PART OF YOUR WORLD Blessed with a bowerbird sensibility, designer TALI ROTH'S affinity for craft, *colour* and collecting looms large in the MAGICAL transformation of a Victorian-style home in inner-city Melbourne.

*By* ANNEMARIE KIELY *Photographed by* LILLIE THOMPSON *Styled by* JOSEPH GARDNER

***This page*** in the living room of this Melbourne home, Bobbi Modular **sofa** from Momu reupholstered in custom mohair fabric; custom **coffee table** by Studio Tali Roth; sculptural **ceramics** (top shelf, centre) by Stephen Benwell and Lion **vessel** (middle shelf, right) by Georgia Harvey from Craft Victoria; steel duck **vessel** (middle shelf, left) by Kento Saisho; Ochiba **candle** (lower shelf, centre) by Moro Dabron from Studio Gardner; Sequoia custom **rug** from Armadillo; **Roman blinds** from Curtain Machine; *Yellow Array I* **artwork** by Matthew Allen from Oigáll Projects. *Details, last pages.*

*This page* in the sitting room, Danish lambswool **armchair** (left) from CCSS; **lounge chairs** from Casa Blanco; custom **ottoman** by Bluestone Upholstery upholstered in Lelièvre Paris fabric; Lavigne **side table** from Rachel Donath; Corsi Design **vase** from SSENSE; Savannah **rug** from Armadillo; Akari UF4-L10 **floor lamp** by Isamu Noguchi from In Good Company; Nelson Saucer Bubble **pendant light** by George Nelson for Herman Miller, enquiries to Living Edge; **Roman blinds** from Curtain Machine; **artwork** by Tom Polo from Station Gallery. *Opposite page* in the hallway, **table** by Zachary Frankel; **vase** by Jordan Fleming and Rosanna Ceravolo from Oigall Projects; ceramic **mirror** by Linda Levy.

*These pages* in another view of the living room, Wave **chair** from Daniel Boddam reupholstered in custom mohair fabric; custom **joinery** featuring painted gouged glossy wood drawer fronts and stainless-steel upper cabinets by Studio Tali Roth; glazed ceramic sculptural **vessel** (as a vase, on coffee table) by Georgia Harvey, Paper Plate ceramic **plate** by Pauline Meade, sculptural **vessel** (on left shelf, left) by Jill Symes and wood-fired Twist **vase** by Terunobu Hirata, all from Craft Victoria; ceramic **vessels** (on left shelf, bottom) by Linda Levy; Helly **lamp** by Peter D. Cole from Oigáll Projects; **artwork** (left wall) by Marion Abraham from Sullivan+Strumpf.

Before designer Tali Roth begins a tour through her studio's latest and greatest "Glam Up"— a solid-brick Victorian, badged the 'Surgeon's Haven' after its resident physician's requirement for comfort — she pauses for self-reflection.

"I'm learning more about myself in the context of the rest of the world," she says of being a youngling designer increasingly compelled to distinguish her clients' personas in dustier ideals of beauty than most big practices would allow. "Others don't spend the same hours down the rabbit hole of vintage like I do, but I don't think I could arrive at such singular result without it."

From the vantage of a front sitting room allocated to teenage children for their 'gatherings' with friends, Roth's singularity reads with a dissonance deserving of its adolescent occupancy. Deep magenta portraits of angsty people by artist Tom Polo add to mint-green Victorian walls with all the iffy sharp of shiraz in a Grasshopper cocktail. A Grandma-core of "supremely comfortable" seating dresses in 'on fleek' fabrications of dusky-blue denim, polar wool-fleece and fluffy pink bouclé. And precious vessels by pioneering Italian polymath Gaetano Pesce, belie their bouncy silicone constitution in glassy jewel colours.

It's a no-rules nod to young adults whose want to explore all options further tells in a wall-hang of Etsy-sourced plates pitting Picasso's Madoura Pottery against 18th-century Willow pattern refinement and what Roth believes "might be a metal inset Nordic phallus?"

So many interesting antagonisms. Roth agrees, advising they anchor in a mid-century oak cabinet designed by Vôtre Maison, the French company founded by architect Robert Guillerme and artist Jacques Chambron, who met as prisoners of war in a German labour camp in 1940 and concertedly distanced from the formality and fighting of an old-world order. Their vibrant craft feels relevant to the room's meeting groups and the reigning instability of this moment.

But all credit goes to the client. "She has an awesome sense of dress, an always-sunny disposition," and seemingly subscribes to intellectual Alain de Botton's axiom that we need rooms to keep "the important, evanescent sides" of ourselves. "I analysed it all, doing layouts based on budget, then jumped into the bedroom. It was the beginning of a one-room commission that creeped in scope and set the tightest July-to-October turnaround of a house ever."

