

photographs / CATE ST HILL
introduction / ANNABELLE KERSLAKE

INTERNATIONAL / UK

AT HOME WITH / CATE ST HILL

Cate St Hill – design and interiors writer, blogger, stylist and consultant based in south London, UK – has a simple design ethos that uplifts the everyday. Through all aspects of the home, *Cate* strives to seek calm and simplicity in the daily routine, creating the clarity to take a moment out of a busy schedule to slow down and appreciate small blessings. Taking time to savour daily rituals, appreciating a considered piece of design or the simple pleasure of a freshly-made bed are prioritised in the everyday, enjoying the things that make a house a home.





PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR HOME AND YOURSELVES...

I'm a freelance writer, blogger and stylist working from home, usually from the dining table or my cosy home office upstairs, which I recently redecorated. My day will either revolve around creating posts for my blog, styling products for brands, writing articles for design magazines or helping clients with their own redecoration projects, sourcing furniture and developing moodboards. *Francis* – my miniature Dachshund – is always by my side, as soon as I went freelance I got a dog!

I'm a real home body and love relaxing at home, curating and creating a cosy space, pottering, cooking, reading magazines, books etc. I met my boyfriend, *Oliver*, six years ago at a party. We love culture, going to art exhibitions, collecting design books, watching French art house films, taking mini breaks in Europe.

I do most of the decoration and DIY in the home myself – we're slowly, room by room, making it our own. I love coming up with a concept and seeing a transformation take shape. I'm the one who does the painting, drilling, putting up shelves etc! When we first bought this house, it was painted in bright, garish colours and all the period details had been all but wiped away. I wanted to strip everything away to take it back to its former glory. The house is south-facing so I wanted to embrace the light and make a calm, airy, welcoming home with light grey walls and white floors. We knocked the wall down between the kitchen and living room to create an open-plan flexible space, so one of us can be in the kitchen cooking or working at the dining table and the other relaxing on the sofa and there's always a connection. We can have moments together and time apart without being in completely separate rooms.

WHERE IS YOUR HOME LOCATED?

South London, UK.

HOW DID YOU COME TO LIVE IN YOUR HOME?

It's the first home I've bought with my French boyfriend, *Oliver*. We moved from a 1930s two-bedroom flat in central King's Cross to a two-bedroom Victorian terraced house with a garden a bit further out of the city near Brixton. We wanted to have more space and a little garden. This house was in a perfect location down the road from a lovely big park. My mum always told me buy the worst house on the best street, rather than the best house on the worst street. Neglected and looking rather tired, it had been used as a rental for several years and was in need of some TLC. It was a doer-upper but we could see the potential in the generous rooms, relatively tall ceilings and period details.

PREVIOUS SPREAD

01. *IKEA's customisable PAX wardrobes keep the master bedroom tidy and clutter-free.*

OPPOSITE PAGE

01. *Postcards – picked up from art exhibitions and flea markets – decorate the walls.*

HOW DOES YOUR HOME'S DESIGN AND FUNCTIONALITY ENHANCE YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE?

In our previous flat we had a dark, small galley kitchen set away from the living room, so if one of us was preparing dinner, there was nowhere for the other person to sit and relax unless in another room. The chef always felt like they were cut off from everyone else. It didn't really work for entertaining friends either, we had a small round dining table which only sat four at a push. Now, we have a free-flowing, open-plan space, a bigger dining table and a large, L-shaped sofa. It's perfect for having friends round for dinner or drinks and there's always a seat for everyone.

A lot of my home is grey, the most noticeable part is the kitchen, it has a bit more warmth than white while still being light and airy. I like that there are so many different tones in the spectrum of greys, you can have light beiges and deep dark greys, they capture different feelings and connect back to nature and the city outside. The light grey walls, white floors and big windows make the space feel light and uplifting, as soon as you walk into the living space, it feels instantly calming. I like using neutral wall colours and understated decor as a backdrop for everyday life and all the things that make a house a home. I'm not one for bright, clashing colours, I find soft, neutral tones put me more at ease.

WHICH ELEMENTS OF YOUR HOME DO YOU THINK SUPPORT THE ETHOS OF SIMPLE LIVING?

I've tried to create a home that's pared-back, elegant and timeless so that it can evolve, adapt and grow with us. On my blog I aim to show stylish spaces that feel authentic and are easy to achieve, for me decorating shouldn't be something that feels daunting or difficult, but simple and easy – instead of constantly buying into the pressure new trends, I believe we should invest in how a space feels to be in. So that means creating a calm sanctuary that can uplift the everyday, a space that makes you feel good, whether its a cosy corner to curl up in the evening or getting organised, decluttering and paring things back to create a better peace of mind and sense of wellbeing.

