

What's In Store... ?

Color and Design Trends

by Kaye Evans, CPF, GCF, CMG

The art of professional picture framing could prove to be one of the most exciting careers in ones lifetime. Just getting to handle and care for all of the treasures clients bring into the shop is exciting. My granddaughter recently taught me the real meaning of the word treasure. "Granny, I brought you a real treasure," she said, holding out her little hand. She then presented me with the most perfect, oval, smooth, and colorful *rock!* The look in her four-year-old eyes reminded me of how important treasures can be. We sat together while she explained where she had located this treasure and how the sunlight made the colors of the rock dance.

The next morning I saw the treasured rock residing on my dresser and remembered how important the color of the rock had been in Madison's explanation. She had said, "See how the colors dance!" It occurred to me that colors do dance, and sing, and smell, and laugh, and they even taste. This made me feel proud to be involved in presenting color trends to retailers around the world. Each year as I become more and more involved in color trends for various industries, I realize how important it is to be aware of color and how it effects the trends in design. Related here is the latest



Leaning artwork has become more prevalent in many home decor settings.

news in color and other trends, how they will make the colors dance, and how they could become the greatest treasures in the frame shop...

Family and Friends

The fall of 2001 greatly escalated the importance of our immediate and extended families and friends; both those of old acquaintance and newfound ones were pulled tighter into the circle. All of these things have been proven to be the most important assets one can have. For this reason, things like safety, security, caregivers, and heroes have become buzzwords of the times. The past and its events should have proven to any American that the trend of "Family and Friends" would be pulled to the forefront. Each and every one of these trends will be held as gently as one would hold a newborn babe. The world is

round; reflecting and reshaping not only itself, but also the nature of needs, wants, and desires. There is, of course, no perfect crystal ball that allows for statements of exact colors and trends in the coming months and years; however, if one puts their ear close enough to the ground a message will begin to appear. Framers should be framing lots of shadowboxes and give them the new title of "Memory Boxes." These pieces of yesterday's memories will begin to gain much more importance to clients and they want "preserved memorabilia" that future pollutants will not damage or destroy.

Techno Mixes with Texture & Nature

There is a continuing and growing influence from both technology and nature, a theme echoed in the softer



"Memory Boxes" using both metal and wood frames with ornate mat designs will remain desirable to house items sentimental to your customers. This type of framing tells a story.

yet more sophisticated texture in colors and patterns. For all it seems there is a need to seek some balance between the hard-edged almost frenetic world of 24/7 plugged-in rules and the soft-edged nurturing world that nature so simply provides. The world may soon be softly splashed with pearlescent that will appear to just come from nature and with little or no difficulty. Expect pearlized frame panels and in fact entire frames of pearlescence. Leaves and flowers created by mixing talent and technology make up some of the most exciting signs of the "Techno and Nature" trend.

Kids are the youngest consumers and as such have entered the color and trends arena and they like it "shock." Colors to catch their fancy will have to "dance" from all directions and give them the reward of visual pleasure to make them put these frames on their bedroom walls. "Gel-Brights" and "Kids Treas-

ures" from Marley Mouldings are examples of profiles that kids can choose to frame those colorful posters of Britney Spears and Aaron Carter. (P.S. If the names of these two teen idols don't ring a bell consider a listing in the "older generation" category!)

Over the last several years, metal has made a definite resurgence in interior design. Top designers are using it a lot; simply check out any home furnishing store, popular TV show or movie, and you'll notice all types of art (not just posters) framed in metal.

It seems woods and metals are being mixed for many applications of home accents. Why not try combining metal and wood to create more intricate textures and cutting edge in a new trend called "combo frames?" Don't forget to pre-assemble these corner samples so your client will not get sticker shock from *two* frames.

Water Balances and Calms

Perhaps one of the most fearful unknowns is an ailing economy. It has slowed but is not screeching to a grinding halt. It appears slightly ill yet no one seems to be able to identify any symptoms. The public still spends... not pouring it out in gallons; but rather carefully selecting quality and lasting values in the products selected.

Better understanding of the importance of quality and value has begun to emerge in the consumer psyche. This is causing the complexity of colors and trends to mature also. There is evidence that tremendous influence has come to pass on trends that can perhaps be translated into a desire for "trustworthy, and "tried and true" colors; while at exactly the same time consumers will break out of the mold and experience newfound energy using striking colors, such as black, blue, and green.

Colors and finishes coming forward are fresh and almost



Thai Sapphire matboard from the Samui Design Collection from Bainbridge surrounds nature-themed artwork, demonstrating the techno-texture-nature mix.



Clustering framed art is also a favored look right now. See how the slender sides and wider top and bottom matting create a streamlined look for the room.

squeaky clean yet the colors are fascinatingly complex. The buzzword for the next palette will be softened color, and while many will become muted they will not be as dull as they appeared in previous times when muted palettes appeared. The keyword here is *rich* in appearance. The spa colors in the Blue Green Family appear most likely to shine and anything to do with soft winds and calming waters will be a proven winner. Oh, by the way we are beginning to say the “T” word again. Reborn as a Blue-Green and used as an accent, we won’t call it “Teal” even though it reverberates with “Retro” overtones. This color that brings memories of the real soda bottle is already strong in European markets and is forecast to make its way once again to the colonies by the year 2003, or knowing Americans, perhaps even sooner.

