

Artist Anthea Hamilton: 'Camp architecture really hits all my buttons'

The Turner Prize nominee on Kendrick Lamar, her Loewe scarf and beloved collection of bricks



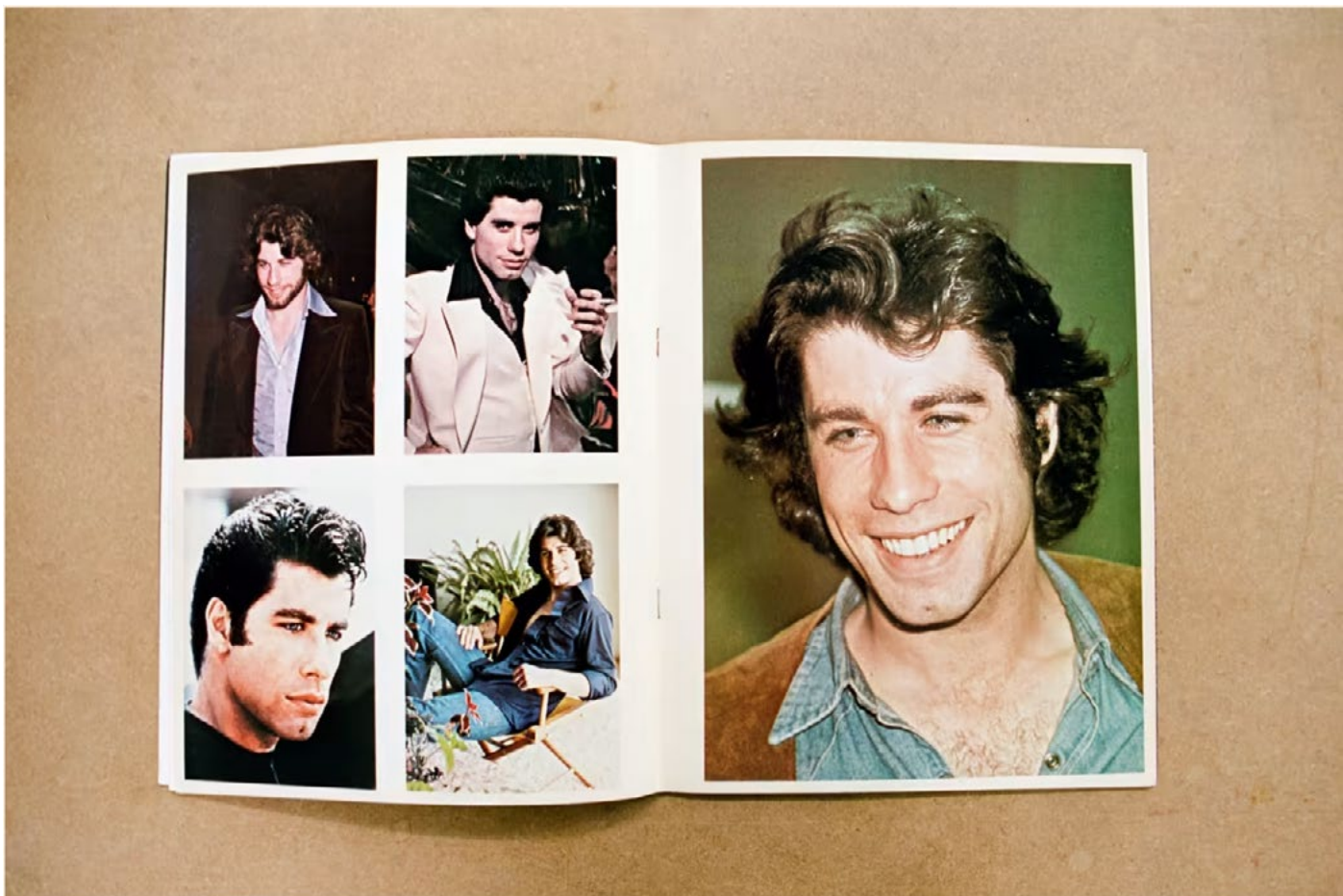
My personal style signifier is my silhouette. I always have this bun. It crept in about 15 years ago, because I had no time to think of another way to manage the top of my head. And then there's my big orange scarf from [Loewe](#) that I cannot live without. I wear it from the first leaf falling in September until May, and then it goes on holiday in the freezer, before coming out again as soon as possible. I'm a very from-the-neck-up kind of person, clearly. The rest, whatever.

The last thing I bought and loved was a book, *Intercultural Architecture: the Philosophy of Symbiosis*, by Kisho Kurokawa. It has a really complicated title, but it's just about how camp architecture can be, which really hits all my buttons.



The artist's signature Loewe scarf on the sofa © Antonia Adomako

The place that means a lot to me is Paris. I've lived there on and off for small pockets of time. You feel like you can walk it in a day. And you can find these very particular stores: you go to the store that sells, say, sticks, and it will have 10 million sticks, or you go to the shop selling cooking utensils and it will have all of those. All the stuff that makes up the city is there for you, embedded into it.



Her John Travolta postcard book © Antonia Adomako



Arrangements in Blue, by Amy Key – the best book Hamilton has read in the past year © Antonia Adomako

The best book I've read in the past year is [*Arrangements in Blue*](#) by my friend Amy Key. It's about the idea of being single, and how so much of society is geared towards romantic love, and what happens if you haven't found that person. It takes the framework from Joni Mitchell's album *Blue* and it's beautifully written. What's really amazing is that I've shared so many memories with her over the years, and some are in the book, and they're exactly how I remembered them. She's the one who formed that language for me.

