

Catification: Designing a Happy and Stylish Home for Your Cat (and You!)

By Jackson Galaxy, Kate Benjamin

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A *New York Times* bestseller! The star of Animal Planet's hit television series *My Cat from Hell*, Jackson Galaxy, shows cat owners everywhere how to make their homes both cat-friendly and chic.

Cat owners know the struggles of creating living spaces that are both functional *and* stylish for owner and cat. Don't just go to your local pet shop and adorn your home with unattractive cat towers and kitty beds. In *Catification*, Jackson Galaxy, the star of Animal Planet's *My Cat from Hell*, and Kate Benjamin, of the popular cat design website Hauspanther.com, walk readers through a step-by-step process of designing an attractive home that is also an optimal environment for cats.

This gorgeously designed, full-color book includes more than twenty fun DIY projects, from kitty beds and litter boxes to catios (cat patios) that will be sure to make readers—and their cats—purr in approval.

Catification: Designing a Happy and Stylish Home for Your Cat (and You!) By Jackson Galaxy, Kate Benjamin Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"If you have cats, you need this book. Galaxy, star of the television series *My Cat from Hell* and author of *Cat Daddy*, along with Benjamin, founder of the cat design website hauspanther.com, show in over 400 color photographs myriad ways to make your home cat-friendly without looking like a crazy cat person. **Best Interior Design Book of 2014.**"

—**Library Journal**

"**Catification** is user friendly, includes photos and diagrams and some truly inspirational ideas. Whether you share your home with one cat or ten, **Catification: Designing a Happy and Stylish Home for Your Cat (and you!)**, is a must have. There are design ideas for every budget and every skill level. **FIVE STARS** (out of five)."

—**Examiner.com**

"Jackson Galaxy and Kate Benjamin know just how to transform your pad into a kitty-friendly paradise without wrecking a room's aesthetic."

—**New York Daily News**

"Even if you are DIY challenged and on very tight budget, there's such a range of ideas for all types of people, cats, and homes."

—**Adopt a Pet.com**

"Full of DIY tutorials, tips for understanding your cat's specific needs, plenty of examples to draw inspiration from, and other essential ingredients you'll need to create a home that is suited for both your feline companion (or companions) and your sense of design. Due to its focus on filling the pages with large, high quality photos and easy-to-follow, illustrated DIY tutorials (drawn by local graphic designer Catherine Madrid), *Catification* is like no other book on the market."

—**Phoenix New Times**

"One of my favorite things about **Catification** is that it encourages pet parents and cat lovers to look through the eyes of a cat. It is a funny and informative book with lots of tips that will get you excited about how you can make your cat even happier about being in your forever home! Even if your cat seems pleased with their environment, I recommend taking a look at this book."

—**Purrfect Cat Names**

Praise for *Cat Daddy*:

"A joy. . . . Sometimes the biggest stories are actually the smallest ones—one man, one cat, and a quiet love that was large enough to save them both."

—**Gwen Cooper, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Homer's Odyssey* and *Love Saves the Day***

"This book is no ordinary cat memoir, nor is it an ordinary cat advice book. It is an inspirational tour de force that offers an intimate glimpse of Jackson, the man, and Jackson, the Cat Daddy."

—**Ingrid King, publisher and founder, *The Conscious Cat*, and award-winning author of *Buckley's***

Story: Lessons from a Feline Master Teacher

"Mr. Galaxy—shaved head, arms full of tattoos—seems physically at odds with his gentle voice and gentle approach to animals. . . . But though he may be dealing with humans who have been terrorized and even bloodied by their out-of-control pets, he's a model of consistency. The cats, not the people, are his No. 1 priority."

—*The New York Times*

About the Author

Jackson Galaxy is a cat behaviorist and the host of Animal Planet's hit show *My Cat from Hell*. He is also the author of *Cat Daddy: What the World's Most Incurable Cat Taught Me About Life, Love, and Coming Clean*.

Kate Benjamin is the founder of the popular cat design website *Hauspanther.com*. She makes frequent guest appearances on *My Cat from Hell*, helping Jackson Galaxy create stylish cat-friendly environments.

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It's a great time to be "the cat guy."

When I started out my life working with animals, around 1993, it was at a shelter in Boulder, Colorado. Within weeks of realizing that the cats had something they wanted to tell me, the other staff members seemed to smell a cat person in their presence. They immediately christened me "Catboy," and put me on the job of decoding everything about cats for everybody. Good thing I was up for the challenge.

