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Japandi meets industrial

PHOTOGRAPHY: LARRY ARNAL



A TORONTO LOFT TRANSFORMED

In downtown Toronto, a compact 900-square-foot penthouse loft has been reimagined as a study in balance – where industrial rawness meets the quiet discipline of Japandi minimalism. Designed by Olivia Bailey, the space celebrates material honesty, light, and proportion, turning a small urban residence into a serene yet expressive home.

At the heart of the design is the original concrete ceiling, complete with exposed ductwork and structural piping – features that many would conceal but Bailey chose to emphasize.





Rather than smoothing away the loft’s imperfections, she allowed them to guide the design vocabulary. The ceiling became both muse and map: its raw texture informed the use of warm wood, stone-like surfaces, and subtle lighting that defines each zone. Suspended glass pendants and linear fixtures echo the loft’s geometry, drawing the eye upward and celebrating the interplay between shadow and texture.

The result is a space that feels expansive yet intimate – a refined dialogue between industrial grit and minimalist calm.

A home with personality and purpose

Designed for a Toronto College graduate student and her playful dog, the loft needed to accommodate both study and sanctuary. Bailey’s approach was to layer functionality within openness. The southwest-facing windows fill the living and kitchen areas with natural light, while a seamless spatial flow connects the lounge, dining, and work zones.

In the kitchen, custom millwork in rich wood tones pairs with Caesarstone Topus Concrete quartz countertops and backsplash, creating an aesthetic that is simultaneously grounded and elevated. Integrated Fisher & Paykel and Bosch appliances ensure professional performance within a compact footprint, while warm under-cabinet lighting adds a soft, ambient glow.

Furniture selections articulate the balance between restraint and expression: a sculptural tangerine Mario Bellini sofa provides a vibrant counterpoint to the otherwise neutral palette, and SMEG appliances lend a touch of retro charm. Every object feels intentional – functional yet personal, unified by a palette of wood, taupe, and matte black.

Serenity in structure

The principal bedroom posed a particular challenge: how to integrate a generous walk-in closet while maintaining openness and preserving the lake view. Bailey’s solution – full-height millwork and built-in cabinetry with recessed lighting – creates a rhythm of vertical planes that expands the sense of height.

Throughout the loft, large-format porcelain tile flooring with underfloor heating offers both durability and comfort, counterbalancing the concrete ceiling above. The tactile contrast is subtle yet powerful – cool and warm, rough and smooth, urban and domestic.



In the bathroom, floating vanities, integrated LED mirrors, and minimalist brass fixtures continue the interplay between function and refinement. Every line feels deliberate, every junction resolved. The result is an atmosphere of quiet luxury – not through opulence, but through clarity.

A cohesive composition

What distinguishes this loft is the unity of its design language. The exposed ceiling, once a utilitarian surface, now acts as the binding element that carries through every room. Its linearity informs the cabinetry proportions, the placement of lighting, and even the furniture alignment – creating a visual and spatial harmony that feels instinctive.

In Bailey’s hands, industrial becomes elegant, and minimalism becomes warm. The space neither hides its structure nor fetishizes it; instead, it integrates the building’s history into a calm, livable narrative.

“Every material choice needed to feel both natural and intentional,” Bailey explains. “The goal was to create a space that feels effortless – where simplicity reveals depth.”

That effortlessness is precisely the achievement. Through careful orchestration of light, form, and material, Olivia Bailey transforms an urban loft into a sanctuary for modern living – one that feels grounded, personal, and unmistakably Toronto. **OD**