



Beyond The Neutral Zone

Living in Ontario, our climate can be less than inspiring when we've experienced a long, cold and dreary winter and our hopes of a sunny spring and summer are sadly lost in days of endless rain and overcast. We naturally end up spending a lot of our time indoors so why make our living spaces as grey as the outdoors? After a renovation or even after just a new paint job, one of the next things you may be looking at is textiles – fabric for drapery, upholstered items and accent pieces. Splattered in design blogs, social media and magazines we see many trends that cross into various streams of design. Mixing metals can be seen in everything from hardware to furniture, lighting and even fabrics with metallic sheens.

Look into fabric companies like **Alendel** where they now offer a vast array of col-

lections like their new soft metallic faux leather with inspired shades of bronze and gold alongside pearl shades of silvers and creams. It is extremely easy to translate such collections into any design plan, largely due to the offered colour palettes. Inviting neutrals, linens and subtle rich shades can be found in many of their new collections.

Among fellow designers, some of us joke that we'll completely lose it if another client requests another grey sofa. We love our neutrals and grey has definitely remained in power over the years, but unless we're using it with some more high contrast patterns, colours or interesting textures, it can be a little boring. If you prefer to stay in the neutral zone, remember to introduce various textures and weaves to create strong visual interest. Patterns will create further interest and movement into the living space.

Nowadays, navy and shades of green have found their way into the neutral zone. For some of our more daring clients, we've designed custom navy sectionals using rich luxurious velvets that have been treated with inherent stain and water repellents to survive family life. Accenting these larger pieces with patterns is a fun way to inject some personality into your space. Using high contrast patterns and saturated water-colour-inspired floral cushions bring light and dreams of sun-soaked lazy days to your indoor spaces. Experiment with geometrics or organic flowing lines to play up your space, or throw a little animal print in there for good measure! The point is to have fun and express yourself. I personally adore working with heavy weave fabrics, luxe velvets and textured chenilles; they add so much personality to a room. Combine these with richly coloured silks, textured mohairs



or faux furs, and mixed patterns – stripes, abstracts, prints and you begin telling your story through textiles. Your space should be a reflection of who you are and everything around you should make you happy.

TIP: Mix and match patterns with stripes. Choose colours from the same colour

family in varying shades and patterns for a sophisticated and elegant look or try using different colours with similar saturation or intensity for a more eclectic vibe.

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