Back then, the sense of cats being "other" from humans was clearly prevalent. I mean, if shelter workers were scratching their heads about cat behavior, imagine what the rest of the world was thinking (or not). As a matter of fact, as my knowledge base grew and I refined my techniques, I branched out to other shelters to find the same desperately inquisitive population. You will never find a more compassionate lot than those who dedicate their lives to caring for homeless animals. That said, we were in dire straits. We were labeling as "unadoptable" cats who were acting out from a place that not enough people understood. In the reality of that time, "unadoptable" meant "euthanized." If that didn't give Catboy a sense of urgency, nothing would.

As I left the shelter to pursue private practice, I was constantly up against a seemingly unsolvable puzzle: guardians cared enough to hire me instead of "getting rid of the cat," and that was fantastic; at the same time, however, the suggestion that problems could be remedied by adding more litter boxes, toys, and trees (and, of course, not hiding them in the basement) was a distinctly unwelcome one. We wanted the problem gone, but the solution was aesthetically *painful* to most. Almost all of the guardians I came in contact with were panicked that if I had my way, I would turn their home into the "crazy cat lady house."

Of course, that sense of aesthetic panic on the part of my clients panicked me. It wasn't just a matter of not wanting a litter box in the living room; it symbolized a lack of true empathy toward, and an investment in, *love for* cats. We could easily bear the notion of spreading dog blankets, toys, dishes, beds and stinky rawhides around our house. We wouldn't ask to hide our dogs' existence any more than we would try to hide our children. In the meantime, cats, and the smallest perceptible evidence that they actually lived in our homes, rode squarely in the back of the domestic bus.

In the ensuing twenty years, I've been privileged to witness the cat renaissance; those that were considered "other"—alien, aloof, more furniture than family—are enjoying a surge in popularity like no other time in

their “domesticated” history. We hungrily devour cat memes, watch cat videos by the tens of millions (even creating celebrities out of those video cats) and, thankfully for those of us in the rescue community, adopt them in record numbers. The animal that for tens of thousands of years enjoyed a great reputation as a working animal—controlling rodents on farms, for instance—has become a bona fide companion.

A truly amazing bonus to being seen as a companion is that under the surface we are asking not only what we can do for cats to make their lives better, but we are acknowledging what they do for us. Cats are now seen by millions as supportive family members, bearers of unconditional love. We better understand that cats don’t show love and devotion like dogs do, and so we invest in the time needed to learn a new language.

You may think of *Catfication* as a design book; it is so much more than that. In the same way that our refusal to add litter boxes symbolized cat shame, what you will see in this book symbolizes cat love. It doesn’t illustrate what lengths “those crazy cat people” will go to, but rather the maturation of us as humans. At the very core of my belief system is the knowledge that a meaningful relationship with the animal world completes us as humans. The concept of “dominion,” of a natural order of things that has us dominating cats with an iron fist and without regard to their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, is simply an old way of thinking. I jokingly say that successfully living with cats relies on your ability to compromise. Learning the language of cats, and changing up our environment to accommodate them, to me, is a symbol of our evolution, as it demonstrates our willingness, on a deep level, to compromise for the sake of an animal’s happiness.

And where does that leave us? In a pretty good place.

I hope you believe that what you hold in your hands is something far beyond a design book. It’s a celebration. A home that proudly advertises that you care about your own comfort as well as that of your animal companions is beautiful to some, but for shelter workers, rescuers, foster parents, and others, it’s a moment to shed a tear of gratitude. Cats have cleared a significant hurdle in their timeline. And make no mistake, that timeline has been a rough one. Does *Catfication* mean that we’re on our way to becoming like the ancient Egyptians, deifying and burying cats alongside our human family members? Maybe not. Elevating cats, however, means we care not only about the ones in our homes, but *all of them*. We are beginning to care—not just on the lunatic fringe but across the human spectrum—about whether they live or die. And that means more will live. Soon, millions fewer every year will die. And *that* makes it a good time to be the Catboy.

A friendly greeter at the front door. A fuzzy bed warmer on a cold night. A purring companion curled up on your lap. Living with cats gives us a certain pleasure no other animal companion can provide. Cats are elegant, intelligent, loving creatures that have entered our homes and our hearts. In return for what they give us, we, as responsible cat guardians, must provide them with the things they need to live in a happy, healthy, safe, and stimulating environment.

