



# ALL IN THE FAMILY



*Clockwise from top left:* Janaki Larsen's dining room. Klee Larsen's photos from a 2013 show. Patricia Larsen. Janaki and Pascal Roy. The chairs in Klee's apartment came from her high school. Klee in her living room.

*Opposite:* In Patricia's home, a cabinet rescued from a junk pile is now a resting spot for textiles picked up in various Mexican locales.

There's no shortage of creativity and talent in the Larsen family: Patricia is an accomplished painter living in Pescadero, Mexico, while her daughters—Janaki, a potter, and Klee, a photographer—reside in Vancouver, Canada. There, the two sisters, along with Janaki's husband Pascal Roy, run Le Marché St. George ([marchestgeorge.com](http://marchestgeorge.com)), a charming corner shop and café. One look at their homes, not to mention their artistic endeavors, and it's easy to see that a great eye for design runs in this family.



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*Vancouver Photographs by CLAUDETTE CARRACEDO*

*Mexico Photographs by AMY DICKERSON*



**IN THE LARSEN FAMILY**, there's no stigma to hand-me-downs. "I'm so lucky," says Klee, 28. "My mom [Patricia] and sister [Janaki] find amazing things, and then I get to borrow them!" Take the gold candelabra that hangs above her sofa: it belongs to Janaki and was originally loaned to Klee as decoration for one of her art shows, entitled *Oro* (which means "gold" in Italian). "I have just kept on borrowing it," adds Klee with a laugh.

Klee currently manages the café at Le Marché St. George, and she lives next door with her friend, Melissa Hudson, in a two-bedroom apartment that Janaki and Pascal previously called home. Remnants of the couple's decorating efforts include wood floors that were painted a dark gray-mauve, and the textured living room wall, a result of what remained after the wallpaper was removed.

Like many 20-somethings, Klee and Melissa have furnished their home with plenty of pieces that were gifts or passed down. "How you place items and put colors and textures together is how you make things your own," says Klee. In the living room, an old army cot came from a neighbor, whose father slept on it while serving in World War II. A friend's mom provided Klee with the slightly beat-up green desk that's tucked into a corner. Art by Klee's family members, as well as Klee's own photography ([kleelarsen.com](http://kleelarsen.com)), populate the apartment.

*Above left:* The art in Klee's home includes pieces by Patricia (large painting) and Janaki (foot sculpture), as well as a work by Klee and Janaki's father, Ron Crawford (square painting).

wood boards and adding layers of paint, paper, and resin or wax.

She recently started experimenting with printing her images on transparent paper, such as vellum, then laying the images on

Klee currently ascribes the adjectives "constructed" and "quirky" to the interior. "Having student loans and living in Vancouver does not give you much extra money for home decor," she says. "You have to be inventive. A nice vintage blanket and a couple of throws to cover a couch are more cost-effective than a new couch." (The Ikea sofa anchoring the living room was a gift.) "You don't have to have tons of money to have interesting style," she continues. "It can be as simple as a can of white paint, a score at the flea market, and some sticks from your neighbor's tree."



*Clockwise from left: A hand-me-down desk, chair from a secondhand shop, and painting by Patricia occupy a corner. The previous tenants, Janaki and Pascal, painted the fireplace white. Sheepskins and blankets disguise an Ikea sofa. Sheepskins and blankets disguise an Ikea sofa.*



“In the Larsen family, there’s no stigma to hand-me-downs.”



**B**ACK IN 2009, husband and wife Pascal and Janaki were expecting their first child and “looking to move out of our loft into a more family-oriented neighborhood in Vancouver,” she recalls. “We had been discussing the idea of buying an apartment building as a ‘family compound’ for a while, but the right place never turned up.”

That is, until she received an email one day from a friend who lived in the city’s Kensington area, letting Janaki know about a two-story shingled building a block away from her that had just hit the market. On a whim, Janaki and her aunt, Marie Brennan—who would be making the purchase with the couple—went to the open house. “Pascal was out of town,” says Janaki, “and we bid on it without him even seeing it!”

That may have been for the best. “It was an ugly building then, covered in pale blue stucco,” says Janaki. “But I was smitten with it. I knew that the potential was there to turn it into something larger than

itself. Our building inspector used to come, shake his head, and say, ‘Well, most people would just tear it down.’” Structurally, it was a mess, having been built on a drained marsh. The downstairs was gutted, though they tried to preserve as much as possible. “I was worried it would turn into a soulless space if we couldn’t reuse some of the original materials,” explains Janaki. In all three of the building’s apartment units, they removed one bedroom to open up the otherwise tiny living rooms. They tore down the blue stucco, retiled the kitchens and bathrooms, and replaced aluminum windows with wood ones.

