

Photography/Paul Massey \* Production/Mary Weaver \* Words/Lola Borg

# WORK of ART

Can a family live happily in a home that's almost an art gallery too? Yes, if like Louisa you weave in plenty of colour, warmth and inspiring ideas



## GARDEN ROOM

'I wanted a room full of light,' says Louisa. 'In the winter, this room is beautiful because it has underfloor heating. I didn't want this to feel like the cold, draughty room, but a proper part of the house.' Above the sofa, which inspired the renovation of the entire house, is an eclectic group of pictures, including postcards by artists such as Billy Childish, from the Royal College of Art's Secret sale. 'The pouffe and sofa work brilliantly together, but that's luck as they were bought four or five years apart.'

**Get the look** For details of the Trombé glass extension and the lamp, see *Ideas to Steal*. The sofa, rug and cushions are by Designers Guild. The Donna Wilson pouffe is from SCP. Similar art can be found at london.secret.rca.ac.uk, where you can browse the postcards and register as a secret buyer.





**GARDEN ROOM**

The copper box was a sterilising box for dental tools found in an antiques shop on the Isle of Wight. 'It was a lucky find and it fitted on that bookshelf perfectly,' says Louisa. **Get the look** This is the Network bookcase by Casamania.

**HOME PROFILE**

**THE OWNERS** Louisa Warfield, an art consultant, her husband Troy, a customer service director, and their children Eliza, 12, Annabel, 11, and John, nine. **THE PROPERTY** A Thirties house in southwest London, around 2,500 sq ft, arranged over three floors. On the ground floor is a living room, kitchen-diner, garden room, TV room and office. Upstairs on the first floor is the master bedroom suite, including a walk-in wardrobe, plus two bedrooms and a shower room. On the top floor are two further bedrooms and a bathroom.



When you are totally redesigning your living space, what's the starting point? For Louisa Warfield, it was one sofa that sparked an entire renovation. 'I know people usually go in and rip everything out,' she says, 'but when we moved into this house, although it was totally in need of renovation, I just painted the kitchen white, then got on with raising the kids and having a busy life.'

Fast-forward nine years and Louisa was walking past Designers Guild in Marylebone High Street when a sofa, on sale at a hugely reduced price, caught her eye. 'I wasn't looking for a sofa, but I saw it and loved it,' she says. She placed her new purchase in the empty space that had been the children's playroom (a draughty, leaky conservatory) and then – just like that – decided to renovate the entire house. 'So really, that green sofa gave me the oomph to get started,' she says. 'I created the whole interior, weirdly, around an impulse buy.'

In fact, Louisa and her home had a rather chequered history. She'd once driven past it and said to her husband Troy, 'I tell you one thing – I'm never going to live in that house.' But London property prices meant she gave it another glance. An Art Deco family home in a corner plot, with higgledy-piggledy add-ons, the house had no lovely period features, unlike the grand Victorian houses around the corner. So it all came down to three words: space, space (and more) space. 'I have three kids and you do need 100 per cent more space than if you have two,' Louisa says. 'These Thirties homes offer that in spades.' The house was, she adds, 'a pretty good blank canvas'.

She may not have changed a thing for nine years, but Louisa had plenty of ideas when she did get around to it. Having lived in Australia for several years – Troy is an Aussie and they met when Louisa was working there in her previous incarnation as a marketing executive – she loved the aesthetics of contemporary Australian minimalism and knew she wanted an inside-out feel, whatever the London weather threw at them. 'Australians are the masters at seamless indoor-outdoor living,' she says. The very day she put the sofa in place, her first call was to someone who could install a sophisticated glass box instead of the rattly room that had been the playroom. Thanks to underfloor heating and thermal glass, the 'garden room' is now toasty even in the middle of winter.

What makes the house so special is Louisa's eye for colour, executed with a sure hand. ('I'm not frightened of colour at all,' she says.) There are quirky touches everywhere: the roll of paper with a 'quote of the week' for the children to mull over and the roller blinds in her son's room (one an Aussie flag and the other a British one) that express his dual nationality. Then there is the seamless way she uses the interiors as a backdrop against which her art collection can star. She has her own business that supplies 'beautiful bespoke art solutions for private clients'. Her passion started with the RCA Secrets, where postcard-sized works, often by well-known artists, are auctioned. 'Over the years, that's become a major addiction and I've struck gold a few times,' she says.

Some works of art were pivotal as starting points for the décor. The blue-green ceramics in the kitchen are by potter Derek Wilson and were given to her architect, so that the Corian work surface could be colour-matched. Louisa commissioned more hand-thrown pots for a display in the kitchen. Her bedroom scheme was designed around a photograph that could only fit in one place in the house, which was above the bed. 'So, yes, I planned the room around one picture,' she says. 'Isn't that what everyone does?'

Louisa executed the decorating of her house with a very singular idea of what she wanted to achieve. Some areas, such as the kitchen, were 'painful' to get right. (For example, after trawling every kitchen shop, she used an architect friend to design it.) But were there no mistakes at all? 'No, I don't think so,' she reflects. 'I'd lived here for nine years. So I knew how the house functioned, I knew how I used it, how my kids used it, what the shortfalls were.' Louisa takes great pleasure in her house, but has a refreshingly matter-of-fact attitude towards the interiors. 'I love this place,' she says, 'but at the end of the day, it's just four walls and some stuff. What really matters to me is the health and happiness of my family.'

