

# DOWNTOWN LIVING

## What's in My Loft?

*Downtown Residents Show Off a Few of Their Favorite Things*

BY EMILY MANTHEI • PHOTOS BY GARY LEONARD

### Liana Georgoulis

Rowan Lofts



**R**edondo Beach native Liana Georgoulis has a history with Downtown Los Angeles. She remembers her parents taking her shopping in the fashion and jewelry districts, and to the Coliseum in Exposition Park for the 1984 Summer Olympics. As an adult, she returned to Downtown to use her degree as a volunteer clinical psychologist at the Union Rescue Mission. She soon found herself visiting friends in Arts District lofts.

"I watched the city grow, and



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I just wanted to be part of it and be inspired by its creativity," she says. So, in 2014, she moved to a bright corner unit in the Historic Core's Rowan Lofts. These are some of the items in her home.

1) A black, acoustic Mitchell guitar is a longtime companion — Georgoulis has had it since she was a teenager. "Since living Downtown, I've gotten really into song-writing. This space is so creatively inspiring to me, so I just sit here looking out the window, writing songs," she says. "The fire escape reminds me of a film noir."

2) A 1970s Philips turntable, which she found in Atwater Village, plays all of Georgoulis' records. "I started collecting records two years ago. I try not to tell people about my favorite spot so that they won't take all the best records, but I'll give you a hint: It's right across from this building. I go to the monthly Rock 'N' Roll Flea Market at The Regent, too. I'm a regular." She's been on the hunt for her all-time favorite album, The Clash's *London Calling*, but so far the price hasn't been right.

3) A framed print of Debbie Harry, signed by photographer Lee Black Childers, is one of Georgoulis' prized possessions. It comes with a story: "I went to one of his photography exhibits at a counter-culture gallery called Lethal Amounts, which my friend opened on Seventh Street," she says. "Childers told a bunch of amazing stories about his experiences with Lou Reed, Iggy Pop, Debbie Harry and all the greats. He signed this photo for me that night, and a week later he died. That was his last hurrah."

4) By her bed, Georgoulis keeps a large fishbowl terrarium, filled with a scene from her annual trip to Joshua Tree. "I go to Joshua Tree every year for a few days and camp with friends, climb the rock piles and just generally have a hippie retreat. I tried to re-create the place where we always stay inside this terrarium. It's like its own tiny world." Inside are succulents, including a plant known as a Miniature Joshua Tree. The terrarium is one of many plants around the loft. "I love my plants. I sing to them, and I guess it works. They love the singing, and they love the light in here."



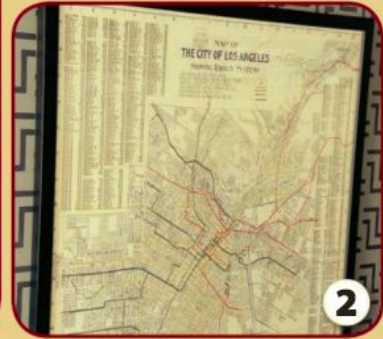
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## Scott and Cait Benson Eckardt Building

Scott and Cait Benson enjoy watching the skyline change outside their window on Los Angeles Street. "We like to count the cranes and see what's going on over there," says Cait, who moved Downtown in 2009. The director of student activities at FIDM and her husband of six months, a talent agent with offices in the Eastern Columbia Building, both enjoy their no-car commutes. Scott has lived at the Fashion District's Eckardt Building since 2011. They share the home with their dog Orson.

1) A bookshelf with Americana-infused items epitomizes the couple's style. When Cait moved in, she admits it was a challenge to integrate her belongings with Scott's. "He already had his place here, but I had to kinda tone down the sports nostalgia theme and get rid of some of my Moroccan stuff from my last place," she says. He adds, "This whole bookshelf is the culmination of everything we've built together. It holds her typewriter, my dad's baseball glove, a Moroccan lamp from her old place, milk bottles from my hometown and things we find together at flea markets."

2) Journeys to the Central Library inspired much of the couple's wall decorations, including a reproduction of a Downtown streetcar map. "This rail system is gone, but the map at least lives on, and the Metro follows its legacy," Scott says. "I didn't have a car for a while so I was using Metro all the time. Now, we only have one car between the two of us. And the cool thing about Downtown is, we almost never have to leave. Our car sits in the



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garage and basically only goes out on weekends."

3) A 1920s Victrola hand-crank record player, polished to perfection with a dark cherry finish, is one of Scott's favorite possessions. Scott cranks it, throws on a wax record and a tinny piano sounds from the speakers. "I bought this from someone in San Francisco right after I met Cait. We love listening to records together, but it's not the best for a party." Grinning, Cait adds, "It's okay listening to this for about 20 minutes, but after a while the speakers can be grating."

4) A watercolor map of Downtown, drawn by one of Cait's FIDM students, Chloe White, was a unique inclusion with the couple's wedding invite. "We wanted our guests to know about our favorite places Downtown, so we incorporated them into our wedding weekend and gave everyone a map," Cait says. "We got married at the Carondelet House near MacArthur Park, had our reception at Terroni, and had everyone stay at the Los Angeles Athletic Club overnight. We also told them to check out the Last Bookstore, Walt Disney Concert Hall and Seven Grand — that's where we had our first date."



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2) Brimhall whips open her balcony door overlooking Grand Avenue to reveal a thriving succulent garden. "I've started gardening since moving to Downtown. It's so hot out here, but these succulents don't seem to mind. You just snip a few clippings from somebody's plant and stick them in the ground. Suddenly it starts growing.

3) Ivory figurines created by Alaskan artists are a treasure

from Brimhall's days in Nome. "I became very interested in the native carvers and artisans. I felt like they were getting ripped off by selling their beautiful carvings in the bar just to get beer money," she says. "I wanted to help them protect themselves, so I did a conference at Fairbanks University on art law and eventually became well-known enough in Alaska to become the first director of the Institute of Native Alaskan Arts. These are pieces from artisans that I knew personally."

4) A wood cheese board, complete with a decorative cast-iron cow figurine, represents one of Brimhall's favorite things about Downtown: great food. "My staff gets together here at my office on Fridays, and we always make dinner together. Food and camaraderie are sacred to us, and that's what makes my business special. We were all so excited about the Whole Foods opening down the block, and now it's where we get all of our dinner ingredients. I got this cheese board down the street, too. It's perfect for the cheese course before Friday dinners."