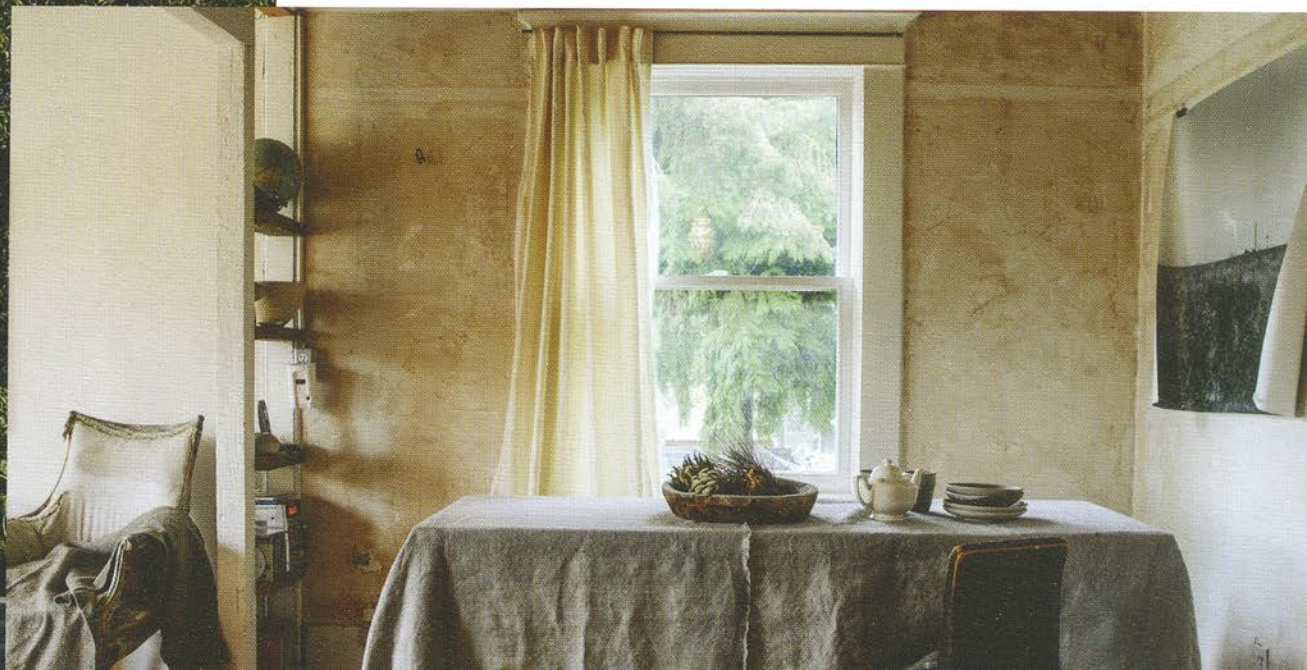
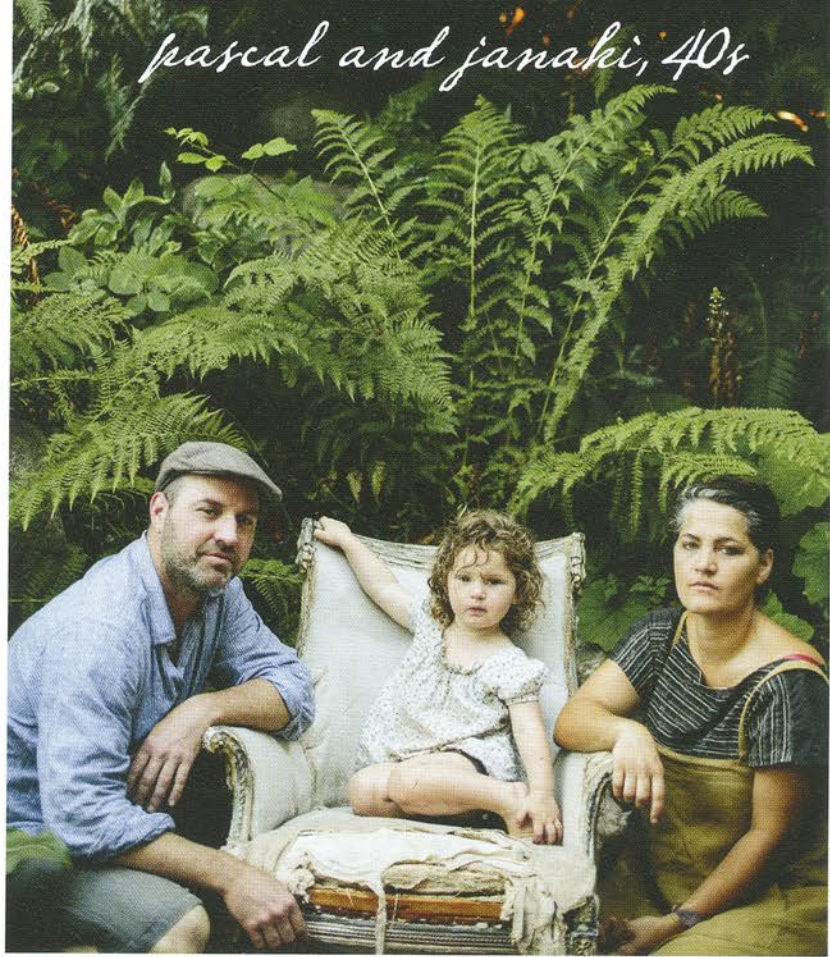
Janaki, 40, and Pascal, 45, initially lived in the ground-floor apartment next to what would become Le Marché St. George. After two years, they moved upstairs, into the unit that Marie had occupied. (Marie has since moved out of the building, and the third apartment is now rented long-term to a family friend.) “We decided to move upstairs to be able to separate a



