

10 Ways to Transform A ROOM

We asked top designers to reveal their tried-and-true tricks for turning a so-so space into a sensational one. Use these easy moves to glam up your home



Peekaboo coffee table, CB2, \$249; cb2.com.

1 Think clearly! Want a quick fix for a roomful of sedate furniture? Pull out your least favorite item and replace it with a sleek Lucite piece that serves the same function. "It's amazing how adding, say, a clear coffee table or console can completely lighten up the space," says Barrie Benson of Barrie Benson Interior Design, in Charlotte, N.C.

2 Highlight your artwork Call attention to a framed drawing or watercolor by painting a square or rectangle of color behind it. Create a stencil on the wall with painters tape. "Choose a tone that coordinates with the rest of your décor or adds contrast to the room," suggests Chicago decorator Alessandra Branca. You can also use this method for a collection of framed photos.

Garden III (turquoise) monoprint by Isabel Bigelow, Sears-Peyton Gallery, N.Y.C., \$1,400; searspeyton.com for additional work by the artist.



3 Change the hardware If you're tired of an old desk or dresser, replace the knobs or handles, says Melanie Coddington of Coddington Design, in San Francisco. "It gives furniture a custom look without the elevated price tag. I'm always on the lookout for gorgeous vintage hardware. I'll even buy a big flea market piece just for its knobs!"



Octopus pull, Bauerware, \$39; bauerware.com. Green glass pull, Restoration Hardware, \$15; restorationhardware.com.



Madeline Weinrib Butternut Wes cotton rug, \$1,050/8' x 10'; madelineweinrib.com for information.

4 Let the floor do the talking Introduce an oversize graphic to a monochromatic space with a bold rug, says Los Angeles designer Mary McDonald. Want to make your own pattern? Paint an eye-catching geometric shape on a wood floor or sisal rug as McDonald did in the navy room above. Read more smart tips in her just-published book, *Mary McDonald Interiors: The Allure of Style* (\$55; amazon.com).



Blue porcelain vases, Middle Kingdom, \$18-\$60; 800-560-2146.



5 Fashion a colorful still life Build a visually stunning vignette using an assortment of objects in one color. "A group of items in different shapes and heights adds a pop of color in a neutral space," says Atlanta designer Suzanne Kasler (see her own vintage-glass arrangement, far left). Your collection can be made up of flea-market finds or modern choices—it's the single color that makes the cohesive statement.



6 Repeat as necessary “I like to group similar antiques on the wall,” says Suzanne Kasler, who is known for her classically inspired interiors. “The repetition creates an elegant symmetry and looks eclectic, not decorated.” Case in point? The lineup of vintage-looking maps and mirrors in the office she did below.

From left: Bruno sunburst mirror, Cooper Classics, \$140; csnmirrors.com. Suzanne Kasler Vintage Inspired mirror No. 4, Suzanne Kasler for Ballard Designs, \$99; ballarddesigns.com. Small gold leaf sunburst mirror, Global Views, \$299; amazon.com.



7 See green “A round table with a lush display of potted plants adds dimension and life to a room,” says New York decorator Rita Konig, who arranged the verdant cluster above. “It’s a wonderful alternative to vases of cut flowers.” Mix herbs, topiaries and ivy with houseplants in varying heights and shapes. Aged terracotta pots lend an effortlessly stylish vibe.

8 Swap out your bedding Fresh linens—from pillow shams to the bed skirt—give a bedroom an instant facelift. Go outside your comfort zone with an unexpected color combo. “One of my favorites is purple and gray. Not only is it soothing, but it’s a nice balance of masculine and feminine,” says New York designer Tom Delavan, whose clients include Rashida Jones and Gwen Stefani.

Violet pillows in Ash (top) and Shadow and Simone duvet and pillowcase in purple, all by Area Home, \$145 each (pillows) and \$70–\$495 (bedding); arealinenshop.com. Draper Stripe bedding in Chinois Blue, Dwell Studio, \$260–\$310; dwellstudio.com.



Life, etc. | DECORATING

9 Don't forget to look up! "A painted ceiling next to white walls is a fantastic surprise," says Mary McDonald. "I've used red, hot pink, bright orange, deep eggplant, gold, and light blue—it all depends on the feeling of the room." Try a lacquered, rich jewel tone in a foyer or dining room, or a pale pastel shade on your bedroom ceiling. The safest bet: soft pink. "It casts a warm glow and isn't a huge color commitment," she says.



Paint in Passion Plum, Benjamin Moore, \$41 and up per gallon; benjaminmoore.com for stores.

10 Rethink a towel Replacing a shower curtain is the easiest way to jazz up a bathroom. But David Harris of the New Traditionalists, a custom furniture design group in N.Y.C., likes to up the style quotient by using an oversize beach towel designed by a contemporary artist in place of a ho-hum curtain. "Have an upholsterer add grommets to the top [or buy a grommet kit, \$8; homedepot.com for stores—it's easy, we promise!], then slip in the hooks and a liner."



Elizabeth Peyton towel (other artists available), Art Production Fund and Target, \$95; workson whatever.com. (Check out Peyton's work in *Elizabeth Peyton*, \$50; amazon.com.)

—BRETT HILL