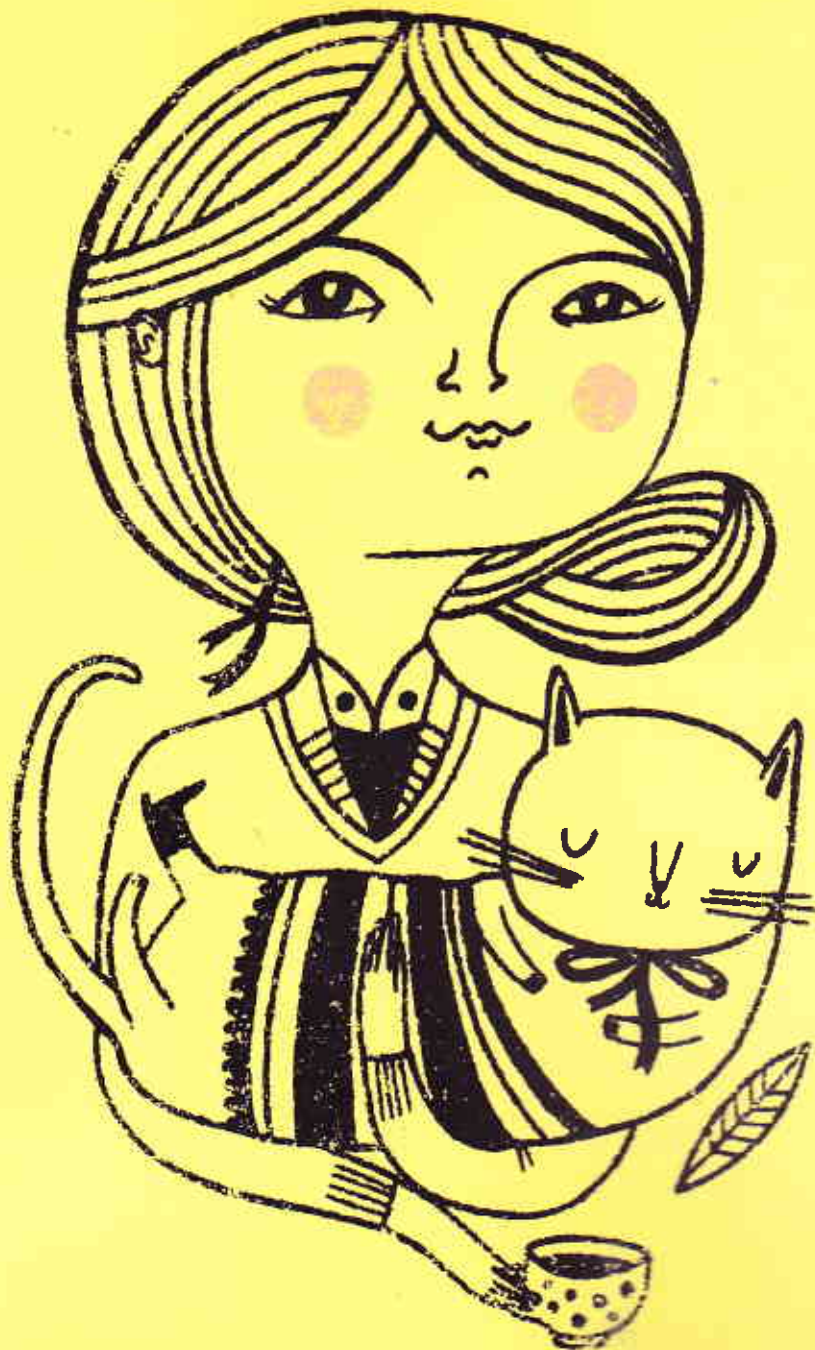


# frankie

DESIGN / ART / PHOTOGRAPHY / FASHION / TRAVEL / MUSIC / CRAFT / HOME / LIFE



frankie  
press

ISSUE 56  
NOV/DEC 2013  
AUS: \$9.95 inc GST  
NZ: \$11.99 inc GST  
UK: £7.50

##PA24002/Q1817  
ISSN 14497394



# HOME BODIES

emma de clario and kids live in a former knife factory  
chock full of vintage treasure.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ORITA SUKTI SORLING & WORDS: ABOUT HOUSE STYLING ASSISTANT: CAROLYN WOOD





←

**What do you do?** I'm an actor and artist. I have worked as an actor from the age of seven and I've painted for as long as I can remember – every home I've lived in has had a little studio. It never occurred to me that I would paint for anyone other than myself or friends and family, but after my kids were born I had a huge burst of energy and creativity and was offered an exhibition. I sold 200 pieces, the entire collection. It was a total shock.

