



HOLLY BECKER founder of Decor8blog

DECORATE *workshop*

Design and Style
Your Space in 8 Creative Steps

photographs by **DEBI TRELOAR**

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Design and Style Your Space in 8 Creative Steps

Holly Becker founder of Decor8blog.com

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This book is dedicated to my readers and students, whom I love dearly. Thank you for supporting me in all that I do. Your friendship and love is the wind in my sail.



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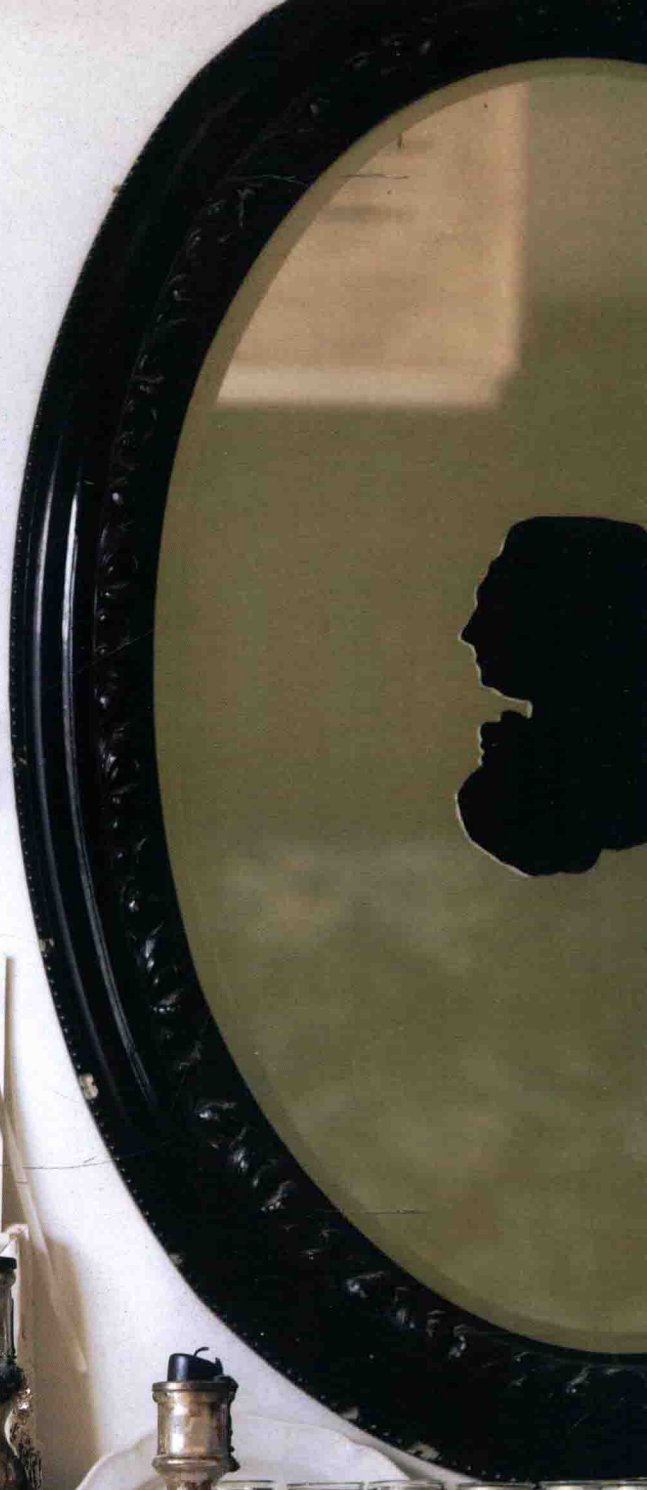
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Introduction - decorate with me

It is my sincere invitation that you'll join me in this interactive workshop to explore creativity, self-expression, personalization, and a "try anything once" approach to decorating. Your home should be an authentic expression of who you are, who you hope to become, and it should honor your roots because they have made you exactly who you are today—and that's something worth cherishing and sharing with others.

Let's face it, everything is better in life with a good friend by our side. When I decide to work on a project I find it beneficial to tap into a knowledgeable friend who is willing to share pointers and even cheer me on along the way. This book is my hand reaching out for yours as I lead you

most societies or seen as a necessity—being practical and rational is. Exercising our creative side is viewed as a luxury, a bonus, something that we can tap into only when we've finished everything else. I don't buy into that for one second. I encourage you to schedule time each week for creative expression in the home—because we all have a creative side, we simply need to engage it.

