



Don't expect designer minimalism when you enter Jane Atfield's house. This is a fully functioning family home (for husband Robert Shepherd and four-year-old Noah, left) and workplace rolled into one

to be as inclusive as possible for four-year-old Noah. There are toys and drawings everywhere, with Noah's drawings competing with his father's paintings for wall space. "We've tried to make it child-friendly, very relaxed, probably to the detriment of a civilized interior," says Atfield, who is expecting another child next year.

It's a busy time all round. Though Atfield is best known for reclaimed plastic furniture, she has just diversified into textiles with her husband, and is preparing to show these plus a range of new interior products and furniture at the 100% Design show which runs from October 5-8.

She fell into furniture design ten years ago after taking a year out from architectural training to study furniture, and never going back. Since finishing her MA in furniture design at the Royal College of Art, Atfield has researched unusual materials, starting with felt, then pioneering recycled plastics through her (now wound-down) company, Made of Waste.

Her latest explorations are into straw, rope and bamboo. The straw work developed from an outdoor seating project for Noah's nursery, using bales wrapped in discarded lorry tarpaulins, and developed into pieces for inside the home as well. With the rope, Atfield is experimenting with horizontal and vertical hanging systems using tension-mounted hooks as hangers. Prototypes hang on the walls of the house, along with tea towels from the couple's new textile company UP, adorned with washing-up bottles, u-bends and plugholes. "For the first time it's something I really want to sell, rather than some rarefied thing in a gallery. It's really good fun. I could design a tea towel a week," says Atfield, who plans to extend the range, currently on sale at SCP and American Retro.

Also in the pipeline is an eagerly anticipated project for Ikea — perhaps the only thing that could persuade the family to move from this home they clearly adore. "If we weren't here, we'd have to live somewhere very different," she says. "Like a wood in Sweden..." *Tea towels by UP will be on show from October 1-14 at Bar Italia, 22 Frith Street, London W1. Details from UP: 020-7278 6971.*

Creative chaos reigns at furniture designer Jane Atfield's home, says Pamela Buxton. Photographs by James Mitchell

The family seat

Take a few steps into furniture designer Jane Atfield's home and you stumble into the latest in her long line of unexpected work materials — straw. Bales of it piled up in the hall set the scene for the decidedly unpretentious place she shares with artist husband Robert Shepherd and son Noah, above a bookshop on Gray's Inn Road. Forget minimalism. Atfield's family enjoys a cheerfully chaotic

living arrangement, with their main room serving as kitchen, play room, office, guest room and dining room all in one. On the top floor of the town house are two bedrooms, while a shed in the tiny garden serves as a studio until Atfield gets around to renting a separate workspace. Atfield, who has just designed a multi-functional trolley for the Oreka range of children's furniture (see page eight) wanted the home

