

## Decorating Amanda Lewis

PICTURES: MICHAEL O'BRIEN

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An eclectic mix of furniture helps inspire artist Becky Blair.

# Inspired by Freo

### Arty and quirky is the way visiting UK artist Becky Blair describes her eclectic style

**W**hen UK artist Becky Blair searches for inspiration, she heads Down Under to her home away from home — a town house in a former churchyard brimming with energy and style.

An eclectic mix of flowers, vases, keepsakes, art and colourful collectables make the North Fremantle apartment — occupied by designer friend Kylie Thevenau — an inviting retreat in which to get the creative juices flowing.

The home is also a short bike ride across the river from Blair's Fremantle studio.

Blair, who has visited Perth six times in the past decade, will stay with her friend for the duration of her new exhibition, *Backseat Fiction*,

now on at Dalkeith's Gaffly Gallery. It is her third solo exhibition in Perth.

Like a warehouse but more intimate, the home's theme of pinks, reds, oranges and blues was inspired by Thevenau's Mauritian upbringing, especially the Indian influence.

"Well, the town house in North Freo is very much my housemate Kylie's style but we both share a love of eclectic styling," Blair, 34, said.

"Combining fabrics in quirky ways, kitchen posters and ornaments (and) second-hand treasures are all loves that we share."

"The place is very open and retro modern. My place in London, on the other hand, has a very cottage, homespun feel, probably because it's a conversion in a Victorian-terrace house and a lot of my furniture is inherited and all of it is old."

Blair, who is based in Brighton, says pre-loved pieces are a must to create an arty, quirky look in a home. This was as simple as following your heart and choosing pieces you really loved.

"I think a home should be a reflection of your personality, not a show home that conforms to what's safe," she said.

"Putting it all together to work as a space can be tricky. To make quirky work, it's good to either have clean white walls to play off against all the kooky stuff, or find ways of displaying your finds so it is concentrated in one or a few areas."

"Or go the other way and have it everywhere, more like an Aladdin's Cave."

*Backseat Fiction* exhibition reflects Blair's recent road trip through the Northern Territory and along WA's coastline. She painted and drew her way from Darwin and Kakadu to Broome, Coral Bay, Ningaloo, Shark Bay and the Mid-West before arriving in Perth.

Blair describes her art style as "beachy and homespun".

"I have rediscovered a love of travel after a visit to India," she said.

"Travelling by all forms of transport — plane, bus, boat, train, rickshaw, taxi and moped — all of which I saw from the back seat, watching the world go by, soaking it up."

*Backseat Fiction* runs from December 1 to 22 at Gaffly Gallery. Call 9386 8369 or visit [www.gafflygallery.com](http://www.gafflygallery.com) for viewing times.



Becky Blair in her home away from home in North Fremantle.

## GET ECLECTIC

### Bury second-hand

- Show off treasures and childhood keepsakes.
- Combine fabrics in quirky ways.
- Keep it colourful.
- Display jewellery and handbags from nails in the walls to show them off as pieces.
- Mix second-hand pillowcases with new plain bed linen for a personalised feel.
- Paint floors and wooden furniture.
- Potted plants and window boxes in vibrant colours look great and are low maintenance.

