

'The advantage of living in an open-plan apartment is being able to keep an eye on the kids wherever I am,' says Bailey Bezuidenhout of the Parkwood flat she shares with husband Jan-Jan and their young twins. The low-back sofa was one of Jan-Jan's bachelor buys and they were given the black pedestal by friends.

DESIGNED FOR LIFE

WITH ITS ABUNDANT CHARACTER, THIS PARKWOOD APARTMENT IS A LIVED-IN FAMILY HOME THAT CELEBRATES CONNECTEDNESS

TEXT MILA CREWE-BROWN STYLING LEANA SCHOEMAN PHOTOGRAPHS ELSA YOUNG





Space is a relative notion. Those who have it sometimes mismanage it, and those without it tend to make the most of every last centimetre. Given the abundance of space in South Africa, a two-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment might be the last place you'd expect to find twin toddlers. Yet for their young mom, carving an intimate, ostensibly voluminous home from the confines of a third-floor apartment was entirely possible.

Meet Kimmy & Bear cofounder Bailey Bezuidenhout, whose wholesome approach to parenting and keen eye for design have made her one of Jozi's best-loved mom bloggers. By the time she and husband Jan-Jan Bezuidenhout bought the small apartment they had been renting, they were intimately aware of the possibilities for manipulating every square metre – and manipulate they did. A light facelift and subsequent renovation resulted in a tailor-made home that answers the demands of their lifestyle – and that of two-and-a-half-year-old Anna Clementine and Florence Willow.

It's clear that the five years Bailey spent in New York had made their mark on her. She has not only become accustomed to the

ways of small-space living but has genuinely been won over by it, embracing the convenience and distinctly urban feel. But contrary to the demands of a confined space, theirs is hardly the stripped back home of a minimalist. Bailey's accumulated possessions are evident at a glance. 'I *attempt* to refine my hoarding instincts,' she says, 'but I'm nostalgic by nature.'

It was the light that persuaded her that, of the countless homes they had viewed, this was 'the one'. The apartment receives generous light from two sides: morning sun streams into the lounge through large glass sliding doors leading to the balcony, and in the afternoon sunlight filters in from the open corridor on the kitchen side. The balcony, one of the apartment's triumphs, skirts the lounge and living room in one long sweep, and has enough space for a casual sitting area and a vertical garden with a few adaptable square metres to spare for the twins. Just beyond it, a row of treetops makes for an unexpectedly leafy view.

Inside, careful furniture choices help to demarcate areas; an oversize sofa separates the lounge from the library where a neat desk area has been conjured from an expansive bookcase that

covers an entire wall. The shelves hold well-paged novels, art books commemorating gallery visits, and a glut of children's books. It is a display case that skilfully and intimately conveys Bailey's tastes and treasures.

The furniture is a mashup of styles and periods that she struggles to define but gives the home its character. An antique dresser handed down from her parents and a Renaissance-style portrait from the 1920s represent her taste for the classic; modernity enters via the contemporary art surrounding it. The bright, open-plan living area is further animated by fashionable store purchases, sentimental smalls that made the journey back from New York and Persian rugs that came with the apartment.

It's a space that reveals itself in layers, one that propels you to linger and appreciate the details as you page through the books that line the shelves and study the art on the walls. It's also a home that has little to hide, since there is scant room for doing so. Ultimately, everything that Bailey chose to display on the countertops, tables and shelves is meaningful, useful and, most of all, beautiful. kimmyandbear.com

ABOVE FROM FAR LEFT Bailey with twins Anna (left) and Florence (right); the wagon from Polly Potter's Toy Store (pollypotterstoystore.co.za) doubles as a holdall for the twins' toys and makes regular trips to the pool and back. The rocking horse is from Ikea (nevadafurniture.co.za); the painting in the kitchen was a wedding gift from Bailey's uncle, artist Dale Rhodes; the fridge door is covered with family photographs, something she lists as one of her 'favourite things'.



'We bought the dining table before we knew how big the kitchen would be,' Bailey says. 'It turned out to be perfect!' They found it in a Melville antique store. OPPOSITE The portrait by an unnamed Chinese artist caught Bailey's eye in an antique store, and the desk was a wedding gift from her parents. The door behind Anna leads to the balcony.

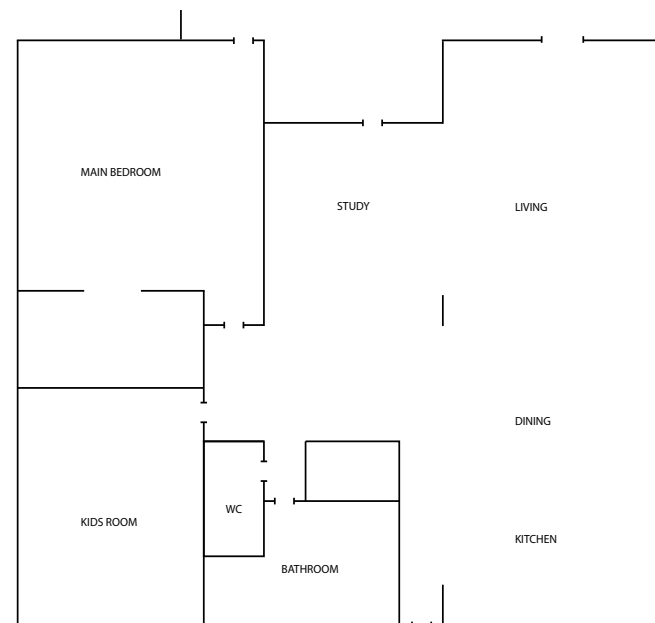


The girls' cots are a matching pair from Ikea (nevadafurniture.co.za) and the black and white blanket is from Country Road (woolworths.co.za). They inherited the Persian rug from the previous owner. OPPOSITE FROM LEFT Bailey's home office is a nook in the floor-to-ceiling wall unit in the living area; Bailey found the dressing table in the master bedroom in a vintage furniture store in Melville. The chandelier is from Billy Moon Antiques (011-788-9950).

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BAILEY'S HOME TRUTHS

The best thing about living here is the view. On the one side we have a view of the Parks' treetops and on the other the Joburg skyline. Style is hard to define. It is an expression of who someone is. I'm inspired by beautiful writing, innovative and creative solutions, photographs that make me stop, lush gardens, travelling to new places and always by my children. Living in a small space is a lesson in editing. The best design advice I ever received was from my parents, who always told me to buy the best I can afford. My pet design hate is quotes that have been written or stuck on a wall. My favourite things include luxurious linen and fabric, family photographs, beautiful stationery, things that tell stories, parquet floors and large archways. When I entertain it's very casual. A signature dish? My husband's tomato pasta. My most rash purchase was a pair of Willem Boshoff prints. I like to shop at The Future Perfect in New York, and at 44 Stanley - Anatomy Design for interior pieces and The Atelier for books. My top tip for living in a small space is to rotate possessions. I don't have all my girls' toys out all the time.



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