Keeping cats indoors is the best way to ensure they live long, healthy lives. Yes, cats have natural instincts, such as climbing and hunting, which can be fulfilled when they go outside, but the dangers far outweigh the benefits. Outdoor cats face threats from cars, poisons, being trapped or locked in places they shouldn’t be, fights with other outdoor animals, and further unthinkable outcomes. We’re here to tell you that you can (and should) keep your beloved feline family members safely indoors, and that you can easily give them all the things they need to thrive. That is what *Catfication* is all about.

The *Catfication* process starts by understanding how your cat sees the world. Consider yourself the designer and your cat, your client. It’s your responsibility to understand your client’s needs and preferences. We

introduce you to the concept of “cat mojo” in this book, giving you all the tools you need so you can think (and more important, *feel*) like your feline.

In Part 1, we first show you how cats in general are hardwired to see their environment. Then we help you discover your own cat’s specific preferences. Armed with this new information, you will be inspired to enhance your cat’s environment to accommodate his or her likes and dislikes, encourage positive behaviors, and discourage negative ones.

Part 2 offers a full range of project ideas and inspiration for creating a well-designed and cat-friendly home that provides your cat with the stimulation he or she needs in a way that makes you happy, too. Please don’t think you have to cover everything in your house with beige carpet to Catify! That is definitely not the case. You can live with a cat and still have a home you are proud to show off. Catification comes in every style; it just takes a little inspiration and creativity.

Catification doesn’t have to be a huge undertaking. It can be as simple as rearranging some furniture. We show you a variety of projects, including many that are easy and inexpensive. We hope you will find something to inspire you at the level where you are comfortable—whatever your skill or budget.

Why Catify?

Catification has immediate and obvious benefits for both you and your cat. Many behavior problems can be reduced or even eliminated with the introduction of certain environmental enhancements. Catification is essential, whether you have one cat or several, but in a multi-cat household, it is especially critical. It’s the only way to keep the peace among multiple cats living in the same home. Environmental enhancements give everyone the space they need to coexist and live peacefully, even in a very small living space. Catified homes can reduce stress levels for all occupants—human, feline, canine, etc. Lowering stress can reduce health problems and even increase life expectancy, for everybody.

Ultimately, if your cat is happier, you will be happier, too, and the bond between you will deepen.

It is our hope that the information and ideas in this book will inspire more people to bring cat companions into their homes and their lives. We are facing an enormous pet overpopulation problem in the United States, and cats more frequently suffer the consequences than any other animal. We feel Catification is one of the key factors in changing this trend. If cat guardians can understand how their cats see the world and make the necessary changes to accommodate those preferences, more cats will stay in happy forever homes, and fewer will be sent to shelters or, worse, outside to fend for themselves.

Opening your heart and your home to a cat companion (or two!) is one of the most rewarding things you can do.

Let’s Catify!

Jackson and Kate

Cats are hardwired to see the world a certain way. If you take the time to understand your cat’s perspective, it will be much easier to Catify your home. Of course, every cat is different, and we get to that in an upcoming chapter, but first, let’s put on our cat glasses and take a look at how and why cats see their environment the way they do.

Who Is the Raw Cat?

If you strip away all the trappings of the modern domestic housecat—the fancy beds, the cushy lifestyle, the food on demand—what’s left is the Raw Cat, essentially a wild animal who is a dedicated, carnivorous hunter, and an animal positioned firmly in the middle of the food chain; in other words, every one of his or her senses is honed as both predator and prey. The Raw Cat always has one eye open—whether hunting, securing resources, defending his or her territory, or even sleeping and eliminating. It’s all done with the sharpened senses of kill or be killed. Watch your cat come to life as he spots a moth on the ceiling or a bird outside the window—that’s the Raw Cat engaging prey. Observe your cat’s eyes, ears, and musculature as she sees another cat enter the room—that’s the Raw Cat preparing and executing a friend-or-foe kind of threat assessment of her territory. These are the behaviors responsible for the successful propagation of the species for tens of thousands of years.

As you learn more about the Raw Cat and how domestic cats are hard-wired, start observing your cat and ask yourself the following questions:

“How does my cat tap into his or her inner Raw Cat?”

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lewis Lin:

Do you have favorite book? If you have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to be aware of everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or maybe goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They are reading whatever they get because their hobby is definitely reading a book. How about the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, person feel need book after they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will want this Catification: Designing a Happy and Stylish Home for Your Cat (and You!).

Andrew Schulz:

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