

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

An old North Melbourne home thought to have been horse stables has become a sanctuary for an **artistic couple** who have breathed new life into the unusual space

text & styling natalie walton | photography chris warnes/warnes & walton

Colour my world
Heidi works mainly with oil paints on board and linen. "I gravitate to subdued colours, rarely using pure bright ones."

Portrait of the artist

The far end of the living room is where Heidi, pictured, works on projects and paperwork. She uses the wall to hang works in progress. "I really enjoy the process of coming up with visual ideas and developing images," she says. "The best part is the painting process itself, especially when the work is going well." Her 1940s desk was found in an op shop and the desk lamp is from Ikea. →



Light, guitars, tent

High-arch windows are what first attracted Heidi to the home. "They create abundant natural light... and a European feel." The guitars are Ben's, and the couple made the teepee for cat Nico because pet store furniture is "so unattractive".



Heat of the moment

Keeping the open-space living room warm in winter is difficult, says Heidi, so the pot belly fire gets plenty of use. The Artifex leather recliner was bought at a vintage furniture and collectables store in Richmond.



who lives here?

Artist Heidi Yardley (Heidiyardley.com), her husband Ben, a musician and composer, and their Russian Blue cat, Nico

Hipster vibe "I like the style and home of Hollister Hovey who has a blog that explores 'new vintage living'," Heidi says.

Art inspiration "I'm inspired by so many artists, past and present," Heidi says. "They include Edvard Munch, Balthus, Goya, Frida Kahlo and a number of women Surrealists. Contemporary artists include Luc Tuymans, Michaël Borremans, Louise Hearman, David Noonan and Victor Man."



Past perfect continuous

Heidi says her style is "relaxed and creative" with a liking for op-shop and flea market finds. "We love furniture and objects that have traces of past lives."



Trade centre

Heidi and her friends love to swap their art. So the stairwell now shows off various paintings and photos by Tony Garifalakis, Jane Burton, Rhys Lee and Heidi.

HOUSE HUNTING CAN BE as much about trusting your instincts and taking a chance as ticking off boxes. When artist Heidi Yardley and her husband Ben, a musician and composer, were looking for a new home in inner-city Melbourne in 2010, they came across an advertisement for a place with terrible photos and a description that turned out to be a little misleading. But, their interest was piqued because it stated the house came with an outdoor artist studio. After a private viewing, the couple handed in their tenancy application almost straight away. "We were lucky," says Heidi. "And I was very persistent with the agent."

What they became tenants of was a two-storey house in North Melbourne. While it technically has one bedroom, that room takes up the entire upper floor and is almost 40 square metres. Downstairs is an open-plan living/dining area with an adjoining kitchen. Next to that is a sunroom where Heidi paints. She also uses the outdoor studio, and prepares materials there, but it is also a space where she stores her works. "Walking into the courtyard and seeing this unusual two-storey greenhouse with a red door reminded me of Europe – we decided immediately that we wanted to live here," Heidi says. The couple liked many elements, but they especially fell for the home's high ceilings, old brick walls and arched windows upstairs. They suspect the 19th-century building was once a horse stables. →



Living the dream

Though there is 38 square metres to play with, the couple's bedroom has an intimate, slightly dishevelled feel.

Of the Jane Burton photograph above the bed, Heidi says: "She captures beautiful, haunting interior worlds that are distinctly feminine."

* console converted to headboard, cool!



Creative space

Natural light pours into the studio space in the annex next to the kitchen where Heidi spends a lot of her time. The artwork behind the pendant light and on the easel are both by Heidi.



Art in order

An assortment of storage boxes, alongside and beneath the desk, help keep the space orderly, and allow the focal point to be Heidi's paintings.



Spheres of influence

Heidi's *objets* include a Ferrante & Teicher *Rhapsody* album cover, a porcelain bust of a doll from a Berlin market and a skull cast plaster by artist Rhys Lee. →

While there is not a great deal of natural light downstairs, the private courtyard and large balcony off the bedroom go some way to compensate. The couple have kept the living area cosy and intimate. They decided to hang a large burgundy curtain (that they picked up from a sound-recording studio) between the living room and sunroom – it's left open during the warmer summer months and closed during cold winter days and nights to contain heat from the wood fire.

"There have been a number of weird and wonderful renovations done over the years by other people," Heidi says, "and I believe that the house has often been occupied by artists." Proof of this came when they realised there were already numerous hooks to hang art on the walls, and Heidi and Ben have their collection on a regular rotation. The couple like to rearrange furniture, too, as the need arises: workbenches get pulled out for large dinner parties – which they like to fit in between work deadlines – and set aside for Ben when he's creating handmade leather goods.

