

Bring in Art for More Style

By Brooke Robb

Have you ever walked into a home and been dazzled by an eclectic selection of framed art? Vivid portraits of family members, mysterious black and white nature prints, misty mountain peaks from a past vacation, all can all bring warmth, texture, personality-- not to mention plenty of conversation, into your home. If you have boxes of unframed photos or barren walls with no dressings, then here are a few tips on how get your home feeling more colorful and festive!

First, use what you have. Not all memorable works of art are expensive. Decorative postcards, greeting cards, maps, a favorite scene from an old calendar, or a pressed leaf can all be elevated to a new level and presentation with a matte



Quads Forum By Ramone Dupree
Cottonwood Art Gallery
101 Conejos, Colorado Springs, CO

and frame. The vibrant colors and high quality papers now used to produce some of these items can have long-lasting value. Children's drawings, for example, can take on a whole new personality when matted and framed. Instead of water-stained colorings thumb-



Ramone Dupree
Local Fine Artist

tacked or held by a magnet to a fridge, why not frame a few to add charm, color, and personality into a study, downstairs den or bath? Just imagine how proud the young artist will feel.

When choosing a frame, remember that it should never overwhelm the contents. Sometimes neutral shades, or even a frame that matches the wall itself, can make the picture stand out even more. Instead of having all of your pictures matted and framed professionally,

consider the advantages of removable frames that you can do yourself from a hobby store. Removable frames allow you the convenience to switch out and update pictures and can be a great way to transform a room for the changing seasons, or to celebrate the holidays.

Be creative with your matting. Again, the matting should complement the contents without overwhelming the eye. Sometimes using a very large matting for an old family portrait, for example, can give a powerful presence to something that might otherwise be overlooked within a small frame or collage.

How you arrange your pictures can make more of a statement than the pictures themselves. A framed picture or photograph by itself can seem awkward or stale and can leave the surrounding space empty and disparate. Grouping pictures together, on the other hand, can create a theme, rhythm or pattern to unify spaces within a room. Choosing the same frames to display a series of nature photographs, for example, can bring sophistication and intrigue to an otherwise barren space. Remember to use a level for this type of presentation, as any flaws will be easy to detect.

In casual living room areas, charm and personality are more important than rigid perfectionism. Let loose a little! Find a similar theme, then, experiment with the rest. Don't be scared to mix up different sized frames, colors and shapes. Try grouping the pictures together in a cluster above a sofa or in a hallway. Arrange larger sized pictures towards the center and piece in the gaps with

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medium and smaller sized pictures around the periphery.

When mounting pictures, the rule of thumb has always been to put them right above eye level. However, for intimate spaces within a home, break the museum rules! Try hanging pictures at waist level in a reading room near a favorite table or desk. Experiment with verti-



cal columns on a small wall between windows. To bring attention to architectural designs near the ceiling, try mounting a horizontal series of pictures above eye level. Remember to always leave one wall in a room completely empty to give the eye a rest.

If you are hesitant to put a lot of holes in the wall, or are the type of person who likes to continually rearrange photos, a picture shelf might be a better option. A two to five inch deep shelf with a lip is a great alter-



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native to wall mountings. A shelf also allows for candles, decorative plates, and collectables to be displayed along with your pictures.

To take your artistic display one step further, make sure your favorite pieces are all well lit. A painting may be well lit during the day, and poorly lit during the night. Be conscious of where your table lamps are during the evening hours before you make your final decisions on where to display your wall mountings. Track lighting is a very inex-



pensive option these days and may be just the right touch to create a little more warmth.

Remember to just have fun. Take a few risks and you can always fine tune later. The very last step, however, is to invite over friends and family to share your new interior charm. Notice how your displayed art and photographs stir up conversation, intrigue and laughter among your guests. This is the gem of the exercise!