

covet garden

inspiration grows here



heather,
josh,
griffin &
sebastian
a sanctuary in the city



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contributors



DONNA GRIFFITH
photographer

We're so happy to have Donna shooting for *Covet Garden*. We're longtime fans of her work and the way she can capture the energy of a space or the inner life of an object. You may have seen her work in magazines such as *House and Home*, *Chatelaine* and *Better Homes and Gardens*.

donnagriffith.com



NAOMI FINLAY
photographer

Australian-born, Toronto-based Naomi Finlay has been photographing great places and objects around the world for the past nine years. Her work has appeared in such publications as *Toronto Life* and *Outpost*. She recently won a National Magazine Award for her work in *Design Lines*.

naomifinlay.com

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welcome

When Heather and Josh moved into their home 10 years ago, they were looking for a sanctuary within a frenetic urban area. They also have an appreciation for materials that record the passage of time, such as wood, paper and fabric.

We found everything about the family and their space fascinating. We hope you do, too.

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perfectly imperfect

Heather and Josh and their two lively boys embrace natural order in their bright and beautiful home photography by Donna Griffith





opposite: There's not a space in the house that the kids don't play in, says Heather. "Look at this orchid. I'll come home and there will be a knight in there."



When Heather and Josh first started looking for a house together, they knew they wanted a place that would feel homey. "The world is so busy," says Heather. "I wanted to make the home a sanctuary." Surprisingly, they found an idyll, in the then not-yet-gentrified Trinity Bellwoods area.

Moving into the house was not the beginning of Heather and Josh's story. "All of our family is here in Toronto," says Heather. "[That] was a huge draw for us to stay here." Their personal history is

bound to Toronto as well: "We met through friends and family who decided that we were meant for each other. We both love old things, our cats, nesting (or rather, Josh is very tolerant of my moving things around) and, of course, our two boys, Sebastian, eight, and Griffin, six."

What's amazing about their place is how they reinvent the things they have as their story continues. Just as the neighbourhood has quickly changed and single-family dwellings outnumbered the rooming houses, every day, month and year seems to bring a shift in the house's dynamic.

the space



"I love living in
the boys' world,"
says Heather.
"I love seeing
them curled
up reading."







‘Why not have a white chair in the kitchen? You have to just not care. That slipcover has been on that chair for 20 years’

Fortunately, both Heather and Josh are flexible folk. It helps that Josh works in film and TV, where every scene and set-up brings new problems that need to be solved. And Heather runs her home furnishing business, *pi ‘lo*, in a studio behind their Victorian home. The rooms adapt to suit the family’s needs.

For example, the kitchen counter is double wide. “I love the big counter,” says Heather. On the day of our shoot, she served a delicious lunch for six—plus her highly addictive oat cookies—around the spacious surface. Not only was the meal

fantastic, but the unusual seating arrangement also led to a fun and interesting conversation.

In her work and in her home, Heather tries to use as many natural fabrics and finishes as possible. Her aim is to create objects responsibly in the hope that they’ll be passed down from generation to generation.

These natural touches not only tie the rooms together visually but the wicker baskets and ceramic jars also help keep the rooms organized. “I’m a big believer in baskets,” says Heather.



As a textile artist, Heather is fascinated by the historic processes of working with fabric. Inspirational objects, such as this antique printed needlepoint pattern, appear all over the house.



There is a subtle but discernible divide between the upstairs and the downstairs styles of the house. Both storeys are warm and welcoming, but if the first floor is functional, the upstairs is where dreaming takes place.

When Heather and Josh first toured the house, something about the flow of the rooms and well-loved/worn details reminded them of an old farmhouse. By the time they spied the quirky upstairs hallway, they knew they had found their home.

Once in residence, they hung curtains in the door-

ways and strung fairy lights in the bedrooms to illuminate the space for reading in bed. Family photos occupy the hallway walls. Every corner has the potential to transport the imagination to the past or the future or to faraway lands.

Which is not to say that the habitat got this way by magic. The house had to be rewired and walls had to be stripped of generations of wallpaper and patch jobs. But cosmetically only a few simple steps, such as painting floors and walls, were needed to uncover the potential of the original moulded woodwork and to brighten the space.

Heather loves to collect things that engage and surprise as many senses as possible, such as vintage fabrics, sandalwood beads and French ivory containers.







