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CREATING A STYLISH HOME

Function is also important, designer reminds

Eugenia Triandos, principal designer at Hibou Design & Co.

Aman Than of Aman Than Interiors. *PHOTOS MIKE CHAJECKI*

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This is the second in a two-part series. Last week looked at common design mistakes and solutions.

In a time when trends are constantly evolving, creating a stylish home that stands the test of time can seem like a formidable task.

Rather than chasing the latest trend that could go out of style by the time you've completed your makeover, consider incorporating timeless design elements.

"It's important to remember that when designing a space, you're not just trying to create a stylish home but one that is also highly functional," says Eugenia Triandos, principal designer at Montreal-based Hibou Design & Co.

Here a couple of essential elements that can help you achieve your goal:

CURATE YOUR COLOUR PALETTE. Selecting a coherent palette will set the "foundational tone" for the entire space, Triandos advises. "Whether you opt for a more serene colour palette or bold contrasting hues, consistency in colour application is key to creating create visual unity within your space," she says.

Colour plays a crucial role in setting a mood and defining a space's personality, adds Aman Than, founder and principal designer of Aman Than Interiors in Brampton. Because we're spoiled for choice, choosing a colour can be overwhelming. "I always start with a timeless neutral base and add a hint of colour that speaks to my client's liking and personality," she says.

But she's not afraid to choose a statement colour in some spaces. "A bold colour such as dark navy, deep chocolate brown or deep burgundy can do wonders in a library, creating a backdrop for a cozy, Old World, charming space."

SPLURGE ON PRIMARY PIECES. You may not be able to afford a variety of high-end pieces for your space but make sure your high-ticket items are the most important ones, such as a sofa or bed. "If you want something to last, it's better to splurge on those larger, high-ticket items that will remain timeless and will withstand evolving design trends," Triandos says.

LAYER THE LIGHTING. This is important because lighting serves as a "cornerstone" to setting an ambiance within a space, Triandos advises. A blend of ambient, task and accent lights across your space – from scones to standing lamps – will "really elevate" your home and result in a "multi-dimensional aesthetic" that will cater to various functional requirements.

Than echoes the importance of layering the lighting to create just the right ambiance. "A well-designed room with improper lighting can hinder its beauty," she says. "Creating a lighting plan based on the functionality of the space that includes task lighting, to accent lighting to ambiance lighting is a must. Natural light is irreplaceable. Lighting impacts colour perception as well. Always choose lights to complement the undertones of your wall colours."

Textures and patterns enhance visual interest, says interior designer Eugenia Triandos.

All cool white lighting is among her pet peeves. "It makes your home cold, uninviting and unrelaxing. Cool white light is ideal for offices and hospitals as it makes the space look professional and enhances productivity, but warm light has the opposite effect and is well-suited for homes," says Than. She recommends light bulbs with a colour temperature ranging from 2700K to 3200K.

CREATE VISUAL BALANCE. A well-balanced room feels comfortable and is pleasing to the eye but there are two approaches to achieving balance that can significantly impact the feel and functionality of a space: symmetrical balance and asymmetrical balance.

The first has a more formal and classic vibe, while the second is more relaxed and modern. "A symmetrically-balanced room is easy to spot. The repetition of items in the space creates symmetry," Than says. "Asymmetrical balance comes from visual balance. Rather than repeating the same item, the balance is achieved by the use of colour, shapes, patterns and texture."

Than is a fan of asymmetrical balance. "For example, I love to use matching nightstands and lamps in a bedroom. I find symmetry calming and easy to live with in my day-to-day life."

FOCUS ON TEXTURES, PATTERNS. Among the "most versatile elements" of interior design, textures and patterns can be used to create mood and add interest, depth and character to any space, says Than. "For example, using a geometric throw pillow on a plain neutral sofa and an organic jute area rug can elevate your room's style. I love using wallpaper to bring pattern and texture to my spaces."

Interior designer Aman Than likes to start with a timeless neutral base and add a hint of colour that speaks to her client's personality.

The designers at Hibou Design & Co. strive to introduce a variety of textures and patterns in every project to enhance visual interest. Doing so also creates a "more earthy and aesthetic space," says Triandos. "We usually opt for more muted tones, so a lot of the visual interest comes from the various textures we source from different items throughout the home."

ADD YOUR PERSONAL TOUCH. "Infusing your space with personal pieces engenders a sense of individuality and warmth," she says. "Be it curated artwork or bespoke decor items, these elements reflect a person's unique identity."