Turning to the World of Global Appeal

Americans have always been in love with foreign lands and the trend toward “Global Appeal” has grown by leaps and bounds. This has been fueled by the 2000 U.S. Census, which reports that Latinos have grown at an escalated rate of 45%; perhaps this is the reason for all the new music in Latin tones! Asians have ballooned at 48% in the last 10 years and this is being felt as new trends in Latino and Asian touches appear in home decor and especially in warmer color palettes.

Before 9-11, a heavy focus was found in African trends and after 9-11 this does not appear to have changed much except that animals look less dangerous and more regal in their appeal. They tend not to leap out but quietly

blend into the backgrounds until one begins to search for them. Other existing trends before 9-11 have not fared as well. There was a definite trend towards Mid-Eastern embroideries, thinner fabrics, and brighter colors. Retailers sitting on heavy inventories after 9-11 will probably have them for an indefinite period.

On the other hand, Americans continue the long-lived love affair with Europe, namely England. Softer and more ornate palettes will be directly affected by colors and trends reflected in a European influence. Take for example the hand-crafted and water gilded Gold and Sterling of the Collection called Mirror Elegance by La Marche. Metals, once thought to present only a very cosmopolitan appeal reach Old World appeal with features such as embossed beading and specialty finishes. These new frames and many more ornate and smooth finished mouldings seal the love affair with the Old World.

In The Garden

It is the nature of someone to become quiet when faced with uncertainty and this could be one of the reasons the softer and more muted earth influenced palettes are appearing everywhere. One has only to look at a sunrise and the safe feel of nature’s quiet appearance to know that the earth will *always* continue to influence the color and trend palettes. These palettes will take on shapes of colors that are born from water, fire, and air. We will want to play “In the Garden” more than ever and not only for fun but for peace of mind. This trend now evolves and continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Lots of blue in every palette will begin to soften into blue influenced greens that will begin blending with yellows and reds. All of these colors will begin immediately to look old and rich and most of all safe. When two or more trends are blended together the trend is then called Eclectic. Mixing Retro and Garden together gives baths and kitchens a softer and “I grew up with this” feel to any décor. This is a place where botanicals and metals meet to tie trends together.

Nostalgia

As patriotism and pride in one’s roots remains strong, the largest trend to appear just over the horizon is “Nostalgia.” The largest retired trend to come close is “Victorian” done at the turn of the century and this one expects to be even bigger. Why, one may ask? Stop for a moment and think of what it is that this reader holds to be most precious? This upcoming trend of Nostalgia should pop into the

mind. It will have a look and feel of comfort, quiet calm, and gained wisdom with age.

The home will truly become the fortress and a place of security for all inside. Cabbage roses and deep muted and complex colors are visible in decor trends. Even the “M” word, which we said would never return, has said hello once again with a more energized and dusty rose form of Mauve. Start looking towards Red as the hot new color after Green blossoms.

Ever heard of the word clustering? It is a term used in picture framing meaning to group or cluster several pictures together on a wall to create a “look” or tell a “story.” Look for clustering to be important to home décor in the near future. In the last month, reading six of the leading decor magazines, this author found no less than 12 pages with pictures of clustered décor. This would be a good solid indication that a good professional would begin to show clustering on their walls in order to plant seeds in the consumer’s mind. More clustering can result in more frame sales.

The word comfort will continue to be very important and it will be evident in bedding. This is one room where one tends to always feel safe. Bedding has grown quickly as one area of repeated remodel and the trend of “Comfort in the Bedroom” will grow in complexity and beauty! So, what can the professional picture framer do about this trend? Do research. Pictures will go into the same rooms as these new \$300+ bedspreads. And offering just the right print and frame will increase your sales for these bedroom customers.

Another new trend in framing is “Leaning,” a technique that is accomplished by using several frames supported by a shelf, either on the wall or a mantel of a

fireplace. Notice the oversized matting seen in Photo 1. This is one of the easiest ways to give the client more than they requested and also help the profits at the end of the day, not to count the added value given to the look of the artwork, more space for the eye to rest increases the value of eye appeal. These trends add richness to any décor.

American consumers will no longer tolerate being referred to as a disposable society. Much like the Europeans, Americans will demand to preserve rather than dispose. Preservation framing has made great strides in the past few years and will most likely continue to accelerate in the next few, fueled by preservation-quality products.

Summary

Wow! A lot of new and exciting stuff is happening in the industry. Pull out that color wheel, climb on board the color and trend train, and start researching in the places consumers shop. Magazines and high-end clothing and furniture stores are great places to keep ahead of colors and trends. Perhaps it’s time to produce framing vignettes that will offer to the client just the look for the new this or that in their home, their place of nostalgic comfort, where they go after a long and hard day at work, where they play in the soft earth of the Garden or just get this feel from the bathroom where they wash their hands. And want to know one of the greatest treasures of all? As professional picture framers, we get to frame it all! ■