



DESIGN INSPIRATION / HOME TOURS

This Photographer Transformed Her Attic into an Office

How one designer turned a drab attic space to a calming oasis.

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When designing an office space for a photographer, it goes without saying that creativity is a top priority.

Cassandra LaValle of **Coco Kelley** set about designing a space for Seattle-based fine art photographer **Deb Achack** that could serve almost like a blank canvas. Drawing on whitewashed minimalist themes, the new office is airy and serene.

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In the lead image: Benjamin Moore "Classic Gray" OC-23 floor paint color; Benjamin Moore "Ice Mist" OC-67 wall paint color; Benjamin Moore "White Dove" OC-17 millwork and door paint color; Artwork by Deb Achack; Zinc Door Worlds Away Randolph Gold Leaf Sconce, \$297; West Elm Mid-Century Swivel Office Chair, \$279

In this image: Shades of Light Modern Classic Wall Sconce in "Matte Gold", \$130; Blutot Strut Medium Table in "White", \$799

"It's not fluffy or overdone; there's nothing here that's not needed," says LaValle of the office. "Because she's a photographer, she's always switching out her pieces and trying new things, so we wanted it to feel almost like a gallery of sorts. Kind of like a clean palette for her creative endeavors."

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The one caveat? The space Achack had designated as her office is actually the home's attic. 275 square feet of space (plus an adjacent 40 square foot bathroom, which LaValle also updated) was awkwardly shaped and came with full-floor carpeting that made it look a little dated.

Faced with a somewhat barebones budget and the obstacle of figuring out what pieces would actually be able to fit up the stairs, LaValle and the Coco Kelley team set about transforming the attic into a space that would be uniquely Achack's; an escape from the rest of the home and a quiet place to edit and get inspiration.

In this image: Susan Connor cushions

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Four months later, the new office was a complete 180. The bright space is a breath of fresh air that looks warm and inviting despite the relatively minimal decor. LaValle tore up the carpet to find wooden floors that ended up being totally usable, and one coat of

white paint

later added to the room's simple aesthetic.

In this image: Custom-made console by [Department Chicago](#)

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According to LaValle, that simplicity was actually somewhat accidental.

“Our original plan was to build out more of a seating area with custom cushions and add more color to the space, but once we finished the basics [Achack] realised that she wanted it to remain a little more flexible. We ended up keeping it really fluid for her to be able to use however she likes,” she says, noting that Achack’s water-themed photography was part of the inspiration for the fluidity of the space.

In this image: Earnest Home Co. Ines Silver Dipped Stool, \$220

The office’s minimalism really allows the space’s textures—like the macrame hanging or knit throw draped over the staircase that Achack actually knit herself—and more unique fixtures to stand out. A sink left over from the old attic lends a vintage feel, and pieces from local artists make the office special. Of course, Achack’s own art is on full display too.

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“It was really a matter of letting the space tell us what it should be,” says LaValle about styling the more challenging layout. “Often you go into a space and start deciding where you want to put everything, but that doesn’t always work. We all have those spaces in our home that we don’t know what to do with; give yourself the flexibility to not know exactly what it’s going to be right away.”

If this stunning attic transformation is any indication, that’s definitely advice worth following.

Read more of Cassandra LaValle and the team at Coco Kelley’s makeovers [here](#), and be sure to check out Deb Achack’s website at [debachakphotography.com](#).

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