

property



INTERNAL AFFAIRS

So what will the home of 2017 look like on the inside? We speak to some of the cities most respected voices to find out what they feel the interior of 2017 will entail. From tropical prints to copper and brass, we consider the kitchen, bathroom and living spaces.

Clair Strong Interior Design

The home of 2017 will be big, bright, and bold. After the soft and serene Scandi-inspired looks of previous years, there seems to have been a shift towards vibrant maximalism.

On a philosophical level, this could be a reaction to recent political and social events. When things seem a bit dark and gloomy, the world of art and design often swings the opposite way.

☛ **Brass is a great choice if you want something rugged and industrial, but still glamorous. Pair with raw, natural materials like timber, clay and cork or for a sleeker finish; marble.**

On an aesthetic level, I think after years of magnolia reigning supreme, people are simply craving more colour. So we're seeing bright hues, playful patterns and warm materials replace cool neutrals and subtle detailing.

There have been a lot of interior design trends forecast for 2017. I've picked three that go really well together and can be made as maximalist or minimalist as you like. They are: tropical prints, the colour green (in part inspired by Pantone's colour of the year) and brass.

Tropical prints are everywhere, from cushions and curtains to wallpaper and furniture. They can look amazing (and I say that as a die-

hard minimalist) but they are quite loud, so I recommend exercising a bit of caution. An accent wall in palm leaf wallpaper or a few well-placed botanical cushions can be really effective. More than that and you risk overwhelming the eye.

Green – in all its verdant glory – is a great colour to use in the home as it represents balance and harmony. It's a natural companion to the tropical trend too. 'Greenery', a mossy, spring-like hue is Pantone's Colour of the Year but I prefer emerald. It's a warm and inviting tone that always feels a bit opulent and indulgent. Plus it goes remarkably well with a lot of other colours.

Various metallic materials have come and gone over the past few years. It started with gold before moving swiftly onto copper and now brass is the metal du jour. Brass is a great choice if you want something rugged and industrial, but still glamorous. Pair with raw, natural materials like timber, clay and cork or for a sleeker finish; marble.

Clair Strong Interior Design is a small, friendly, creative business based in Bath and London, providing services for residential and commercial clients.

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Choosing art for your home

Are you struggling to find the 'right' painting to complete your living room? Or are you looking to design a whole new décor for your home, but want to start with a dramatic piece of artwork?

With art having such a big influence on how your home looks and feels, finding something that ticks all the boxes can prove a real challenge. Naomi Pound, Design Director at Kersfield, has teamed up with Bridget Sterling, Director at local gallery, Bath Contemporary, to choose artwork for the show house at the stunning new Lansdown Fields development by Kersfield. The resulting pieces help to show off the show house's best features, while making the space feel 'lived in'.

Here, they share their top tips on how to choose the best pieces for your home ...

Know where to look

If you're new to buying art, knowing where to start can be one of the most daunting aspects. "With the internet such a popular starting point for all kinds of purchasing decisions these days, people often think it's better to approach artists directly online, rather than going through a gallery," explains Bridget.

"But what they don't realise is that, if an artist is being represented by a gallery, their work will sell at the same price as when buying directly. We simply make sure their work gets seen by more people and manage the sale, which is something most artists prefer not to do."

Naomi also recommends visiting the Affordable Art Fair, plus taking in exhibitions at art schools, where you may meet talented emerging young artists eager for a commission.

Have a budget in mind

Unless you have thousands to splash on whatever may take your fancy, it's worth having a maximum figure in mind. This will help keep you grounded in those 'wow' moments, when you spot something you love, but which far exceeds your price range.

For entry-level buyers in particular, Bridget she strongly recommends original prints. Unlike a giclée print, which is a reproduction print produced on an ink-jet printer, an original print has been hand printed by an artist. With prices starting at around £50-£100, they don't have to be an expensive option and they hold their value far more than a reproduction.

Create a 'flow'

At a basic level, this means choosing colours that complement each other – either matching a piece of artwork to your existing colour scheme, or picking two or three colours from the piece and adding accents from that around the room. Similarly, try to repeat shapes and angles throughout your scheme. "For example, if your furniture features hard, industrial edges, choose artwork that incorporates sharp lines and angles," says Naomi.

"It's about making sure that nothing jars and everything 'talks' to each other. This creates a more comfortable space."

Consider your space

Whichever room you're buying for, Naomi's advice is to think about the atmosphere you'd like to create there.

"Some artists have a noisy energy to their style and their work often fits well within busy environments such as kitchens and living areas. As you would expect, quieter pieces work better in rooms where you might want to create a calmer setting, such as bedrooms and bathrooms."

It's also important to make sure you consider scale.

"I don't think artwork should ever dominate the architecture of a home – it should allow

architectural features to 'breathe' – so it's important to go for a scale that's in proportion to the surroundings," adds Naomi.

Think before you hang

So, you've found 'the one' and you're keen to get it up on the wall as soon as possible. But, as Bridget points out, there are certain 'rules' when it comes to hanging artwork.

"It sounds obvious, but try not to hang paintings too high, even if you have high ceilings – they should be at eye level, not above your head! That's a mistake people make a lot."

And how do you make sure your new piece is shown off to its best advantage? This is where good lighting comes in.

"Picture lights can interfere with the artwork, so instead, I'd recommend recessed down-lighters – especially if they're directional, so you can angle them to wash the wall with light without shining directly on your piece," advises Naomi.

Find an emotional connection

Whether it reminds you of a special holiday, a specific memory, or just gives you a good feeling, both Naomi and Bridget agree that by far the most important factor to consider when buying art for your home is finding an emotional connection.

As Bridget says: "You must buy art because you love it. You'll know when you have it because the piece will jump off the wall and wrap itself around you!"

Naomi adds: "It's vital to remember that artwork will become the focal point of a room. It absolutely carries the interiors so it's important to really consider it quite carefully. It's probably one of the single most important purchases you'll make for your interior."

"But as long as you go for something you truly connect with, you won't go too far wrong."

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