

living large in small spaces

expressing personal style
in 100 to 1,000 square feet



marisa bartolucci
photography by radek kurzaj

DEBORAH OROPALLO AND MICHAEL GOLDIN

During the early years of her career as a painter, Deborah Oropallo lived in her studio with bare-bone domestic comforts. "A hot plate and a toaster oven" is how she sums it up. She had no real furniture. Her surroundings were unimportant; her focus was her art. She did, however, covet a building, an old factory with fifteen-foot ceilings and glass-brick windows. When it came up for lease, she convinced the owner to sell and so became a homeowner—of sorts. Oropallo demolished the interior and parceled out to friends sections of the space to be used as offices and studios, keeping just 800 square feet for herself for living and working.

From the moment she first saw it, Deborah Oropallo knew that this old factory building was her dream house. Years later, she and her husband, Michael Goldin, an architect, turned the building into a friendly, if unconventional, family home.

Soon after, she met her husband, Michael Goldin, an architect and furniture designer, and things began to get domestic. Well, sort of. All over the cell-











Before the couple had children, the bookshelves extended up to the extra-high ceilings. When kids came into the picture, Goldin sliced away a section of the space to construct a mezzanine, which now accommodates a bedroom for them and for him and his wife. Densely lined with possessions, the wall of shelving takes on an architectural presence, and so avoids being an eyesore.



The bathroom is no-nonsense in its accoutrements, but the shower curtain and rug add a sense of fun.

As the couple put a high value on creative freedom and flexibility, having a space like this that can be endlessly reconfigured is a joy. Goldin brings this ad hoc approach to his design work, especially his furniture business. His company Swerve is known for its series of simple and colorful tables, equipped with industrial wheels. They have been designed to get pushed around, both at home and at work. Oropallo shares her husband's utilitarian approach to furniture. A pair of metal lockers in her studio recently did a tour of duty in the kitchen when extra storage was needed. Another pair now serves as toy storage in her children's room. From the couches in the living room to the kitchen worktable, everything in the house moves around—Goldin has put it all on wheels. While some of the furniture is industrial, and the arrangement improvisatory, the atmosphere is

surprisingly homey. Colorful rugs, pillows, objects, and an assortment of artworks by Oropallo and friends bring warmth, personality, and fun to the space.

In this unconventional dwelling, the central gathering place is not the hearth—there isn't any—or the dining table, but an upright piano (on wheels, of course) with Goldin's electric guitar hanging next to it. Oropallo grew up in a home full of musicians, and she wants music to fill her children's lives as well. By having instruments out where the family congregates, instead of a television, the hope is they will start making music together. By the looks of their home, they already are.

A Tibetan meditation rug brings an air of fantasy to the children's room. Heavy velvet draperies transform their bunkbeds into a secret hide-away.