This book goes a bit further than, "Put that sofa there and place these lamps on either side." I will first guide you on a mini self-discovery mission, then I'll share how to view everyday things with a more creative eye. Next you'll be shown how to build out some of your ideas in a more tangible way, and from there I'll provide lots of decorating guidelines and examples. Finally you will be on your way to doing all sorts of lovely things to your home. That's how I approach decorating from start to finish—to tap in and then connect the mind with the home.

When I decided to write a second book to follow *Decorate*, I felt strongly that I needed to give you a book that I myself had long wished to find but couldn't—a decorating guide that I could write in and put to good use. It's often scary to write in books, I get that. Mainly because books feel quite precious and so much heart, soul, time, and money goes into the making of them. The thing is, I was a blogger long before I became an author and I can't imagine writing a blog that no one ever commented on. My approach for this book is very much like blogging, that we're involved in a conversation—I'm voicing my opinion and you're responding. I invite

"When you tap into your creative side, everything is enhanced and decorating is really just that—being creative in your home in a very personal way."

down a happy path, free of judgement, bossiness, and pretension, as we work on your next decorating project in eight steps together. I've provided several writing prompts to inspire and motivate you along the way because I want to encourage you to finish what you've started. Your vision deserves to see the light of day so that you can walk into your home and say that it feels "just right." I'm here to help make that happen.

Everyone wants to feel at home yet often it is the first thing that we neglect when busy schedules overcrowd our life. Decorating is an act of creative self-expression, which is why it's most often pushed to the side simply because creativity is not revered in

"The making of a home is an ongoing process; it's like a never-ending art project, and most importantly, it should be fun."

“My approach for this book is very much like blogging, that we’re involved in a conversation—I’m voicing my opinion and you’re responding.”

you to relax, grab a pencil with a good eraser (in case you need to modify something along the way), and give yourself the freedom and permission to use this interactive guide to your best advantage. Write in it! Highlight parts that speak to you with a fat yellow marker, make notes in the columns with a pencil or ball-point pen, sketch, doodle, respond to the various prompts that I’ve left that will allow you to explore your inner decorator. Instead of viewing this as writing *in* a book, view this as writing *a* book in which I am the author and you are my co-author.

I believe that the ultimate compliment is when someone steps into your home and says, “This is so you, I love what you’ve done here!” Making something your own is really the spice of life—the seasoning on the beautifully prepared meal, a meal that you want to share with others because you are proud of your creation. A home should be the same, and this can be accomplished by allowing yourself to communicate your vision—an inspiring act in itself. I believe being house proud fuels all areas of our lives, trickling into the biggies like our self-esteem, comfort, security, family relationships, and how safe we feel in our own skin. My belief is that when your foundation, namely your home, feels right then everything else just works better. Even when hard times come at least the security and warmth we feel at home, coupled with our comfy bed and a big squishy pillow to cry into, makes difficult moments more bearable.

When you tap into your creative side, everything is enhanced and decorating is really just that—being creative in your home in a very personal way. The making of a home is an ongoing process; it’s like a never-ending art project, and most importantly, it should be fun. Through the pages of this book you’ll be encouraged to explore your decorating

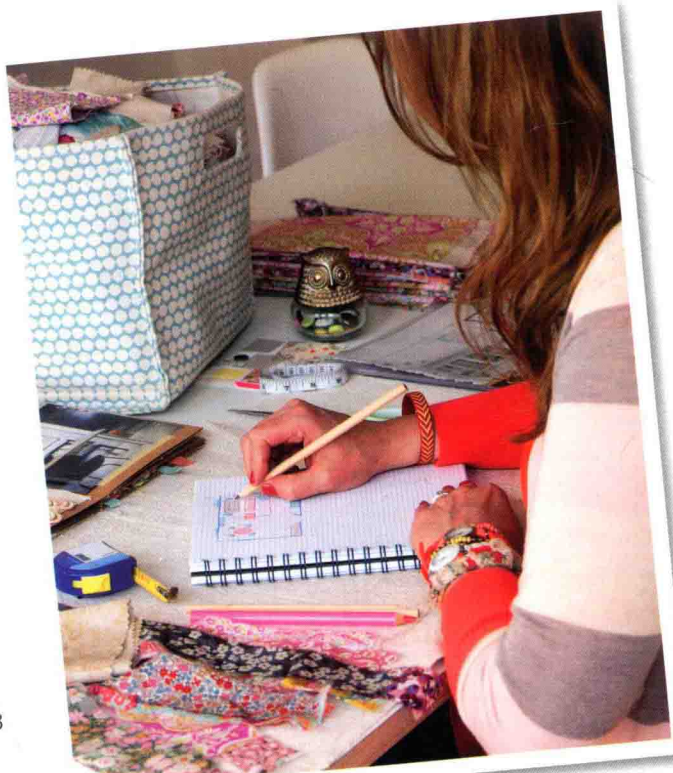
approach through fresh eyes while enjoying the process because the journey should be as sweet as the destination. We’re a team and I wholeheartedly believe that together we can make your home a little sweeter. Want to get started? Good, I was hoping you’d say that.