HOW WOULD YOU BEST DESCRIBE YOUR AESTHETIC?

My style is simple, calm and understated, I create spaces with warmth and feeling, homes and interiors that are natural and relaxed, that are designed to be lived in and evolve with the user. I'm drawn to pared-back, Scandinavian-inspired spaces with neutral, understated decor and a minimal aesthetic. I'm trying to be more conscious with what I buy and how I decorate, favouring natural, honest materials that appeal to the senses and just get better in time and considered, well-crafted objects that tell a story of their craftsmanship. For me, an interior should be more than just a statement or display, a home is a place that should be designed around how we live everyday not just how we want it to look. A home should be an expression of you... I'm quite quiet and shy, I'm not the loudest person at the party, and my home is a bit the same with its simple, pared-back style.



OPPOSITE PAGE

01. Cate in her cosy grey home office.
02. Looking into the open-plan living room from the kitchen space.
03. The newly decorated home office provides a warm, functional space for Cate to work from home. The desk is IKEA, the Eames chair is by Vitra.
04. Plants and greenery bring life and colour to the living room. The sofa is from made.com.

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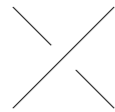
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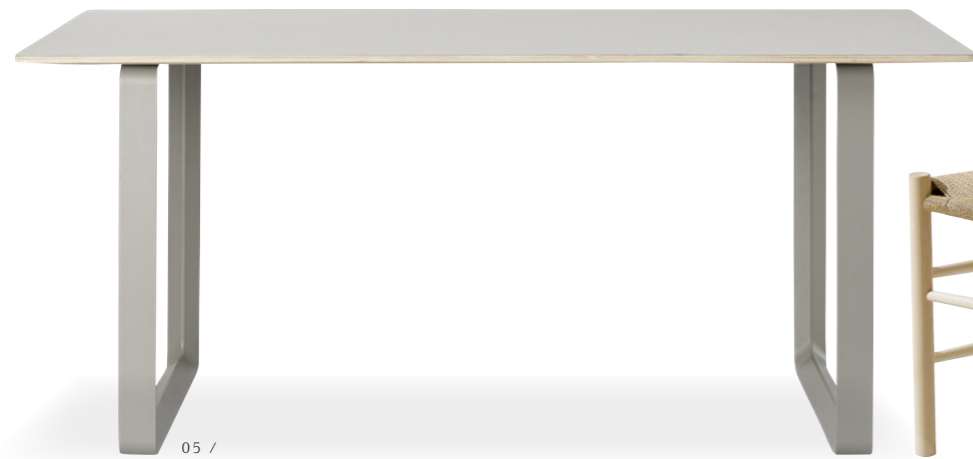
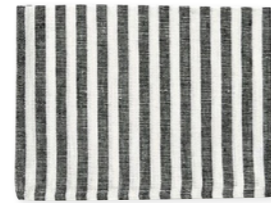
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- 01. Muuto Ambit Pendant In Dusty Green \$535, lightly.com.au
- 02. Cowboy Coffee Kettle in Black \$149, gingerfinch.com.au
- 03. Fog Linen Tea Towel in Black Stripe \$16.95, saison.com.au
- 04. Fredericia J39 Chair in Oak and Natural Paper Cord \$1,275, greatdaneurniture.com
- 05. Muuto 70/70 Table Small in Grey Tabletop and Frame \$2,195, surrounding.com.au
- 06. Zone Denmark Peili Bowl Set Medium in Black \$92, designstuff.com.au
- 07. IKEA 365+ Carafe with Stopper \$4.49, ikea.com.au
- 08. Minimal Cutlery Set by David Mellor \$155 per five piece set, hubfurniture.com.au



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- 01. Every inch of space is maximised in the Scandi-style kitchen, with the grey Veddinge cupboards from IKEA extending to the ceiling.



WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU IN A HOME?

The little things that make a house a home, the things that tell a personal story about us, our hopes, interests and aspirations. The postcards that I've collected from various trips to exhibitions, the piles of magazines, my favourite grey Persephone books, candles to make the evenings cosy, all the things that make a space feel lived-in and loved.

And of course the people in it, *Olivier* and my dog that fill the four walls with happiness and laughter.

DID YOU INCLUDE ANY ENERGY EFFICIENT OR ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES IN YOUR HOME?

We replaced the leaky, old PVC windows at the front of the house with sound reducing sash windows, in part to help with insulation and road noise outside, but also to bring back a feature more in keeping with the style and period of the house.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR LOCAL AREA?

