you + your space + your stuff = the heartbeat of your home

with Julia Atkinson-Dunn www.studiohome.co.nz

simply jot down your answers on a piece of paper and be one step closer to your #homegoals



Is your home temporary/rented/owned and over what timeframe do you imagine you will call it your own?

This will help you be realistic about the weight you place on purchases dictated by the home you are currently in. Be smart about investing money into space specific items if you are planning on moving on in the near future!

For example - a 2 seater sofa would fit perfectly into the bay window space in your rented villa, but you are moving next year and overall, 2 seaters can be an awkward piece of furniture that takes up more space that an armchair but is often only comfortable for 1 person to sit in!

Action: simply write down your projected time frame for living in the home you currently call your own



Result: this will help you rank what is most important to you when it comes to spending on your home and contents.

For example -

Perhaps you do buy a 2 seater but will look for a bargain on trade me that you could sell again later without losing any money. Instead you could invest in a gorgeous blanket or sheepskin to cover it which you can take and reuse in many different scenarios.



Who lives in your home?

A home is for living in, not just looking at, so make your decorating and furnishing choices reflect the realistic needs of your everyday life in relation to the space you live in.

Action: list all those you share your home with and what specific needs they might have?

For example -

Is it just you? A couple? Young family/growing family/kids about to fly the coup? Pets with hair/claws/a love of lying all over your stuff (wait, that's all pets.) Flatmates?

Then consider what they need:

Furniture that, within reason, can take punishment from orange juice and sticky fingers? Ample storage in spare room for regular visitors.

Ability to hide a home office in the living room.

Seating for how many to watch tv?

Space to store out-grown clothing and toys in the mean time?

Soft edges for toddlers.

Display for growing collection of glass genie bottles Inside space where clothes racks can be put up to dry in sun over winter?

People you live with	List of needs		

Result: to be responsible with your money and protect against decorating regret, its important that you are clear and realistic about how your house and its contents need to work for you.

This is the reality check for lofty expensive ideas or answering the demands of a current trend.



Identify your furniture & —

strong decorative pieces that aren't going anywhere.

Over time you have made decisions on what material items to keep in your home and which ones to lose along the way. Yes, these decisions are often made due to space and budget constraints but nonetheless, its time to take note of your pieces that you really like and then breakdown "why". The "why's" will give insight into your own buried aesthetic and empower you to filter through future purchases based on how they will work with or compliment your existing items.



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This will help you with committing to bigger ticket items in the knowledge that you know exactly what important possessions they will need to work in with.

Not match. Complement

Action 1: list these items and make notes of why you love them including emotional attachment, style, shape and material.

Force specifics out of yourself!

For example -

My standing/office desk - love because:

It was made by a local nz company and is now a discontinued model. The light colour and classic lines of the trestle design. Its soft corners and height which makes it a little unexpected.

My grey fabric sofa from nood - love because:

It is simple in design but feels modern. I like the curves of the arms and lightness of the way it sits on the floor. Also like its low back.

My art collection - love because:

It makes me so happy to look at each piece and be reminded about who it is by, where I bought or was given it, the stage in my life i was at plus of course its subject matter and messages. True treasures.

My dining room table from nood - love because:

It was our first purchase together as a couple! I love its light wooden finish with natural grain and its soft curved corners. I love that it extends from a 6-10 seater.

My coffee table - love because:

It was purchased by my husband before we met it made me feel like we were "similar"!! A good sign! Its curvy, glass and wood and a nod to the modernist era the design was born from. It's also the perfect height to pull up my stool from for eating snacks, great as a sofa foot rest and due to its glass, sits quite lightly in our tight living space.

My paris au mois d'aout light shade - love because: It was a wedding gift from a dear friend, straight out of her own house! I love its crazy huge size and bold colour. Despite both those features its fine fabric has it sitting softly in the room as light can push through. I like that it is wonky and handmade with soft lines. I love that it is my favourite colour blue despite its shade

being quite navy and a little out of whack with the rest of my blue possessions. I like that about it.

Our collection of amber glass vessels- love because:

They are my husbands and it was such a surprise that this bricklayer would own and grow a collection of glassware! I love the warmth of the amber and that while they push me beyond my own choices, they create a connection between my husband and our home. I love the soft curves and handmade aspect.

Items i love	And why
Action 2: next list reo notice:	ccurring themes that you
_	ers above curved corners d sentimental items with a and texture.

Result: pay attention to re-occurring themes, these all matter and mean something to you. These items are the substance of your home right here, right now. By examining them you now have a reference to check against while looking to compliment or juxtapose with future items



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Colour your own palette. -

These treasures you list above also give you cues for colour and texture when introducing other items, textiles or even wall colour into your home. Pulling inspiration from the pieces that you love will help you create a complementary palette to flow through your home.

Your heart based purchases hold the keys to the colours that make you happy instead of those dictated to you by fast moving, fashion based advertising.

Tip: let's not forget your own wardrobe! No doubt you have a clearer idea of the colours and pattern you are drawn to when shopping for yourself, so be sure to list your favourites.

Action: view your last list and make a new one, focusing this time on colour and materials.