I always feel like everyone is having more fun than me listening to podcasts. I think it's because of how I work, because I can't listen to sound at the same time. Actually, I listen to lots of time-management audiobooks. I haven't got the time for podcasts because I'm listening to those... They all say, "Just do it!" And I go: "Yeah! Let me write that down..."



Anthea Hamilton at home in London © Antonia Adomako

The best gift I've given recently is taking my partner to see Kendrick Lamar at the O2. Kendrick is one of the few people I can listen to while working. It was really fun. I thought I knew all the words, because I listen to

him on loop all the time, but I stood up and I couldn't say a thing. He's really fast!

And the best gift I've received is possibly also the funniest, and the most romantic. There was this stationery shop in Elephant and Castle, and it had these very nice pink A4 binders. I remember saying, "Oh! They're nice," and my partner went and bought them all and filled the room with them – about 40 binders. I thought it was so beautiful that I couldn't put anything in them. I still have them. It was quite nice, his understanding that I wanted to be organised in my life, that I was particular. It was a big gesture.

I have a collection of bricks. Any bricks! I love bricks. I love to go to design fairs and see all the different samples. I say: 'Please can you send me some?' I have about 60 now. You can't do anything with them. I just look at them in the studio. I've got pictures of them on my phone, and people will send me pics too, if they see a good brick wallpaper or pattern. Who needs wine, eh?



Two of her collection of bricks © Antonia Adomako

In my fridge you'll always find lots of fresh vegetables – we always eat fresh. Probably half a celeriac, because I never know what to do with it. Halloumi for my kid – she eats it all the time. Nail polish – [Rouge Noir by Chanel](#). And a bottle of hot sauce which has stayed, because we thought we could handle it, but it's so hot no one could ever get through it. I think it'll just be in every fridge I have for the rest of my life.



Nail polish and hot sauce in her fridge © Antonia Adomako

I've recently rediscovered all these old *National Geographics*, which I found when my parents were clearing out their house in Jamaica. It's really strange to look at them, because they were already old when they came to me when I was a kid. They're incredible to look at, but feel so distant from where we are now. I can see how they made me always want to look at images – at how cultures are framed.

The thing I couldn't do without is travelling. I just have to travel – I don't care where it is, it could be north London. But I need to go away at least once every couple of months, else I start climbing the walls. I mostly go to cities. I'm about to go to New York, and I love how intense it is: the noise on the streets, everyone shouting. People curse there so incredibly. Whereas whenever I've gone to the countryside, I've gone into a slight faint. I need my bricks!



Glass objects from the artist's collection © Antonia Adomako

The last item of clothing I added to my wardrobe is actually a rediscovery: an old trucker's gilet that I bought in a flea market in Berlin in 2007, and then left neglected in my cupboard for years. Now I wear it with everything. It's probably something I wouldn't buy now – these days I buy sportswear. It was a last moment of getting something more structured – of having an ambition for the look I would have when I was older.

The last music I streamed was by [Tyler, the Creator](#). I like his voice – it's so deep and gravelly. It's a little bit emotional but it's also very tongue-in-cheek. I've also been listening to old R&B and some obscure 1970s rock music – I like people going off on a huge riff for 10 minutes with a triangle, then coming back. It's an odyssey.



Hamilton wearing her signature Loewe scarf © Antonia Adomako



Hamilton's beloved lion earrings © Antonia Adomako

An object I would never part with is a pair of earrings my mum gave me when I was six. They're a couple of lions and, to me, they're like talismans. If I need to take care of myself I wear them pointing in, or if I want to keep people out I wear them pointing out. Not that anyone can see – they're very small. I think they're from H Samuel. I thought I lost one once, and I was devastated. Sometimes I wake up and just check they're still there.

The artist whose work I would collect if I could is Matisse – especially his portraits and cut-outs. It all seems to be very free – but the precision with which that freedom occurs is always... I can never quite believe it.

The beauty staple I'm never without is a new perfume, Deya, by a young scent designer called Ezra Lloyd Jackson. His perfumes are formulated for black skin. It was amazing to wear it when I was in Jamaica recently, because in the heat, everything rose up in a different way. It's nice, sweet with spices. Otherwise, I have [Bobbi Brown](#) moisturiser, and if I want a statement lip, my current one is a purple one by [Mac](#). £94 for 50ml EDP, wearedeya.com



Her beauty essentials, including Bobbi Brown moisturiser © Antonia Adomako

The work of art that changed everything for me is Ken Russell's film *The Devils*. My God! It changed my life. All the use of tiles in my work is inspired by the convent where Vanessa Redgrave is the nun. It's so key, deep down.

The best bit of advice I ever received was really simple. If you're ever a bit confused – and I often am – have a drink of water. You're probably just dehydrated.

My favourite apps are [NTS Radio](#) and [Vogue Runway](#) – all the things that keep me away from Instagram, which I'm on all the time anyway. It's terrible. The algorithms have changed, and they keep showing me stuff for middle-aged women. Stuff about my hip flexors, or bunion ballerina pumps... I don't know why. That's the worst one – I don't even have a bunion! If I did, I would accept it.



Materials in Hamilton's studio © Antonia Adomako

My wellbeing guru is [Laurence Sessou](#). She used to do massages, but it's so much more than that – it's also sound therapy, aromatherapy... Whenever I go to see her, I always feel like my body is made of moss by the time I leave. A friend recommended her to me, and she said that if she were in a position like Beyoncé's, she would take her everywhere.

An indulgence I would never forgo is seafood. I love oysters: I've had loads of bad experiences with them, but I keep coming back. I think I nearly died once, but it made me stronger. And if I'm passing through Chinatown, I always need to get a red bean sesame ball.