‘I love that I can make whatever I want and that other people usually want the same things, I feel very lucky’

Heather and Josh’s bedroom is perhaps the best example of their laid-back aesthetic coming together. “It’s our sanctuary within the sanctuary,” says Heather. “We just share it with everybody!”

“Josh and I came with a lot of furniture,” she says. “We inherited a lot.” Finding new life for beloved objects has always been fun for the family. The mantelpiece pictured on the next page was a sidewalk find that Josh brought home one day. They were delighted to discover that it perfectly framed a

radiator. They sanded it down and painted it white to blend in with the rest of the room. To complete the enchanting effect, they also strung fairy lights around the mantel.

Another tip for putting together a serene bedroom is to know when to stop acquiring things. They used to haunt auctions and flea markets but now find themselves in the process of paring down. “We used to have a TV in the bedroom,” says Heather. “It was there for kids to watch movies during parties but was otherwise an eyesore.”



A handmade animated Mother's Day card sits atop a mantelpiece that Josh found on the sidewalk.







Left and far left:
An upstairs laundry room also provides extra storage.

Above: Feather decorations in the hallway were put up for Christmas, but they often stay up for months afterward because Heather enjoys seeing them float by her bedroom.

"I'm not the one who put eight pillows on their beds," says Heather of the boys' beds. "They like things to be as squishy as possible."



the space





‘The boys like having their toys corralled. They put things away so they know where to find them. They take pride in that’

brothers Sebastian and Griffin share a cozy bedroom. Currently the room is decorated with globes and maps (“we’re kind of obsessed with geography right now,” says Heather), but books and postcards also enliven the space.

“We had a big box of postcards, and every night we would let the boys pick a different one,” says Heather. “We’d talk about it and put it up on the wall. We call it the dream wall.” They’ve run out of postcards, but they haven’t run out of stories

to tell. Both kids love to draw, and their artwork is evident throughout the house. “I like it when they’re creative,” she adds. “They hang their own art now.”

While their imagination knows no boundaries, their physical space will soon require a shift. “We’re going to have to change some things like the children’s chairs in the kitchen because the kids have outgrown them,” says Heather. “And they need their own desks when they work on projects so that they can leave things out.”





Josh mostly works outside of the house on film sets. Heather has made a coach-house-turned-sausage-factory into her studio. “I used to work at a studio at Queen and John, but I did the math, and making a studio here worked out to cost the same.”

“I’ve always loved making things,” says Heather, who started her business while she was still a student at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. “Josh jokes that I’ve never had a real job.”

“It’s nice to work from home, but it’s still work,

and you have to separate the two,” she adds. To that end, the studio space is mostly functional and the furnishings are pretty plain—basic shelving to organize fabrics and findings and an old folding table to serve as a workstation.

Again, it’s details like a skylight, vases filled with pussywillow branches or a couple of antique tins that suggest a picnic in a sylvan glade waits just outside the door. The backyard that bridges the studio and backyard is closer to a French farmhouse patio than a big rural Ontario meadow, but it’s still an enchanting space.



Heather sitting in this wicker settee reminds us of Lady Mary Crawley. "The four of us watch *Downton Abbey* and could easily pretend we live there," says Heather.

the space



The lush back
yard on the way
to the studio.

who?

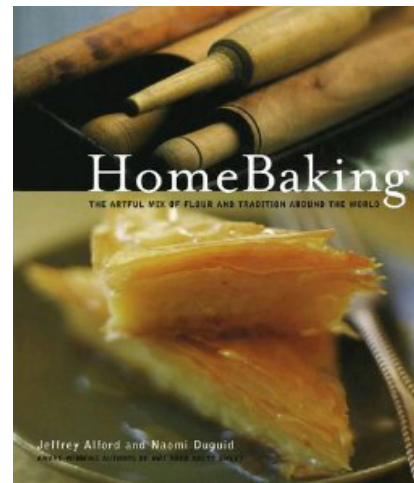
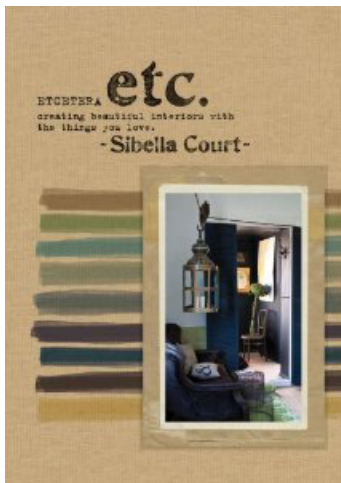
Josh Gray was born in Montreal, grew up in Ottawa, went to University in Montreal and then attended film school in Prague, where he lived for five years. He settled in Toronto, where he works in the film and television industry as a first Assistant Director.

