

Style Statement



# SECOND dibs

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Whoever says you need a big budget for big impact hasn't met Kyle Freeman. This Boston blogger crafted a colorful nest with sweet secondhand scores.



### What she did...

Kyle Freeman's dining room is full of retro charm. The table, constructed from trimmed-down store-bought legs and a locally thrifted slab top, is surrounded by vintage tweed chairs purchased from an antiques cooperative. Kyle accessorized the room with a secondhand tea cart and airy curtains.





**Kyle Freeman is no stranger to do-it-yourself home design.** When she isn't working (she owns her own redesign and home organization business) or blogging

for the popular site *ApartmentTherapy.com*, she's busy rearranging her 1,200-square-foot Boston apartment and thrifting her way through the city's vibrant shopping districts. We sat down with Kyle to talk about why she loves her polychromatic pad.

**Q:** *You have quite a colorful place. Where do you find your palette inspiration?*

**A:** My inspiration is very self-grown. I think about space a lot, and if I find an object or piece of furniture I love, I find a way to incorporate it. I like homes that combine natural elements with bright color—I get a lot of inspiration from the *ApartmentTherapy.com* aesthetic, as a lot of the places featured incorporate bright and streamlined design.

**Q:** *Every room in your home seems one-of-a-kind. Where do you score your furniture?*

**A:** Seventy percent of my home is made up of secondhand items from thrift stores, markets, and online classifieds. When I get my head set on a certain piece, I could wait a year and buy it firsthand, but I'm usually not that patient. I can get it secondhand cheaply, and it's fun to shop for the right piece.

**Q:** *Tell us a little about your business, Cloud 9 Organize & Redesign.*

**A:** I think of my business as a budget- and environmentally focused decorating and organizing business. Instead of going out and buying all new things, I help people look at the stuff they already have and figure out how to best make that stuff work in their home. After organizing and rearranging, people realize they don't need to buy nearly as much as they originally thought.



### What she did...

Kyle's pooch, Arlo, lounges on a plush shag rug, *left*, scored from Craigslist, a site Kyle frequently visits for deals on furniture and home decor. "You've got to be willing to work when it comes to secondhand shopping," she says. "It takes effort to find the really great pieces that make a room." Kyle's thrift shop couch, *opposite*, sits in front of a built-in china cabinet lined with mirrors to reflect light from the facing windows in the dining room.





**Make it!**

Kyle grouped and hot-glued different-size wood embroidery hoops into orbital shapes for a funky sculptural display.



**Q:** *What advice would you give to someone looking to redesign her space?*

**A:** Simplify. Decide what you need and how you're going to keep it. Don't be afraid to rearrange, to try things in a different way. And if you're thinking about buying something, ask yourself, "Is this going to end up in my attic? Can I picture it in my basement?" If the answer is yes, you can pass. You want to be able to live with what you have for a long time.

**Q:** *How do you make so many bright colors and fun patterns work together?*

**A:** I have threads of commonality. My place has lots going on, but one theme I keep is my color palette. I have the same oranges, reds, yellows, and greens in every room. Most of my walls are white. If you're going to have a lot of color, there needs to be a place where the eye relaxes and rests.

**Q:** *Your place is really inviting and relaxing. What do you love to do at home, besides constantly updating it?*

**A:** Oh, I'm totally a homebody. It's kind of a double-edged sword because I love Boston, but I don't actually leave my place that often. I work from home, I cook a lot, I have people over—I've lived in this place for seven years, and I still just love being here.

### **What she did...**

Kyle's living room gains much of its vibrancy from her clever curtains. To save money and reduce bulk, she cut purchased panels in half, hemmed the raw edges, and hung them as four separate panels. Her expansive "sofas" are daybed frames with the legs cut short to make them feel lounge-ready, and the colorful pillows, made from secondhand and found fabrics, were sewn by Kyle's mother.









## Brighten up

Kyle dressed up a metal pendant by attaching faceted colorful faux gems to the inside.