**Whereabouts do you live?** We live in an old factory in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Originally built 130 years ago, it was a shoe factory until it burnt down. After it was rebuilt in the '50s it became a pocket knife factory, warehousing and distributing Swiss Army Knives. I've lived here with my children, Celeste and Lucca, for 11 years.

**How did you stumble across this space?** I was moving here from Bondi with two small children and had two days to find a new home. I saw a tiny ad in the paper and when we came to have a look it was vile. Disgusting. It was all beige and fake cork lining. But I took one look at the industrial-style windows and the ceiling, which reminds me of an upside down wooden boat, and I fell in love. I knew I could make it lovely.

**Have you done much work to it?** It's a rental, so there wasn't a lot I could do structurally. I ripped up the horrible old linoleum carpet and had a huge painting party. I invited loads of friends over and made a huge bowl of risotto, plied them all with beer, played great music and gave them bucketloads of white paint. I took all their

kids to the local park and when we came home the whole place was white. Over time we've built shelves, planted a veggie garden and put down some lovely graphic black and white chequered linoleum.

**What's the first thing you see when you walk in the door?** It's a wall installation of vintage hooks and hanging from them are the things I believe we need in our lives to live well and happily. So there's a rosary (faith), a skipping rope (energy and enthusiasm), a brush (you have to brush your hair before you leave the house!), a trumpet (to call for help if you're in trouble), a spirit level (for equilibrium), a watch (because time is precious), a broom (sometimes you need to sweep things up), a magnet (to draw things to us and sometimes to push things away) and a pair of binoculars (to see things clearly).

**Where is your favourite place in the house?** The kitchen table. Everything happens there. It's the heart of the house; it's where we talk, share good news and bad, get through the hard times and celebrate the good times together, make decisions and eat. There's always food, food, food.

**What is important to you in a living space?** I don't want to sound flaky, but if the aesthetics of where I live aren't beautiful, something inside me withers and dies. I believe everywhere I have lived has been beautiful, and you don't need money to make it so. For me it's about white walls, flowers, music, trinkets – if I didn't have those I would wilt!

→



**What goes on in the house (aside from sleeping)?** It mostly revolves around eating and laughing with friends and family – we have a big roast every single Sunday. The living area also becomes a little theatre when I'm preparing for auditions. We go through scripts together and the kids help me with my lines.

**You are an artist – how do the kids cope when you are getting ready for an exhibition?** If I'm doing an exhibition and I'm working long, long hours, I relocate my city studio to the house and bring home everything I need to work. We live and eat around all the paintings (I've learned to put the lid on my turpentine!) The kids will roll their eyes and get irritated by the disorder, but I also know they enjoy it and think it's funny. I even put them to work. My partner, Guy Mathews, is a furniture restorer, so he builds my frames, while the kids have been trained to varnish and sand. They are my little slaves. It probably helps I pay them \$5 an hour!

**You have lots of vintage treasures – what kind of stuff catches your eye?** If I see something and my heart leaps, I just have to have it. I've literally had to train myself (and it wasn't easy) to understand that while there are lots of beautiful things in the world, I don't have to have all of them. I don't go looking for things, I don't search – if I did, I would be a hoarder and that would be a problem – but things seem to find me. I've found things in the most extraordinary places, but if something isn't beautiful and/or useful it is not allowed past the front door.

**Do you change things around a lot and re-style or is it 'done' now?** I change things all the time. I'm always re-arranging the rooms

and everything in them. It's a moveable feast, and there are so many elements to play with that it's quite easy to completely change the feel of any space in the house.

**What of your personality can we see in your home?** Nostalgia, certainly; hopefully my resourcefulness and my over-indulgence. There's nothing I like more than filling the house with love and laughter – it's imperative that I have people at my kitchen table eating food I've prepared. And finally my love of flowers – I would spend my last \$5 on fresh flowers, even if it was all I had left in the world.

**Some people might be overwhelmed having so much stuff around the place – what's it like to live with day to day?** Sometimes it feels like an anchor! Having stuff is a responsibility. But most of the time it feels like a haven; when we are here we feel safe, happy and surrounded by reminders of the good things in life. I have to keep it revolving, though. I'm always moving things out, giving things away, taking stuff to the op shop, making room for new things to take their place.

**Do you consider yourself a homebody?** Not exactly. I honestly believe I could leave it and not come back. Sometimes when I've been on holiday, I forget what my home looks like and feel I could walk away from all of my possessions. If the house was burning down what I'd save often changes – sometimes it's a bundle of precious letters that I have wrapped in ribbon, or childhood diaries and drawings or old photos. But right now, I'd run back for nothing other than Celeste and Lucca. ❁