



AT HOME WITH: *ERENA TE PAA*

Erena Te Paa's home in Hamilton has drawn the attention of thousands on social media and it's not hard to see why. Remix chatted to the freelance stylist and Airbnb host about the labour of love home, its 'Japandi' style and how she keeps it looking photo-ready with two young boys...





DESCRIBE YOUR HOME IN THREE WORDS...

Earthy, modern, elegant.

WHEN DID YOU START WORKING ON YOUR UNIQUE HOME AND WILL YOU EVER STOP?

It was around the time my son Costa turned one and was starting to walk, in 2017. The end goal has always been a total renovation with architectural plans, builders on site etc but these things take time and money so in the meantime I do what I can with what I have and get to experiment with my style as well.

IT'S LIKE LIVING ART. WHAT PROVOKED YOU TO START WORKING ON IT IN SUCH A WAY?

The house was in a state of disrepair when we bought it back in 2016 and I guess I was a bit broken at the time too having lost my first baby a year earlier. Following on from that experience I'd felt detached from my work and disconnected from my style. The house was the first thing to wake me up creatively, but also knowing that the changes I've been making are semi-permanent has driven me to be more artistic and less afraid of the way I express myself in it.

WE HAVEN'T SEEN YOUR EXACT STYLE ANYWHERE, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE AESTHETIC?

I've tried to give it a name but nothing quite sticks, so I think I'll take my cue from the style it often gets referred to by others

which is 'Japandi' or having elements of both Scandinavian and also Japanese design. Ultimately, I am drawn to clean lines and simplicity but also the imperfection of raw materials too.

DOES YOUR PARTNER DIY TOO? HOW DO YOU PHYSICALLY ACHIEVE YOUR VISION?

I am a DIYer by nature and will turn my hand to most things - paint, plaster, sand, drill and craft. But for everything else I am lucky enough to have a handy father-in-law. My husband is also pretty good on the tools too but DIY isn't really his thing. We'll always get tradesmen in for electrical and plumbing work.

DO YOU FIND NZ RESTRICTING INTERIOR-WISE WITH SOURCING FURNITURE?

Yes and no. I think we aren't as spoiled for choice as in other countries, especially when it comes to just stumbling upon a retro design classic in our garages but at the same time, there is an opportunity in being restricted by choice in that you then have a chance to think outside the box.

UPCYCLING SEEMS TO BE A BIG PART OF YOUR PROCESS, WHERE DO YOU SOURCE MOST OF YOUR PIECES?

Most of our furniture is secondhand or upcycled. Years ago, it was a way to find quality furniture at an affordable price but now it's second-nature to me. I source mainly on Trade