

CLEAN SLATE

Stripped of superfluous details and refreshed with a minimaluxe aesthetic, this listed Amsterdam canal house has a new lease of life – and serious feel-good factor

PHOTOGRAPHY KASIA GATKOWSKA/PHOTOFOYER
WORDS EMMA J PAGE

LIVING AREA

A tonal colour palette of off-white and grey-green instils a sense of serenity in this room. 'I'm absolutely not colourful in my interiors but I do like them to feel warm and cosy,' says designer Anne.

Walls in exterior paint, Keim. **Modular sofa**, L'Authentique. **Wool rug**, Cappelen Dimyr. **Vase**, Laura Pasquino. **Coffee table**, Bieke Casteleyn. **Clay artwork** by Atelier de Rijk



KITCHEN

The ground floor was reworked to incorporate interconnected kitchen, dining and living spaces. 'For the flooring, we took our cue from a remnant patch of monochrome tiling that we found during the renovation,' says Anne.

Moroccan clay **tiles**, Popham Design. **Stools**, deVOL. **Lighting**, Koen Van Guljze. Similar **kitchen**, Naked Kitchens. Custom-designed oak and steel **staircase**, Allard Architecture



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alking through the serene yet deeply tactile rooms of this listed canal house in central Amsterdam, ‘minimalism made modern’ is the phrase that springs to mind. And although interior designer Anne Claus hesitates to label her work, it’s a description that seems to chime with her. ‘Yes, there’s a truth to that,’ she agrees. ‘My interiors are definitely modern, but I think they offer a softer, warmer take on classic minimalism, via plenty of texture and sculptural detailing.’

This latest project is a favourite of the Dutch designer, whose rise to prominence reflects her interiors: organic rather than audacious. A trained lawyer-turned-sales manager for a fashion company, she started designing 20 years ago, working on the interiors of her husband’s first dining venture. Twelve restaurants and a number of homes later, Anne has developed a signature style: nuanced, neutral schemes that feel deceptively simple, but with precision detailing at their heart. A case in point are the walls of this home, which have been painstakingly hand-painted with a fine brush in outdoor paint, creating a delicate effect with a sturdy finish – perfect for a family that includes two rumbustious young boys. ‘A cohesive treatment of floors, walls and ceilings gives me a clean base to work with,’ says the designer, whose schemes riff on the rigour of Belgian interior architecture. ‘In this case, beams are painted in the same tone and the oak flooring throughout is mellow and aged for a cocooning feel.’

Tall and skinny, like most canal homes, this property features a ‘front and back house’, in reference to the lower-storeyed rear annexes that were once added to these properties for kitchen and staff, and whose creation often resulted in the formation of an internal courtyard. ‘Everything was a bit of a jumble,’ says Anne. ‘The front door opened directly into a sitting room; the kitchen was in the basement; ceiling heights varied throughout, and there were two staircases.’

Superfluous details were stripped out, redirecting the spotlight to the building’s bones. The kitchen was relocated to the ground floor and a new oak and steel staircase now ribbons down the centre of the house, successfully uniting its disparate parts. Throughout, a palette of sand, stone and grey is made 3D via unexpected texture. Aged brass door frames rub shoulders with the smooth top of a wooden stool or an informally pleated lampshade made from banana plant fibre. Monochrome accents add understated punch – in the kitchen, floor tiles are based on an original design unearthed during the renovation; while matt black tapware and wall lights bring a graphic edge to the children’s bathroom, and softly curvaceous shapes make for dramatic artwork, such as the one-off clay piece over the fireplace.

Interiors like these aren’t usually synonymous with family living – after all, soft tones and sticky fingers are rarely a match

made in heaven. But that’s where the ‘modern’ comes into this brand of minimalism. ‘Actually, these materials are super-robust,’ says Anne. ‘Walls are finished in paint intended for exterior brickwork; the oak flooring improves with wear; poured cement kitchen counters are indestructible; and soft but washable rugs add warmth. We thought about the boys wheeling through these rooms on bicycles. The family can eat, drink and play here with abandon.’ In other words, the perfect definition of a softly minimal home, made workable for modern needs.

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DINING AREA
'We reconfigured this floor so that the living, dining and kitchen spaces are semi open-plan,' says Anne. 'In these houses, everyone opens their windows and doors in the summer, so we sited the dining room at the front of the house for a sociable feel.'

Custom **table**, designed by Anne Claus; made by Behout. **Maye dining chairs**, Omacity. **Pendant light**, Gallotti&Radice. **Artwork** by San Ming, Stylemeister





UTILITY ROOM

Windows and doors edged in aged brass delineate this space on the lower ground floor. 'There is a rear entrance here and we designed a utility room with a deep sink as the family would like a dog one day,' says Anne.

Custom **cabinetry**, Van Venrooij

CINEMA ROOM

'This area is quite dark because of the lack of windows, so we panelled the walls for a warm and cosy feel,' says Anne. 'The daybed is upholstered with an outdoor fabric from Larsen that has the look of linen, but hardly stains and is super-durable - perfect for young children.'

Beams in Portland Stone, Little Greene. Similar poured **concrete floor**, The Micro Cement Company. Similar **cinema projector**, Sony

CHILDREN'S BATHROOM

'We chose monochrome, softly graphic Portuguese floor tiles for a playful touch,' says Anne. 'They also make the space look deeper.'

Mirror, Zara Home. **Wall light**, DCW Editions. **Tapware** in Aged Iron, Studio Ore. Similar **bath** and **basins**, Lusso Stone. Similar vintage **stool**, Home Barn

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THE DESIGNER

Anne Claus' eponymous studio renovated this canal-side home in central Amsterdam for a young family. The parents work in children's furniture design and they have two sons, aged two and four.

THE PROPERTY

A listed canal house dating from 1900, spanning five floors. On the ground floor is a kitchen and open-plan living-dining-study space. The first floor accommodates a main bedroom suite with a dressing area, bathroom and study. The second floor houses two bedrooms and a bathroom for the children, plus a utility room; while the attic contains a guest suite and small gym. There is a cinema room in the basement.



MAIN BATHROOM

Functional pieces are crafted from natural Portuguese stone and oak, with tapware in weathered bronze. 'We thought about views and reflections in this renovation,' says Anne, 'so that each material ties to the next from room to room.'

Weathered bronze **taps**, Studio Ore. Oversized circular **mirror**, Van Venrooij



BEDROOM

Aged brass doors provide a graphic frame to this eaves guest bedroom, separating it from a small gym area. 'I don't often use it, but the brass became a recurring motif in this project,' says Anne.

Side tables, Mogg Design. **Artwork** by San Ming, Stylemeister. **Bedding**, La Redoute

DESPITE ITS SERENE FEEL, THIS WAS AN INTENSE RENOVATION BECAUSE WE REARRANGED NEARLY EVERY ROOM, DESIGNING SCHEMES THAT LOOK AS THOUGH THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN THERE

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