Learn more about Louisa's art consultancy business at [louisawarfieldart.com](http://louisawarfieldart.com), or visit [louisawarfield\\_artconsultancy](https://www.instagram.com/louisawarfield_artconsultancy) on Instagram

'The plants all over the house are to bring the garden in – I love the indoor-outdoor thing'



**SITTING ROOM**

'This is my solace room, where I go to when the kitchen is a mess and everyone is driving me mad,' says Louisa. 'In the winter, we tend to sit here and move nearer to the log burner. If I get the fire on early enough, the children will come and sit and read their books.' **Get the look** This is an SCP sofa. The rug is from Designers Guild. These are Serve tables by Hay. The copper tray was found during a trip to Buenos Aires. Hanging above the wood burner is a painting by Australian artist Ian Grant.



'The ceramics have been accrued over the years - they're like little friends'



**KITCHEN**

Louisa wanted a kitchen that was quirky with a Scandi feel. 'I'm delighted with my kitchen, but it nearly killed me,' she says. 'It was the finish that was so hard. Often, the hardest things to get right are the most enjoyable.'  
**Get the look** The cabinetry is by Interior Elegance London. The light-wood floor is from The Natural Wood Floor Company. The stools are from Ikea. The ceramics above the stove are by Derek Wilson; and most of those on the open shelving are by Sophie Conran for Portmeirion.

**KITCHEN DETAIL**

'This is a little bit more relaxed than I'd have once gone for,' says Louisa. 'I used to be quite OCD, but I'm learning to let go of that.'  
**Get the look** The plant pots are from botanishop.co.uk. The basket is by Ikea.

**HOME TRUTHS**

**When was the last time you cried?** I always cry when I'm watching anyone win or lose anything. Sports day, the Olympics, it doesn't matter about the event - I'm guaranteed to have some tears.  
**What's your favourite comfort food?** Roast beef with all the trimmings. I love a roast.  
**What one piece of advice do you give your children?** Seek progress not perfection.  
**Are you a laid-back or hands-on mum?** Hands-on aspiring to be laid-back.  
**Which work of art would you like to own?** I'd love a piece by Swiss artist Miriam Cahn. They're wonderful paintings, strongly political and feminist and, of course, fab colour! But I don't have a wall or budget large enough.  
**Are you a frustrated artist?** Absolutely not. I cannot paint for toffee. I once did a drawing course and realised that drawing can be taught, but being an artist cannot.







← **DINING AREA**

If Louisa finds a good quote, she writes it up on the roll of brown paper hanging in the dining room and changes it weekly. 'I use this to subliminally teach my children about values,' she explains. 'I normally write quotes from people such as the Dalai Lama or Muhammad Ali. Do they take it in? Oddly, they do.'

**Get the look** Capture inspiration on a brown paper roll from New Zealand brand George & Willy. This is a Loop Stand table by Hay. The white House chairs are from John Lewis. These are the Piña chair by Jaime Hayón for Magis at Aram Store, *left*, and the Carbon chair by Bertjan Pot and Marcel Wanders for Moooi, *right*. The paintings created using Post-it notes are by Katie Lips.

↓ **JOHN'S BEDROOM**

'My son loves his room,' says Louisa. 'One of his blinds in this room is an Australian flag and one is the British flag, but you can't see the Australian flag. I know my husband will be disappointed that you can't see it here.'

**Get the look** The Warwick high sleeper with day bed is from Aspace. The bespoke blinds were designed and made by Lisa Gomer. The cushion and globe are from Ikea.



**MASTER BEDROOM**

The entire bedroom was planned around the picture above the bed. 'We bought this years and years and years ago from a New Zealand photographer and it was the only place it would fit in the house,' says Louisa. 'I felt the floral blinds were a bit granny-ish, a bit insipid at first, but then once I got the cushions – which are the same fabric but in a different colourway – I was happy. It needed a bit of punch.'

**Get the look** Doc Ross's photography can be found at gallery464.co.nz. The headboard of the Hästens bed has been re-covered in a Designers Guild fabric. The lamp is from Lightyears. Resprayed and with glass tops made to match the bathroom, the bedside tables are from Ikea. The rug and cushions are from Designers Guild.





## MASTER EN SUITE

Suspended just behind the bath is a *verre églomisé* (or gilded glass) mirror; attached on the other side is a functional mirror over a basin unit and a cupboard 'for all your gubbins', says Louisa. 'Actually, I got the idea for the *verre églomisé* from a house I saw in *Livingetc*.'

**Get the look** The roll-top bath is from The Water Monopoly and the mirror is by Ochre. These are Minoli floor tiles. The glass panel is by Dominic Schuster. The shower screen and fittings are from West One Bathrooms.



See more great rooms at [lifestyleetc.co.uk](http://lifestyleetc.co.uk)

## THE BLUEPRINT

