

Decorating Clare Morgan

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Objects are best arranged according to a common theme. They need not be identical in colour, material or age.

Set a scene: An old favourite treasure can be mixed with a newly bought favourite to tell a story.



Glass act: Mirrors can reflect well on your creativity by allowing more light to fall on displays.



In the mood: The way objects are placed together can influence the mood of a room.

Playing favourites to best effect

Creative tricks add magic to the home showcase

Personal touches make all the difference when it comes to making your house a home. Put your passions on show with these stylish ideas for displaying your favourite things.

Most of us have accumulated an assortment of mementoes, keepsakes and collectables that with a bit of imagination can make fabulous design accessories.

Interior designer Fiona Hutchinson, of Revive Design Solutions, says it's easy to inject personality into your home by using creative tricks to put your favourite things on show.

"Choose items that have meaning to you — an old favourite treasure can be mixed with a newly bought, latest favourite to tell a story," Ms Hutchinson said.

"Most of all remember if you love it, dust it off and display it."

The way the objects were placed together would influence the mood of the display and even the room, so the first step to arranging your favourite objects was to consider their size and the space available for their display.

If you wanted to showcase a lot of items, consider investing in a display cabinet, but still try to resist the

temptation to fill it to bursting point.

Mantelpieces, shelves and tables are ready-made spaces waiting for adornment but Ms Hutchinson suggested experimenting with where to set up your arrangement.

Crowding a large vase between narrow shelves or cramming too many ornaments into a small area just looked cluttered and would detract from your display.

Glass or mirrored shelves allowed more light to fall on your display and floating shelves offered clean lines which were ideal for presenting tall items such as vases or statuettes.

Photo frames or small ornaments sat well on window ledges but precious, breakable items were best not left on low shelves.

According to Ms Hutchinson, whether you are showing off holiday souvenirs or showcasing precious family heirlooms, objects are best arranged according to a common theme. They need not be identical in colour, material or age as long as they share a common element.

For example, a cluster of old and new glassware could make an attractive display if of a similar size, shade or shape, while an arrangement of pictures or photographs in different shapes and

sizes would work best if they were framed in the same colour.

"If you are feeling more adventurous, use modern and vintage styles but retain the same colour hues," Ms Hutchinson said.

When it came to the arrangement, it was best to position the biggest piece first and arrange the smaller objects around it. A symmetrical grouping — using objects of the same colour, shape or height — produced a formal, streamlined look. To keep things more casual or eclectic, arrange items in an asymmetric, ad hoc manner using a standout piece for maximum visual impact.

"Keep your displays relaxed to ensure the results are not too forced or contrived," Ms Hutchinson said.

With thoughtful arrangement, even books could be made a living room feature. Ms Hutchinson suggested grouping similarly sized books together and using other accessories such as vases, candles or lamps, to break up the display.

"Don't be afraid to display (books) vertically and horizontally to add interest," Ms Hutchinson said.

Making neat stacks of glossy magazines was an alternative to keeping favourite periodicals stuffed out of sight in a magazine rack.



Mixing old and new: Clusters of glassware make an attractive display.



Thoughtful arrangement: Even books can be made a living room feature.

PERSONALISE YOUR DECOR

- Grouping pieces that are similarly coloured is a good start but don't shy away from trying contrasting combinations in bold shades.
- An odd number of objects can be easier to organise and, generally, it is best to avoid lining pieces up in a row.
- Use cherished items such as fashion accessories to add colour, texture and personality to a room's existing decor.
- Think beyond ornaments, plates or glassware when gathering pieces to display. Less conventional objects such as feathers, shells, books, bottles, magazines and hats could all be used as design accessories.
- Even handbags, when hung on pretty hooks, could be used as decoration.
- A grouping of mirrors or mirrored objects works well together and adds light to any space.
- Periodically introduce different items or make new arrangements from your collection of favourite things.



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