I love the friendly, village-y feel of the area – when you step out of the station you don't really feel like you're in London at all, there's a cute little florist, independent coffee shops, a bookshop and bakery, a farmers market on a Sunday. We're right near the park and I love being surrounded by greenery rather than traffic and London buses.

WHERE IN THE AREA ARE YOUR FAVOURITE PLACES TO VISIT?

Parissi, a French style coffee shop for the best croissants and pain au chocolats around, *Llewellyn's* for simple, modern British food and al fresco drinks in the summer, *First Aid Box* for cocktails, *Dulwich Picture Gallery* for exhibitions, *Jo's House* in Herne Hill for homeware, *Brixton Market* for dinner with friends.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ROOM IN THE HOME AND WHY?

The kitchen, it was the first big project I designed and I put a lot of love into it. It's so neatly designed and everything has its place to make the most of the small space, with units right up to the top of the ceiling. It's been a huge transformation from a dark room at the back of the house with bright sunshine yellow walls to a light-filled space with a contemporary grey *IKEA* kitchen. It feels like a completely different space. I partnered with *IKEA* to create the kitchen and it was such a fun, creative project, we shot a video to show the transformation. It's also where I spend most of my time. I love working at the dining table, surrounded by a calm interior, a window looking out to the greenery of the garden, my favourite radio station on and a coffee close at hand.

ARE THERE ASPECTS OF THE HOME THAT HELP YOU STAY ORGANISED OR UNCLUTTERED?

Good storage is key to a tidy, uncluttered, calm home, so you can hide away the things you don't want to see everyday and keep your favourite things out. The organised storage in the kitchen, the *IKEA* customisable *PAX* wardrobes in the bedroom, and the *IKEA* *Ivar* cabinets and picture ledges for books and magazines (they act as an ever-changing moodboard) in the home office help me stay organised.

OPPOSITE PAGE

- 01. Warm wood chairs by *Fredericia* and *Hay* and a green dining table by *Muuto* lift the grey kitchen.
- 02. A contemporary take on brick metro tiles.
- 03. Discreet appliances and an induction cooktop give a minimal finish.
- 04. The light-filled space features *Blackened* walls by *Farrow & Ball* and painted white floorboards.

DOES YOUR HOME HELP YOU MAINTAIN YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

The house is south-facing so the big windows help bring in lots of natural light, which is so important for wellbeing. The connection with the garden and the greenery outside, the plants inside that bring life, texture and colour to the home.

ARE THERE AREAS TO ENCOURAGE REST AND RELAXATION?

The ambience of the home, the minimal setting and backdrop of neutral, calm colours, combined with soft, natural textures and furnishings that are tactile and appeal to the senses.