Roth crosses the corridor into a former bedroom turned Secessionist-style bar with Adolf Loos vibes and a bullion-fringed banquette set with mirror-topped Trapp tables by Ella Saddington of Cordon Salon. "I'm obsessed with '60s cigarette tables," she says of the smoker's relic that once propped ashtrays. "We didn't need a sofa or TV in here, because this is where the mums retreat for a G & T while the kids conduct their 'gaths' in the other room."

The space is conceptually and tonally held by a large-scale Michael Georgetti painting which swings to the geometric rhythms of the Jazz Age and its modernist ideals, made manifest in the industrialism of an OKO OLO Plank lamp from Criteria Collection.

"Yellow scares me," Roth remonstrates, returning to a hallway spine bathed in a buttery cast of the colour that is comfortingly benign and indicative of sunny client character. "I don't like aggressive colours and prefer to let the furniture and art carry the fun."

She has accordingly curated a gallery hang down the gun-barrel corridor, leaving all polemics to the contemporary artist likes of Ry David Bradley — his figurative distortions in tapestry threading between the digital and real worlds — and Tomislav Nikolic who has melted Manet's impressionism down to pulsing vibrations of pigment that comment on the cosmos.

Artist Dane Lovett's floral moment, framed through bedroom doorway, has clearly determined the suite's plunge into pastoral greens and the bedhead's upholstering in a bucolic French tapestry by Dedar. "It's small circle creativity," Roth explains of commissioning Zachary Frankel to craft a wee hallway console, propping a Vessel 2 glass vase by Jordan Fleming and Rosanna Ceravolo that repeats in a mirror made by local ceramic artist Linda Levy. "She is the mum of Studio Roth designer Lauren Levy whose collage features on the speakeasy's wall."

Roth's concerted quirk and hand-made localism — a riposte to homogenising design and the high cost of imports — ultimately addressed the rear living addition (circa early 2000s) which screamed monochrome polarity-banality when perceived against the moody front-of-house play.

At request she patched the sectional discord with sympathetic colour — sun-baked terracotta for the ceiling plane, hay-bale yellow for walls — and repeated the speakeasy's base rhythm of banquette seating and oddball curio, cast as Edra's 'Cousin Itt' tribute the Cabana Cabinet.

She mapped out adjacent lounging in the mohair luxury of Momu's Bobbi Modular sofa and Daniel Boddam's Wave chair, colour-matching both to the walls and a sequoia-weaved Armadillo rug. Select cabinet face and coffee table leg were hand-chiselled — gouges conferring a textured primitivism and the provenance of another period — while kitchen cabinets were whimsied with custom pasta-shaped metal pulls that Roth plans to put into production.

The sum of the histrionic parts, seeding in a European modernism cultivated by Melbourne's post-war Jewish émigrés and saturated in the secret grotto glitz of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (Roth's favourite childhood animation), prompts comment about home as a curative refuge. "Choices matter," she says of seeking to shape the happiness that allows her client to help others. Physician heal thyself. ■ *studiotaliroth.com*

*This page* in the corridor, **vase** by Georgia Morgan from Neon Parc; Aegis Chain **pendant light** from Lost Profile Studio; **floor** in custom-stained oak from Borthwick Floors; **artwork** (left) by Ry David Bradley from Sullivan+Strumpf; **artwork** (right) by Tomislav Nikolic from Station Gallery.

***This page*** in the dining area, Pierce & Ward burl wood **dining table** from West Elm; Alpine **chairs** in Walnut from Laker Studio; custom **banquette** by Studio Tali Roth and produced by Camm Upholstery in Kelly Wearstler Surge fabric; glazed 20th-century earthenware **vessels** from The Vault; antique Indian Amritsar **rug** from Cadrys; French verdure **wall tapestry** from Secondi. ***Opposite page*** in the kitchen, **benchtop** in Carrara marble; custom **joinery** by Studio Tali Roth; Orietta **drawer knobs** in polished silver by Studio Tali Roth for Lo & Co; hand-blown glass **vase** by Jordan Fleming and Rosanna Ceravolo from Oigáll Projects; **pendant lights** from Modern Metier.

*These pages* in the main bedroom, Heatherly Design **bedhead** reupholstered in Dedar fabric from South Pacific Fabrics; Vernier **side tables** from Rachel Donath; Stars in the Sky **blanket** from Curio; Pium **wall lights** by Pinch from In Good Company; **artwork** (above bed) by Polly Gilroy from Otomys Gallery; **artwork** (in hallway) by Dane Lovett from Station Gallery. *Details, last pages.*