Holly Becker



What do you need to get started?

Before we begin working on my 8 steps, I thought we should first put some key things in place. The first is a creative exercise that involves only a few magazines and an hour of your time. Pull together a few style files to get your decorating gears turning. Style files are simply manilla file folders that are labeled by room name such as “Bedroom” or “Dining Room.” Pull some pages of rooms from magazines and catalogs that speak to you and place them in your folders. This exercise is meant to be fun and to light your creative spark, though later you will be referring to it again as you begin to hone in on your ideas, create moodboards, and develop your final room scheme. Next I would like to ask you to create a Project Binder, as outlined in the box right. Finally, please look over my Toolbox page and try to pull together as many of these important items as you can. You’re already on your way!



PROJECT BINDER

Keep everything in one place with a project binder. I use binders with pockets and label each section. This isn't a catch-all file for everything that crosses my desk, only what I think I will use. Label your sections in a way that works for you. I usually label mine as follows:

...

Floor plans—For floor plans and measurements.

...

Details/Swatches—This is where I insert spec sheets on specific pieces, which could be a printout of a few different sofas I'm considering along with swatches, dimensions, materials, etc. You can print out the details on specific products from the manufacturer's website, too, and insert those in this section.

...

Quotes—For contractor quotes, prices for furniture you're still deciding on, etc.

...

Contacts—This is where details of those I'm working with, from showroom sales reps to delivery services and beyond, are kept. I usually toss in their business card or write down their contact info on a sheet of paper and place it here.

...

Photos—Insert photos that you've taken of your room or pieces that you know you want to use.

...

Invoices—For items already purchased and work that you've completed.

...

Lists & Spreadsheets—For instance lists of what I want to buy for my decorating project. My General Project

Overview spreadsheet, which outlines everything that I'm working on so that I can stay on plan, would also be in this part of my binder. Other spreadsheets

I'd include would be one that outlines all details concerning each item that I've purchased or plan to purchase—item name, code number, supplier, contact, specs, price, availability—another for my budget, where I break down everything detailing estimates and final costs, and a spreadsheet meant for tracking all purchases that I've made to date.

...

Moodboards—If you have a digital moodboard, print it out in color and place it here. If you've created one by hand, photograph it, crop the photo, reduce to letter size, and print it out in color. It's great to have a snapshot to refer to.

