up shop
- FAR RIGHT**
- This print, called Kitschen, was designed for our food columnist Tine Roche, founder of Cambridge Cookery School
- BELOW**
- Personal Joy



- LEFT**
- Mills & Boon Trilogy, If Not Now Whenever
- ABOVE**
- Nick's Favourite Bird After Dawn. This print was commissioned for a bedroom in a Victorian house
- RIGHT**
- Refresher. This digital collage, using family photos, was commissioned for a snug/TV room



# Coming HOME



Patsy Rathbone tried to separate her home life from her artwork – but failed. The result of her struggle, writes Lisa Millard, is a triumph.

## H

ome is, they say, where the heart is and the home, shaped by the hurly burly of family life and domestic drudgery, is at the heart of Patsy Rathbone's art and work.

A Fine Art graduate from Anglia Ruskin, Patsy has launched The Home of Rathbone, a business that showcases the beautiful bespoke wallpaper prints she designs and makes.

But there's more than meets the eye to Patsy's prints. There's a playful nod at tradition, an appreciation of classical beauty, with an invitation to the unexpected. And that's the point. Take the caravan she wrapped (yes, wrapped) in screenprinted wallpaper, created for a project called Relocation for her MA. Titled You Should See My House, each and every part of the caravan's interior – that's the sofa, cupboard doors, drawers and mattress – were carefully covered in a toile de joiu print of pretty scenes. The effect is charming. But look again and the detail of the drawing isn't pastoral-pretty. In fact, the print is called Crisis and features homes that have been devastated by climate change.

"I found the reports in newspapers and drew each one. I had wrapped individual objects for other projects but wanted to do an entire space. I thought it would be oppressive but everyone said it looked lovely. But the vignettes aren't lovely. They are scenes of catastrophe, not actually what you expect. That's a theme of my work."

### mature decision

A creative all-rounder, Patsy is handy on a sewing machine. She studied art at GCSE but her father encouraged her to dump it at A-level to focus on the sciences. "My grandfather was a tailor and me and my sisters were forever making outfits to wear out on a Saturday night that were pinned to our knickers." She didn't pick art up again until she was in her thirties and took an A-level at Hill's Road. "It was transformative," she says. "I loved it." A degree and masters

followed and Patsy attracted accolades and awards along the way.

One of her textile art pieces combined wall hangings accessorised with soft furnishings. "I love the idea of putting cushions into a gallery space," she says, laughing lightly. "It's important to bring the small scale, the home, into that context."

There's also a love of home, a celebration of the stuff of life and a light touch at work. A recent commission for Cambridge Cookery School resulted in a bespoke screenprinted wallpaper in watery Impressionist blues with repeat prints that, from a distance, look like floral motifs. The shapes are not flowers but cows, sheep and even balloon whisks – the core ingredients of the cookery school.

Patsy's own Cambridge home – complete with three children, aged 11 to 16, and husband – is



gorgeous if topsy-turvy with the effects of yet another of the room makeovers Patsy has a penchant for. There are plans for The Home of Rathbone to become more than bespoke wallpaper: "I have more ideas than time to do them. I keep decorating my own home. . ."

The Folk Museum commissioned Patsy to create a window for a pop-up toy and tea shop two years ago. "I photographed all the items in the museum, scales, teapots, tins and tea caddies, and drew them to make a baroque-style print. Then I wrapped some of the items in the paper to create the window display," explains Patsy. "It was a nightmare to wrap all the items, but people really liked it and the Folk Museum loved the print"

### ideas take flight

We stroll down a road close to Patsy's city centre home to the house of a client where the bedroom wall is covered in a striking digital print of bullfinches perched on a hedgerow branch peppered with red berries. "For this commission I decorated the room around the statement print. The couple, Nick and Dawn, saw a print of swallows that I'd done and liked it but the bullfinch is Nick's favourite bird. The print is called Nick's Favourite Bird After Dawn," laughs Patsy. It's glorious.

Then there's the gold screenprint on a clotted cream background she has designed for someone else showing a repeat pattern of drawings of people and places. "This person gave me lots of her favourite family photographs to look through and I chose 10, which I then drew to make the print. The paper becomes a family archive and shows scenes of family life both past and present." It's wonderful, I want one of my own.

"All through college I struggled with the idea of separating home stuff and being an artist, but it's impossible to do that. So I decided not to." It's a good job because the upshot is brilliant.

➤ To see The Home of Rathbone, visit [homeofrathbone.co.uk](http://homeofrathbone.co.uk). Email [patsy@homeofrathbone.co.uk](mailto:patsy@homeofrathbone.co.uk) or call 07733 000402.