

PURE & SIMPLE

A photographer's residence and home studio bear witness to her minimal and organized ways

Text by ANH-MINH LE Photographs by JUCO PHOTOGRAPHY



AT 1,100 SQUARE FEET, photographer Meiko Takechi Arquillos' home in Los Angeles' Eagle Rock neighborhood is just the right size, she says. "It's small enough that I can put care into every corner, but spacious enough for all three of us." The three are Meiko, her husband Joel, and their two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Maia. Colette the cat also resides in the home.

Meiko and Joel, who is the executive director of the nonprofit organization 826LA, purchased the place about two years ago. "The foundation and roof were solid, but everything else was a mess. So we saw it as a blank canvas; we knew we could make it what we wanted," recalls Meiko, who likens it to an "urban cottage," adding: "I like to keep everything organized, but being cozy is the most important element of my home life."

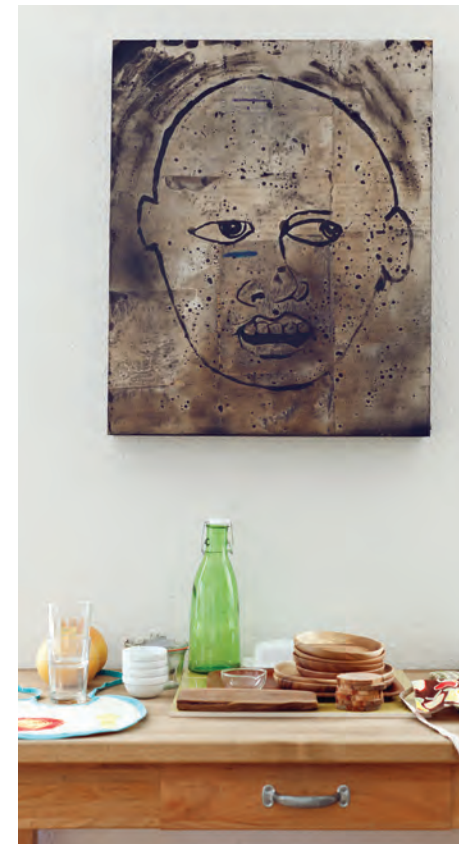
Their proximity to cafes, restaurants, and a library is a bonus, as is the separate studio space on the property. "I have to travel a lot for assignments, but when I'm not traveling, I love being able to work from home. I can pop into the house [from the studio] to start dinner, know that my daughter is right outside in the backyard, or that my husband is nearby," says Meiko (meikophoto.com). "My life is basically about family and work, all mashed together."

Live with What You Love

The living room showcases individual as well as shared passions. "One of my favorite places is Jo-Ann Fabrics!" says Meiko, who spruced up the neutral sofa with a flannel from her stockpile of textiles. She describes Joel as a "big music-head," hence the record collection. They both enjoy shopping at flea markets, where they found the credenza and landscape hanging above it.

The Best-Laid Plans

"The kitchen, dining room, and backyard are perfectly laid out," says Meiko. "So we have the seamless indoor/outdoor lifestyle that I love." The dining area leads out to a patio, where the family often dines. When they entertain, the dining table acts as a serving station and everyone congregates outside to eat.



Cooking Up a Kitchen

"The tiles are from Italy, and I could just stand there and stare at them all day long," says Meiko of one of her biggest renovation splurges. Friend and architect Clay Holden helped the Arquillos transform their kitchen into a space that is functional yet suits their minimalist style. The drawing above the table is by Argentinean artist Irana Douer.





A Streamlined Studio

Meiko's photography studio, which she suspects was once a carport or garage, is used for computer work and photo shoots. "I keep it minimal and clean, so I don't have to move a lot of things around for shoots," she explains. However, there is a designated area for daughter Maia to hang out. "She loves to come in and draw and do her own creative projects."



Artful Acquisition

Meiko purchased the cat painting for \$100 from a bookstore in San Francisco, where she and Joel lived prior to moving to Los Angeles four years ago. "I used to be a total cat freak," she says, "but I knew Joel wouldn't let me get the painting because it's so huge." Luckily, Meiko had a plan. "I took him to the restaurant next door to the bookstore. A pitcher of margaritas later, I asked him if we could buy it and he said yes!"

