



Designers Reveal Fall's Biggest Interior Trends

By Kimberly Biesiada

Understanding this season's biggest interior design trends gives custom framing retailers a leg up when consulting with customers who have recently purchased or renovated their home, or are simply planning to redecorate a room. Equipped with this knowledge, as well as knowledge of their customers' design preferences, a framer can create a package that truly complements the style of the home and serves as an eye-catching focal point. PFM asked some of the industry's leading designers what they believe to be the biggest interior trends for fall.

Wall Colors and Patterns

Designers are taking note of several wall color trends for fall. Steve McKenzie, owner of McKenzie Design LLC in Atlanta, GA and former chief designer and CEO of Larson-Juhl, says he sees an increase in bolder hues. "We've moved out of the gray phase, which is awesome," he says. "I see a lot of blush emerging in projects, as well as a robin's egg blue. These colors are complementary to skin tones, particularly the blush; they're nice colors for dining rooms and more."

In addition to robin's egg blue and blush pink, Michael Pacitti—an industry consultant and longtime design instructor who is associated with the Color Marketing Group and the Color Association of the United States—notes the popularity of other Mid-Century Modern colors, including mustard and turquoise. "I'm also hearing a lot of reports that navy blue will be very strong for fall," Pacitti says.

There are increasing instances of darker, richer hues being used on walls as well, according to Daniel Beauchemin, owner and CEO of Chelsea Frames in New York City. Beauchemin sees demand for "rich jewel tones," with walls and ceilings painted the same color. McKenzie echoes that sentiment, saying navy blue and dark green are popular wall color choices. He also notes the use of high-gloss paint in sitting rooms and dining room ceilings.

Today's design-forward customers aren't shying away from wallpaper, either. "Wallpaper is definitely having its moment again," says McKenzie. "I'm seeing really unique colors, as well as a lot of big, bold patterns that are being used in my and other designers' work."

Pacitti says wallpaper that looks like slate or stone



● Navy blue is predicted to be a top wall color this season. Above photo and lead photo (p. 20) courtesy of Michael Pacitti

has been popular, as customers are more conscious of texture as an important element of interior design. He also notes the emergence of geometric tile and painted cement fresco walls.

Flooring Materials and Stains

Texture, like color, goes beyond walls. Patterned concrete and cement tile are “really having a moment” as flooring materials, according to McKenzie. He adds that he’s also noticing Moorish or Arabesque patterns—“it’s exciting to see on floors,” he says.

Wood floors are still hugely popular in modern interiors. McKenzie says customers are moving away from dark wood to lighter wood flooring, including some light gray, white, and recycled wood stains.

Beauchemin notes the use of natural stone and white marble floors, as well as tiles that look like wood and wood made to look like concrete. He also says “wider planking, new and interesting wood species, and herringbone overscales” are hot trends among his clients. In terms of overall design, light-colored walls paired with dark tiles on the floor can provide an attractive contrast in living spaces.

Furniture Styles and Periods

While many people stuck to one predominant style when decorating their homes in the past, today’s homeowners aren’t afraid to mix and match elements from different design periods—even within the same room. “I think what’s

really exciting is seeing people break out of the mold of one vernacular style,” McKenzie says. “Having a mix of styles brings a lot of energy to the space. People feel comfortable breaking the rules.”

McKenzie sees modern styles of furniture being used more often; at the same time, he also notes a comeback in antique, brown, English, and French furniture pieces being used in many rooms.

Pacitti, similarly, sees “an incredible mix of periods” throughout clients’ homes. “One room is Art Deco; the next is Art Nouveau,” he says. “People like matching, too; matching their couch to the wallpaper, for instance.”

Beauchemin notes the popularity of classic styles, like Bauhaus, as well as rustic-industrial “with a sophisticated edge.” Although homeowners may furnish with pieces that have industrial and exposed structures, there is also a polish to them that ties the room together and keeps the style “thought-out eclectic,” rather than “haphazard eclectic,” he says. According to Beauchemin, brass and other rich metals like pewter and bronze can be found in the bases of many in-demand decorative pieces.

Decorative Accents

The colors, patterns, and textures that are trending in today’s curated homes can also be found in decorative accent pieces. Blush pink is showing up not only on walls but also throughout living spaces, according to Connie M. Cook, senior product manager of Crescent. Cook, who also runs a design blog on Crescent’s website, says the dusty pink hue “is making a huge impact in home decor. It creates a sophisticated yet soothing mood and easily adapts to many materials and design styles. Blush made a strong showing at the 2018 International Contemporary Furniture Fair and was found in surfaces including ceramics, leather, and fabric upholstery.”

Pacitti says bold colors like Pantone’s 2018 Color of the Year, Ultra Violet, are best employed as accents in the overall aesthetic of a room—for example, in a throw pillow or the submat of a framed picture. “If you go crazy with color, it’s too much,” he says. “A person probably won’t buy a lapis blue suit, but they’ll buy a lapis blue tie.”

Beyond color, Cook says she has noticed the return of macrame and string art in home decor, as well as crochet and cross-stitch embroidery. Cook says the trend, borne of today’s maker movement, “celebrates traditional crafts but with modern twists.”



● International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF), 2018, New York, NY. Courtesy of Connie Cook, Crescent



● NEOCON 2018, Chicago. Courtesy of Connie Cook, Crescent

Trends and Framing

There are many color palettes, moulding styles, and mat cutting techniques that are mainstays of the custom framing industry—and they have endured for a reason. Perennial designs will always be an important part of a framer's repertoire, and revolving your sales around current trends won't lead to long-term success. But keeping up-to-date on popular interior trends gives framers an advantage at the counter; they can better tie in their frame design with the overall aesthetic of their customers' space.

"The framer needs to be part of the dialog of the interior," McKenzie says. "Frame the piece in a way that looks beautiful in the room and brings more attention to the artwork and the finished piece."

Pacitti contends that "Custom framers are designers, not decorators," and should be in tune with what is trending in interior design from year to year. To keep up with this ever-changing subject, Pacitti suggests visiting local furniture stores and taking note of what trends they see.

He also encourages frame retailers to keep corner samples that reflect multiple decorative styles in stock. "If a framer has someone come in who wants to decorate their home in a Mid-Century Modern style, the framer should have products in that style." Pacitti says a smart way to show customers you have what they're looking for is to put together "mood boards" with moulding and mat-board grouped together in style-specific displays.

Showcasing perennially popular frame designs while also staying on top of what's trending in today's homes is the key to retailers' success. As Beauchemin, who recommends highlighting classic materials that are transitional and mix well, puts it: "Avoid 'trendy,' but be aware of trends." **PFM**

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