Heather Shaw grew up in Toronto. She then studied at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax (where she specialized in textiles and ceramics). The seeds of her business, p i ' l o, took root in college, when she started selling things that she was making ("before I ever asked the question of what I would do for a living").

links

- p i ' l o website
- Heather's blog

what are you reading?



What is your greatest strength? HEATHI



If you could travel in time, what era would you visit?

JOSH: The 1920's.

HEATHER: The turn of the last century.

What's your favourite place on earth?

HEATHER: Markets in foreign countries.

What do you carry with you everywhere?

JOSH: My swagger.

HEATHER: Burt's Bees lip balm.

What object have you kept since childhood?

JOSH: A homemade wooden rifle and bow.

HEATHER: My pine bed (and teddy bear).

What's the best thing you've ever given someone?

JOSH: A homemade wooden rifle and bow.

HEATHER: A quilt for a friend's dying mother.



playing in my studio

1. *Quelqu'un m'a dit* by Carla Bruni
2. *Ten New Songs* by Leonard Cohen
3. *Rattle the Windows* by Melaena Cadiz
4. *Camino* by Oliver Schroer
5. 70s disco (weekly dance parties)

ER: Appearing calm JOSH: My family

something old...

Heather shares some
of her favourite vintage
pieces as well as ways
to wear them in a
most modern way

photography by Naomi Finlay



A close-up, profile photograph of a woman with dark hair pulled back. She is wearing a large, voluminous headpiece made of many layers of white, translucent fabric petals, resembling a large flower or a cloud. She is looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile. The background is a plain, light grey.

the style

something
new

A full-body photograph of a woman standing against a plain white background. She is wearing a long, white, quilted coat with a subtle floral or geometric pattern. Underneath, she wears a white dress. She is holding a large, open, light-colored bamboo umbrella over her head with her right hand. Her left hand is at her side, wearing a beaded bracelet and a ring. She is looking down and smiling slightly. She is wearing black flip-flops.

'I wear my
Converse with
absolutely
everything.
I even wear
them to
weddings!'

A vintage house-
coat serves
as a coat when
the weather
gets cooler.

the style



Heather bought this Victorian shoulder form because she loved its beautiful construction.



left: Old silk flowers make an elegant embellishment.

how to love old linens

- The most important thing is to actually use them. A little tear just adds character and a repaired tear is even better.
- Wash in warm water with a mild detergent by hand and always hang to dry.
- To refresh vintage linens that have been stored a long time, soak them in water for as long as a week, moving them around in the water every once in a while. If stains persist, treat them by isolating the area in an embroidery hoop and scrubbing gently with soap or use a product like OxiClean.



'I love
aprons
and wear
them all
the time'





NECK LACE

Already know how to crochet? Heather shows us how to make a delicate crocheted neckpiece photography by Naomi Finlay

how to:

1. Starting with a chain stitch, crochet until you have 3 inches in length. This is where you will crochet your first ball.

2. Using a single crochet stitch, make a ring and keep going around the circle, increasing the size of the rings for the first half of the ball and decreasing the number of stitches on the other half.

row 1 6 single crochet stitches into a ring

rows 2–6 increase 2 sc* in one stitch to increase size of ring for each row

row 7 repeat same size ring as row 6

rows 8–11 decrease by 1 sc over 2 stitches as you complete the ball

Tip: Keeping track of the rows as you crochet around helps but we like the organic feel you get by winging it.

Chain stitch for another 3 inches then add your next ball and repeat until you have your desired length.

Close the chain stitch by sewing the yarn into itself for a seamless closure.

* sc = single crochet

thread heads



Here's a quick list of some of our favourite online crochet resources:

- Purl Soho has a fantastic online yarn shop. The Purl Bee (their blog) has lots of great tutorials for crochet newbies.
- In business since 1899, Kitchener, Ontario-based Herrschners has a sweet selection of crochet threads in an amazing selection of colours. Check their site for weekly sales!