## What she did...

The kitchen in Kyle's apartment was functional but not much fun when she moved in. The sink base was a metal eyesore, so Kyle stitched a skirt from stain-resistant fabric to hide it, *above*. The red storage unit next to the stove, *left*, is constructed from two stacked IKEA tables secured with industrial-strength foam tape. And the seemingly custom window seat is built from kitchen cabinets designed to fit above a refrigerator.

## the thrill of thrift

Designer Kyle Freeman shares tips for scoring primo secondhand stuff.

- 1. Define your style.** If you're craving an eclectic look, but you're not sure how to put it together, cruise secondhand shops. "You don't have to buy anything. Just look at objects and see what speaks to you," Kyle says.
- 2. Power shop.** Kyle loves multidealer antiques malls. You have a better chance of finding something you love with more vendors and items to choose from, she says.
- 3. Give it time and space—and a sniff.** If you find something you like, set it in an open area and allow yourself to imagine it in your home. If it's small enough, carry it around the shop with you—you'll get a better sense of whether you really want it. Sniff a potential purchase—especially textile and upholstered finds—to make sure it doesn't have a funky odor.
- 4. Shop often.** If you're in the neighborhood of your favorite thrift shops, pop in to check out the selection frequently—the more often you look, the better your chances of finding something you love.



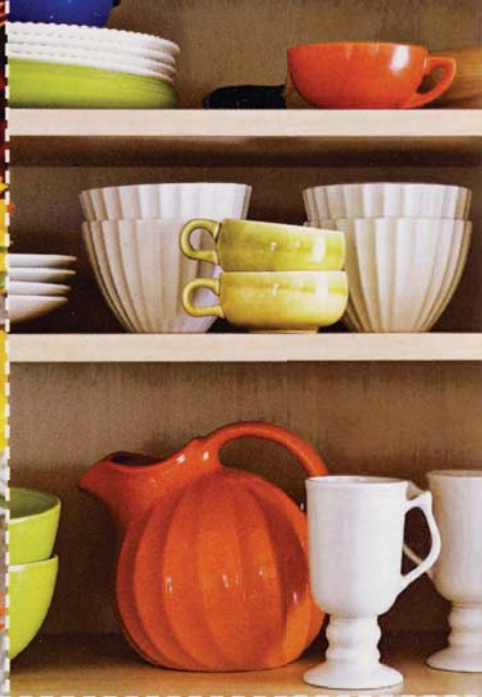




### ← In the mood

Glue a fabric remnant to a magnetic chalkboard for a colorful inspiration board. Tack up scraps, paint samples, magazine images—whatever it takes to spark your creativity.





### What she did...

From top, left to right: Kyle keeps patterned fabrics on hand to reupholster chair pads for an easy style change. Inexpensive bouquets placed in a few small jars bring the outdoors in. An assortment of Russel Wright and secondhand ceramics gives the kitchen a whimsical touch. Dozens of pillows made by Kyle's mother give the living room an eclectic, relaxed vibe. Vintage chairs fill the apartment. Brightly colored martini glasses top a black iron tea cart for a pop of color in the dining room. Kyle keeps colorful thread, pencils, and markers stocked up and at the ready for sudden bursts of inspiration.





"Seventy percent of the stuff in my home is secondhand. The stuff that's not, I try to modify and make it more my own."

KYLE FREEMAN HOMEOWNER



#### What she did...

An oversize paper fan above the bed gives the bedroom the large-scale pop it needs to work with the rest of the home, *above*. Kyle purchased it at an antiques market for just \$12. It sits on a small shelf and is affixed to the wall with hook-and-loop fasteners for easy removal (a smart option for apartment dwellers and renters leery of putting too many holes in the walls). Kyle rescued the bentwood chair from outside a trash bin. A futon frame built by Kyle's brother and a World War II poster gifted from a pal round out the calming jade-tone space.

For Resources, see page 100.