



"OUR PRIVATE SPACES GIVE US THE CHANCE TO CONNECT WITH OUR SPIRIT, THE THING THAT REMINDS US OF WHO WE ARE"

# SPACE SAVIOUR

FOR INTERIOR STYLIST AND AUTHOR SHANNON FRICKE, CREATING AN ORDERED YET IMAGINATIVE PRIVATE SPACE FOR HER TWO YOUNG CHILDREN ALLOWED HER TO FIND HER OWN PERSONAL SANCTUARY

A few years back, I designed and had made some fairly snazzy beds in my kids' room as a segment for the TV show I was working on.

These were no ordinary beds. They were custom-made, multi-functional built-ins that housed a series of drawers and cupboards, side-by-side pull-out desks, a mini slippery slide for a ladder and a platform at the top that accommodated two single mattresses, enabling the kids to lie toe to toe.

Between their toes was a divider that acted as a kind of fence, high enough to make them feel like they owned the space on their side, but low enough to ensure they still retained some connection to each other.

We nicknamed them the 'circus beds' and even though my kids were only small, this single piece of architecture proved to be more beneficial than I could have imagined.

At the time, I remember the design of the beds being driven mostly by my desire for order. My children were toddlers and close in age, which meant our home was bursting out of its seams with all the obligatory paraphernalia one seems to accumulate when heading down the path of babydom – cots, change tables, clothing bins, storage buckets and more plastic than the eye can cope with.

I felt if I could only house all these disparate objects in one space-saving unit, I would feel more in control of the all-consuming chaos that had taken over my life. And to some degree it worked – although in reality, no matter how

much you try to design your life, the beauty of having children is that you never know what each new day will bring!

Upon reflection, those circus beds did a lot more than just achieving the order I so desperately desired. They created a space in our home that the children felt belonged to them. A place where they felt comfortable enough to retreat to whenever they needed time to themselves; a place where they could lose themselves for hours on end.

Even though they shared a bedroom, the design of the beds gave the space a very clear division, making each child feel that they were in control of their own patch of land.

We all need a private space of our own: somewhere we feel able to drop our public facade and become consumed with the things that move us. Our private spaces give us the chance to connect with our spirit, the thing that reminds us of who we are. It is here that we're able to feel most at peace.

Even if your private space is the corner of a busy lounge room, a shed in the garden or, in the case of my children, a fantastical circus bed, it's important to consciously claim a spot in your home that is just for you.

As a parent, I found that creating an exciting space for my kids to spend their time in meant that I, too, was given the opportunity to spend time in my own private space. And, as a working mother with two energetic kids in tow, that made the circus beds my best investment of all.

Creating a custom-built space where her children could feel free to be themselves (below left) gave Shannon Fricke (below right, with her daughter Inez) the chance to liberate her own inner child.



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