A photograph of a dining table with a light-colored wood grain. Several white ceramic bowls are filled with a salad consisting of green leafy vegetables, small yellow and orange cherry tomatoes, and dark, possibly roasted, ingredients. To the left, there are three tall, clear glasses and a stack of white paper napkins with silverware (forks) resting on them. The text 'natural ingredients' is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

natural ingredients

At the *Covet Garden* shoot, Heather served up this terrific salad. So we begged her for the recipe photograph by Donna Griffith

orzo salad

- 1 cup uncooked gluten-free pasta
or orzo
- 1 cup chopped asparagus
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup chopped black olives
- 1 tbsp pine nuts

- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp grainy Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 2 tbsp fresh dill
- 1 tsp chopped capers
- 1 clove garlic
- salt and pepper

1. Cook pasta until it is al dente. Drain, cool and add salad ingredients.
2. Combine dressing ingredients and add to salad. Toss well and serve.

green salad vinaigrette

- ⅔ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp grainy Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Combine all in ingredients in a jar. Shake well and pour over a selection of freshly washed mixed greens.

local heroes

Heather believes in supporting local farmers' markets. The Toronto Farmers' Market Network works to share farmer referrals and best practices, and to raise the profile of the markets. Each market operates independently, and therefore has its own charms. Here are some of the highlights:

- **Trinity-Bellwoods Market**

Heather's local. Along with fresh, seasonal produce, pre-made foods from Ali's Fish Shak and Saucier Foods are available.

- **Leslieville Farmers' Market**

Locals love meats from Phoenix/Arnold Grass Fed Beef and sausages from Greengate Farms.

- **Evergreen Brickworks Farmers' Market**

Beloved by foodies from all over town, this market runs year-round and has the most comprehensive collection of vendors of local produce, meat, dairy and even fresh-cut flowers.

the light stuff

Heather shares a delicious drink recipe for cooling down on a hot summer's day photography by Naomi Finlay

white wine sangria

1 bottle Riesling or Pinot Grigio

3 shots or more vodka

sugar – a few tablespoons or to taste

12 sliced kumquats

1 lemon (sliced)

Mix ingredients together in a large pitcher. Let the mix chill in the refrigerator for several hours (or add ice if you want to serve right away). Add half a 1L bottle of soda water (or ginger ale for a sweeter taste) just before serving. Garnish each glass with a rosemary sprig.



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sweet bliss
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Alanna Cavanagh
PRINTS



dream clean

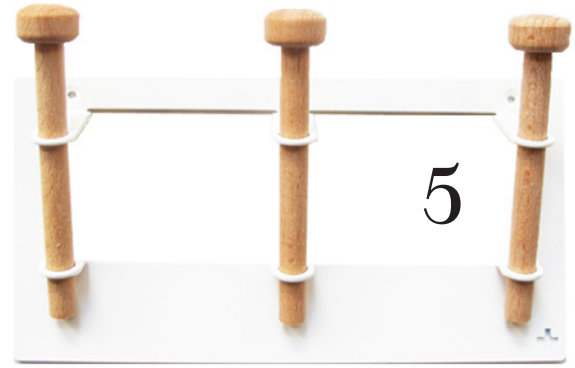
Heather's love of new and vintage fabrics brings to mind the romantic ideal of a well-stocked French country laundry



1. Steele Canvas No. 122 Small Truck bin (one-bushel size) in white, \$84 2. L'Othantique Laven, \$20 5. Pedersen+Lennard hooks (long), \$63 6. Mini Clothespins (set of 10), \$6 7. Garden Trading Soap Bar, \$2 10. Vintage Embroidered Clothes Pins bag, \$18 11. Vintage National Washboard based laundry powder, \$13 14. Riess Family Palest Blue Measuring Jug, \$42 15. Restoration Hardware wicker basket, \$45



4



5



6



12



10



7



11



8



9

der Linen Water, \$22 **3**. Sheila Maid Clothes Airer, £58 **4**. Ancient Industries Scrubbing Brush, g Washing Powder Box in Clay, £18 **8**. Ironing Board in Beech, £95 **9**. The Soap Works Laundry Co. washboard, \$30 **12**. Ikea Burken Jar with lid, \$3 **13**. Farmhouse Wares eco-friendly plant-ardware Seagrass Basket (medium), \$149

in the next issue...

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For our second anniversary issue, we visit housemates Stephanie and John who share an eclectic aesthetic and a lot of good times



Can't wait until next month for the new issue of *Covet Garden*? Check out our blog for more ideas and inspiration!