YOUR DECORATING TOOLBOX

- **Computer with internet access** You can access design blogs and other online resources that are both educational and inspiring, and use it to upload photos, create digital moodboards, create folders on your desktop to organize your decorating ideas, put together spreadsheets to track materials and budget, draft floor plans, and source items from wallpaper to sofas and beyond.
 - **Digital camera** A must for snapping photos of things that inspire you while you're out and about but also helpful as you begin to plan your room.
 - **Retractable tape measure** These are the sturdy ones builders have clipped to their belts. My favorites are those with an auto-locking mechanism for times when I need to measure my space alone.
 - **Sewing tape measure** This is a non-stretchable flexible strip, usually in plastic or fabric, and is helpful for measuring the distance around an item.
 - **Printer with a built-in scanner** If you don't fancy running to the copy shop and you don't want to own multiple machines, purchase a printer/scanner combo so that you can scan magazine tears, fabrics that you may not want to cut into to create a swatch, and any other materials that you think you could use on your moodboard or you would like to access on your computer.
 - **Scissors** I have several different types of scissors for both paper and fabric and a pair of pinking shears with those lovely teeth meant to prevent fraying—I really like how swatches look when cut with my pinking shears! Hey, it's the little things, right?
 - **Project box or tray** This is a great place to start collecting things that you think may work for your project that are bulky. Gather tile samples, flooring, catalogs, and anything else that you can think of.
- You will pull from this pile later and begin the editing process, but it's a great place to start accumulating your inspirations.
- **Painter's tape** Perfect to use if you need to outline where you plan to place furniture, mirrors, art, etc. You also may use it for actual painting if you decide on a new wall color!
 - **Pencils/erasers** I leave my pens aside when sketching floor plans because I cannot draw a straight line so well and a pencil is so much more forgiving than a pen—just erase and try again!
 - **Color pencils (or watercolors)** If you want to explore color try applying it to your floor plans. I was trained to do this on the job, and later in design school, and you will find it helpful if you have the time and patience.
 - **Blu-tac** A staple in every stylist's bag, this putty-like adhesive is reusable and perfect for easily applying lightweight objects to dry surfaces like walls. With Blu-tac you can quickly tack up a sheet of wallpaper, painted poster boards to test colors in a room, or art prints to see how they look on the wall before you have them framed.
 - **Grid paper or 3D software for floor plans** You will want to keep paper around for sketching loose plans as well as for drawing to-scale plans as you go. If you have access to software that can make the job easier, by all means use it!
 - **Swatches** If you are as addicted to decorating as I am you no doubt have a collection of swatches that you refer to for inspiration and as potential jumping-off points for projects. I keep them in clear folders organized by color.

1

Seek INSPIRATION

Digging for treasure is the perfect starting point as you begin to decorate. Knowing what's out there is key as you build up an idea of what you're responding to. This step examines where to find inspiration and the value of keeping an open mind and heart as you get started. So, what inspires YOU? Let's find out!

Find your PERSONAL STYLE

Gathering inspiration can be never ending—at some point you have to pull back and start to make sense of it all. It's time to focus and sift through your finds to identify key themes so you can tap into your vision. This isn't about putting a label on your style, it's simply a step meant to call out themes and decide what is "you" and what isn't.

2

3

IDENTIFY your project

Once you feel motivated, inspired, and on track with your personal style, you'll naturally need to look at your home and decide which room is screaming the loudest for a new look. Your budget, lifestyle, and how you plan to use the room all come into play next. Where do you want to get started?

4

PREP your space

While it may sound less exciting than collecting inspiration, preparing your space is also about digging for treasure and shining up the gems that you have! As you get started on your decorating project, it's time to pull your stuff together by listing, sorting, measuring, photographing, tidying, and organizing it!

DRAW UP your space

Wow, you've come a long way! With your ideas in motion and your space ready to go you can now consider your options, assess your space, and draft up some floor plans!

5

6

Translate your IDEAS

It's time to see how your ideas work together on paper by consolidating them through moodboards and other creative exercises. You are one step closer to nailing down your design scheme and pulling it together. Who said decorating is stressful? Not you!

FINALIZE your scheme

It's time to go from planning to execution! Next you'll pin down the details and create a scheme that works. In this step, I'll take you through some of my favorite decorating ideas for living, eating, sleeping, and work spaces to see what tips you can use in your final plan. Way to go, you're almost there!

7

8

Happy DECORATING

This is when your hard work really pays off. The sofa is in place, your new bookcase has arrived . . . it's time to personalize and decorate! Consider the details, play with some pattern, edit your stuff, decide what you will display and how to style it, and then step back and snap your "after" photos—it's time to celebrate!

STEP 1 SEEK INSPIRATION

“A jumping-off point is usually a single source of inspiration that you build from because it inspires all other elements that you will pull into the room. It may be a scarf, a piece of vintage fabric, a tear sheet from a magazine, or an outfit that you spotted in a catalog.”

Welcome to the first step in your decorating journey, where I'll outline how I find inspiration for all of my decorating projects because, not to sound clichéd, inspiration really is all around us. My goal is to guide you to peek inside a few new corners where you may not have thought to look before. My sources of inspiration keep me on my creative toes and are particularly helpful when I need to be rescued from a rut. In addition to sharing my approach, I'll also guide you through some proactive approaches for soaking up as much as possible in the least amount of time so that you can step away feeling refreshed and energized. You'll find lots of questions to answer, so pull out some paper for jotting down your thoughts and take advantage of the journaling space on pages 21, 22, and 29 that have their own writing prompts for including personal musings—it's time to break a few rules here and write in a decorating book. So grab your pencil—this will be fun!