"At times it looks like more of a workshop than a living space," Heidi says. But that's how they like it. "We aim to create a warm and comfortable environment with a lot of character that expresses our artistic interests," she says. ●

A FLOORING



B FLOORING - STUDIO

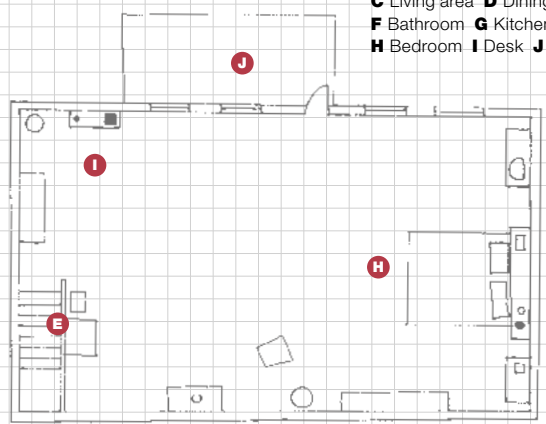


C INTERIOR PAINT



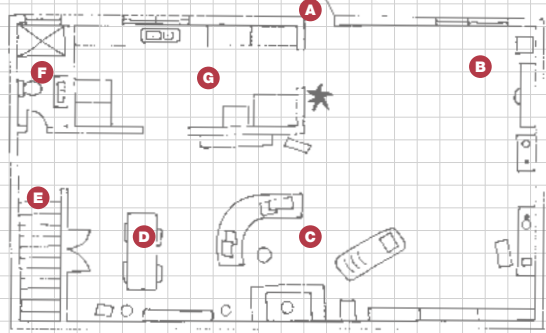
D INTERIOR PAINT

FIRST FLOOR



KEY
A Entrance **B** Studio space
C Living area **D** Dining **E** Stairs
F Bathroom **G** Kitchen
H Bedroom **I** Desk **J** Balcony

GROUND FLOOR



Cool collection

An ordered arrangement of bottles and tins makes for a quirky display.



floorplan & still-life styling christina banos | photography chris warnes/warnes & walton (lifestyle shots)

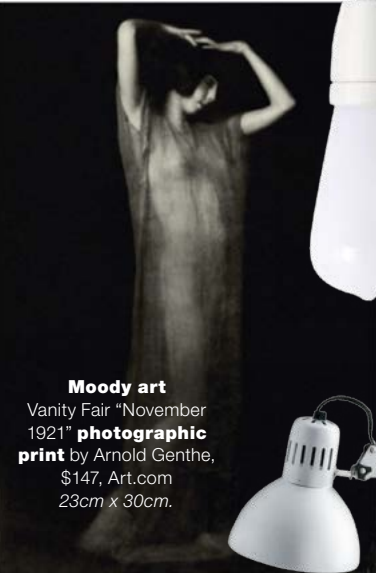
FINISHES

FLOORING Quick-Step Readyflor Multifit in **Sydney Blue Gum (A)**, from \$80 a sq m (supply only), Choices Flooring. Reproduction tiles in **Burnt Orange (B)**, \$130 a sq m, Jatana Interiors. **INTERIOR PAINT** Dulux Design Suede in **Eco Chic (C)**, \$97.95 for 4L. Murobond in **Whitewash Interior (D)**, \$116 for 4L. For stockists, see page 175.

Trot in
 A decorative wicker horse head, once the lid to a basket, now marks the entrance to the kitchen.



Exposed style
 NUD Collection **cord** in Wimbedon White with Edison LED frosted **globe**, \$112, Surrounding.



Moody art
 Vanity Fair "November 1921" **photographic print** by Arnold Genthe, \$147, Art.com 23cm x 30cm.

Step up!
 Library **ladder** in Black, \$125, Provincial Home Living. 1.94m x 42cm.

HEIDI & BEN'S MOODBOARD

Cream and white tones paired with both dark and light wood make for a soothing and creative space

Secure clamp
 Tertial **work lamp** in Silver, \$19.95, Ikea.



Natural grain
 Atelier 3-drawer **bedside table**, \$369, Domayne. Mountain ash solid timber and veneer.

For the artist
 Mabef Basic Studio **easel** M09, \$429.95, Eckersley's Art & Craft. Extended height 2.35m.

Back to school
 Industrial School **chair** in Natural, \$625 for set of 4, Vavoom Emporium.



Pet zone
 Indoor **pet teepee**, \$85, Joyjoie.com.au Also available in kids' sizes.

Goin' green
 Trilogy Baby **vase** in Green, \$7.95, Amalfi.

Organic lines
 Lisbon **table lamp** in Aqua, \$299, OZ Design Furniture.