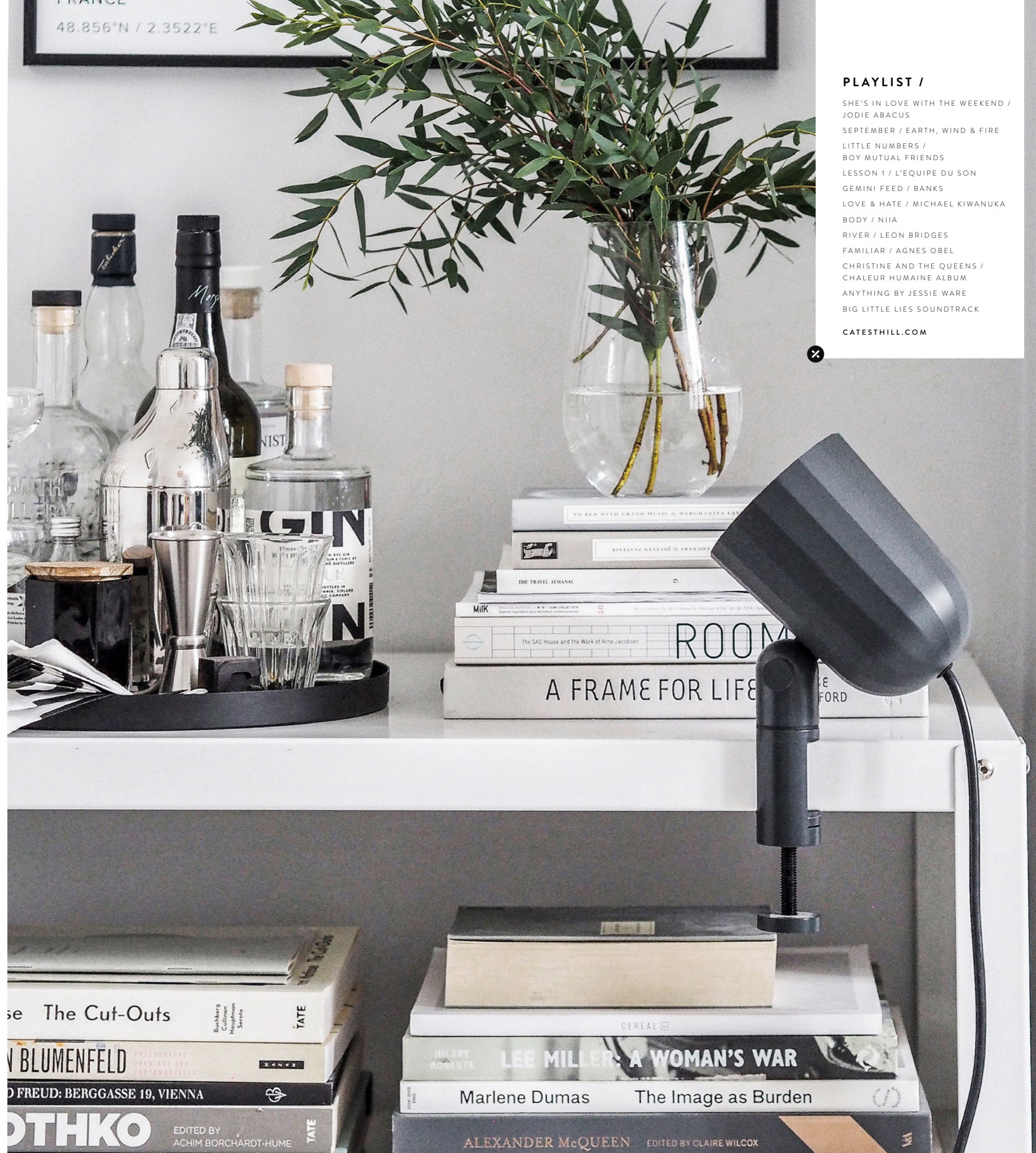
DO YOU HAVE A FUNCTIONAL WORK SPACE?

My newly decorated home office. This plain, bare, white box at the back of the house – dark, dingy and north-facing – has been transformed into a calming, warm space, from which I can work from home as a freelance creative and blogger. Instead of spending all my time working at the dining table, it's now an organised and inviting space I look forward to returning to everyday (via the short commute up the stairs!). I'm also hoping it will help nurture a better work/life balance if I close the door on it every evening, as opposed to working and living in the same space all the time. I wanted to create a cosy, clutter-free home office with lots of clean, functional storage where we had none before. There were plans for a soft grey colour palette, lots of tactile natural materials and clever details to maximise the small space we've got. It's naturally a dark room, despite the large window looking onto the garden at the back. Previously the white walls felt cold and uninviting, so I wanted to bring a sense of cosiness by painting them *Farrow & Ball's* Lamp Room Grey, a traditional blue-grey, which has a soft, warm feel.

A line of floating *IKEA* wooden storage cabinets provides lots of space for storage, we needed shelving space for books, documents, sample pots and all the other stuff a home office accumulates, so it's nice to have somewhere to hide it all away and not have everything on display. The best objects are reserved for the top, including some framed pictures leaning against the wall. Picture ledges provide a decorative focal point as you walk into the room, a sort of 'living moodboard' which I can switch up and curate to help stay inspired as I take on different interior projects. There's also a corkboard to pin up inspiration, postcards and samples.

IF YOU HAD A CHANCE, WOULD YOU HAVE DONE ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY?

Our home is still a work in progress and we're not finished yet, so there's still spaces that need our attention, like the hallway and garden, which are on the to-do list this summer. For me there's no such thing as a perfect home, it's ever evolving as your tastes change, there's always jobs to be done or things you'd like to improve. If money was no object then things would look a little different, a more expensive kitchen say or *Dinesen* flooring would be the dream, but for now I'm just appreciative for a space that's our own.



PLAYLIST /
SHE'S IN LOVE WITH THE WEEKEND / JODIE ABACUS
SEPTEMBER / EARTH, WIND & FIRE
LITTLE NUMBERS / BOY MUTUAL FRIENDS
LESSON 1 / L'EQUIPE DU SON
GEMINI FEED / BANKS
LOVE & HATE / MICHAEL KIWANUKA
BODY / NIIA
RIVER / LEON BRIDGES
FAMILIAR / AGNES OBEL
CHRISTINE AND THE QUEENS / CHALEUR HUMAINE ALBUM
ANYTHING BY JESSIE WARE
BIG LITTLE LIES SOUNDTRACK

CATESTHILL.COM