I would urge you to get out the paints/coloured pencils/ipad "paint" app and start picking out these tones and layering them side by side. If describing colours and texture is all you need to lock that in your memory going forward, then by all means use your own language that is relevant to you!

For example If wood – what tone? If painted blue – is it cool, bright, dark, smokey etc. Stripes often turn up? Reoccurring colourways in art you have purchased?

art you have purchased?

Result: you now have somewhere to start – this palette already exists within your loved items.

You have identified a base of which you can introduce new colours with confidence.

You don't need to "match" future paint or furniture to this, instead use it as a backstop to refer to when unsure if what you are planning to buy/paint/add will work with what you have.

Unless you have the luxury of starting from scratch with brand new furnishings, recognising what you do have is a great way to introduce newness that provides longevity and flexibility.



The way it makes you feel_

In this current climate focused on "styling" our spaces, have you stopped to think about how you want your spaces to feel as opposed to just look? Your home is the one place in the world that you are in command of every detail, element, introduced colour and texture. This should be your bolthole, retreat, family fortress and three-dimensional memory keeper.

Calm, serene spaces don't necessarily equal minimal or monotone. Robust, casual family rooms don't have to have tv's over the fireplace....

Instead of looking for a design recipe or style moniker, challenge yourself to examine your own expectations around your space and the feelings you want it to provoke.

Action 1: list 4 words that describe how you want your home to feel.

Action 2: beside each word, list ways you think could achieve this.

Describe the type of furniture, colours, textures, scenarios, tones and anything else that springs to mind when considering these words in isolation.

Do not visualise interiors you have seen before, instead allow yourself to pair colours and objects, arrange spaces and channel furniture in ways that make you feel these things.

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Having trouble getting started?

Try matching these feelings to your ideas on home to step you off in the right direction: uncluttered, soft, calm, serene, bold, invigorating, bright, fun, cosy, vibrant, private, intimate, elegant, formal, masculine, feminine, romantic, considered etc.

You are specifically listing feelings not styles. Eclectic, boho, scandi, country don't work here.

For	example	-
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I want my home to feel:

- Casual
- Personal
- Homely
- Creative
- Casual
- Mixed, non-matching furniture and fabrics
- Simple, hardy textiles like denim, wool, corduroy
- Books and magazines easily accessible
- Open display and storage
- Hard surfaces that handle use like solid wood, glass, stone, brick
- Rice paper shades

Personal

- Photos on the wall
- Display treasures and collections
- Retaining and re using hand me down items
- Creating areas for specific tasks I like office/studio/seed raising
- Privacy from neighbours

Homely

- Maximum layered texture
- Old mixed with new
- Soft sofas and chairs
- Blues
- Intimate spaces for reading, movie watching
- Easy indoor/outdoor flow
- Flowers from the garden
- Flowers by the bed
- Pot plants
- Natural texture like wood, cane, wool
- Nostalgic furniture and architectural features like tongue and groove, butlers sinks and free standing baths.
- Fire
- Sunny spots with room to sit or lie

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- Space to display treasures
- Colour on walls and in furnishings
- Rotating art and rearranging furniture on a whim! Transitional spaces.
- Spaces to easily make and create
- Experimenting with display and decorating not taking it too seriously

How you want your home to feel?
How can you achieve this?

Result: you just topped off your life facts with your home wants. You have created your own terms of your own home and can move forward growing it in confidence!

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Summarise and reflect - the creation of your brief.

These 5 questions have been designed to take you from "no idea where to start or what I like or need?!" To "this is my life and this is what I want in my home".

You are honing in on your unique aesthetic values. What's important to your homelife and what that might look like.

In reflection.

Question 1. = This is your reality check and helps you formulate a realistic plan.

Question 2. = This is recognising how and who your home needs to function for based on people and space.

Question 3. = This helps unearth your personal, unique-to-you style based on what you are already drawn to.

Question 4. = This is your palette of colour and materials you are subconsciously attracted to and gives you a visual springboard to continue adding to your home in a way that complements what you already own. Not match! Complement.

Question 5. = This is the end goal. This is so you know where you are heading instead of being distracted by all the shiny pretty things on the way.

Action: on a single A4 piece of paper or in the space below, summarise the results of each section in words or a format that you understand and can visualise. Use bullet points if need be and colour pencils or words to describe your existing palette.

For example -

- 1. This is our home for the foreseeable future.
- 2. Sally, Tom, Jessica (8) and T-bone the cat Sofa/seating to comfortable fit 6 - needs to be soft and cosy!

Office area that sally can pull out/easily hide in living space

Some sort of storage/cabinetry that can hide record collection and player but is easily accessible. Space to allow play and easy movement.

Large coffee table that can double down for drawing and play. Robust.

Extra bed option in Jessica's room.

3. Non negotiable need to consider space and purchases that complement our mid century arm chairs and allow storage for record collection and player. We like softness over hard, natural materials and patina mixed with new.
4. Inky blues, stripes, punchy rusts, soft greens and natural warm wood and leather.
5. Additions to our home must drive it toward feeling casual, spacious and personal.



1			
2-			
3.			
4			
5.			
6.			