*This page and opposite, top row (left to right): Le Marché St. George opened in 2010. A tumbleweed is mounted next to a flea market mirror. Pascal and Janaki with their daughter Lola. Middle row: Le Marché pastries. The sofa is from Bombast. The family keeps chickens in the backyard. Bottom row: Le Marché is located at 28th and St. George. One of Klee’s photos is clipped up in the dining room.*



*pascal and janaki, 40s*





The living room's light fixture is a vintage George Nelson design, a gift from Patricia—whose painting hangs above the antique Japanese trunk.



## Janaki's affinity for natural things is apparent throughout the home.

bit from the shop," says Janaki. "I found myself in there at all hours doing things." Today, she is the "obsessive sourcer" for the shop—which specializes in local artisanal fare and hand-made objects—and Pascal helps out (he is also a doctor of Chinese medicine and runs a full-time clinic).

Aside from Mouki in London, Le Marché is the only place to purchase Janaki's ceramics ([janakilarsen.com](http://janakilarsen.com)). She graduated from Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 1999, but has never officially launched her ceramics business; she's hoping to change that in 2014. "Since we've lived here, my studio has been in a closet, the backyard, the sunroom, and soon it will be in the garage," she says. "This is the first time I will have more than 50 square feet to work in in a long time."

When the studio shifts to the garage, the 750-square-foot apartment that she shares with Pascal and four-year-old Lola will be devoted just to living. Janaki's affinity for natural things—a trait she shares with her mother, Patricia, and younger sister, Klee—is apparent throughout the home. "I have vast collections of leaf skeletons, bark samples, pebbles, and rusty bits," she says. In the living room, a tumbleweed hangs above the mantel. "I see it as a wonderful sculpture that would be impossible to make. I have given many as gifts because people love it so much."





In the living room, the sofa was purchased at Bombast and the coffee table found on Craigslist. The space also includes a pair of weathered armchairs that “have been in my life since I was 19,” says Janaki. “They were bought by a friend on Salt Spring Island, sold to my mother, and I finally got them!” A wooden trunk—a Japanese antique—separates the two chairs, as does a painting by Patricia.

Works by Klee are also on display in Janaki and Pascal’s apartment. One of Klee’s photographs, of a woman on a bed, hangs in the stairwell. Another, depicting a prairie and industrial smoke stacks, is in the dining room. The treatment on the dining room walls is courtesy of Marie: when she was living there, she stripped the old wallpaper and then ran a coat of joint compound over the walls. “You get the ghosting of the glue and old paper still,” says Janaki. “The result is pretty fantastic, I think.”

It’s certainly in keeping with Janaki’s style: “crumbling grandeur meets raw and rustic,” as she describes it. “I like things that have had a previous life and traveled a bit. Overall, pretty eclectic—the texture of things drives most of my aesthetic decisions.” She also credits her mother with being the greatest influence on her style. “I’ve never met anyone who can find beauty in the most obscure places. She taught me to see beyond the obvious—to appreciate the decay as much as the new, and that it doesn’t have to be expensive to be beautiful or important. Or even cost anything at all! She is always making things with whatever is available and wherever she is. I admire her fearless, pioneering spirit and am grateful we inherited a bit of that.”



*Top to bottom:* A painting by Patricia in the bedroom of Pascal and Janaki, who met nearly 20 years ago (“He rolled into town from windsurfing in the Baja, with his long curly hair and his French accent,” she recalls). A photo by Klee. For Lola’s room, Janaki “wanted something playful, but not saccharine.”



A sunroom studio with a large window, a pottery wheel, and shelves of ceramic work. The room is filled with natural light from the window, which looks out onto green foliage. In the foreground, a pottery wheel sits on a wooden stool, with a white bowl and a cloth nearby. To the right, a metal shelving unit holds several finished ceramic bowls and plates. The walls are white with vertical paneling.

“I am terrible about taking notes so occasionally something wonderful happens and I cannot reproduce it!” says Janaki of her ceramic work. In her home, she turned the sunroom into a studio.

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