



“MAXIMALISM IS ABOUT BEING EXTRAVAGANT WITH YOUR DESIGN CHOICES, WHERE MORE IS MORE.”

— FREDRIK EKLUND

CURATED CHAOS

Maximalism need not be confused with materialism. While, to the minimalist eye, the over-the-top trend can appear loud with its bold patterns and array of collectables on display, maximalism is less about the stuff and more about the person who bought it.

It's about showcasing everything that has meaning to you; objets d'art, colors, concepts, and mementos that not only capture the essence of life, but the essence of your life. In a sense, it is an exhibition of you, albeit maybe a tad dramatic.

“White boxes are for presents, not homes,” said interior designer Alex Alonso, founder and creative principal of mr. alex TATE Design, which has design studios in Los Angeles and Miami. Alonso, who refers to himself as a maximalist at heart, said he launched his studio “to embrace a global perspective and celebrate the power of storytelling through spaces, reflecting a distinct design approach that is all about the mix. The result is a bold sensibility I call ‘modern Victorian.’ We see every project as an opportunity to curate fearlessly and tell a unique story for each client.”

“Our project goals were to give this vintage home an eclectic, updated point of view while keeping the overall charm of the residence intact,” said interior designer Alex Alonso of mr. alex TATE Design. “I’m a maximalist at heart, and so incorporating vibrant tiles, rich colored wood and patterned textiles was second nature to me. This waterfront Miami Beach home was eventually given new life with an eclectic/modern twist.”



JUAN PABLO CASTRO

Maximalism is making a bold comeback – and this time with even more personality.

By ASHLEY WARD



KIM CARROLL

THE “MUCHNESS” OF MAXIMALISM

Maximalism isn't a shy trend by any means. Bursting with life, maximalism welcomes lovers of color, textures, layered patterns, accessories and art. It includes what top designers describe as “bold gestures:” the art of “more-is-more.”

If minimalism was the responsible adult, then maximalism is the inner child, painting empty spaces with life and joyful bravado. Even though the rising trend is known for its hyperbolic ethos, that doesn't mean you

need headache-inducing wallpapers or claustrophobic mantelpieces filled to the brim. In fact, maximalism adopts the idea of decluttering anything that is neither useful nor beautiful to you.

In essence, it's a dramatic display of one's inner expression: a spacial artwork in itself or a wonderland for the senses — something Lewis Carroll would call your “muchness.” It's no surprise then, why maximalism is resurfacing once more as an ageless friend to interior design.

Inside the airy lobby of h2hotel in Healdsburg, CA, designed by San Francisco architect David Baker to attract sustainability minded tourists with its eco-chic decor and environmentally conscious details, guests can chill on low-slung Missoni fabric couches and a rotating display of art, objects, books and games set in a steel display grid. Floating on lobby shelves are Healdsburg's SkLO Studio's colorful misshapen glass sculptures and instead of a gas fireplace, a single flame is surrounded by bound copper Steinway piano wires.



The main wing of the chateau de la Bourlie, whose exterior harkens back to pre-revolutionary France but whose interior has been modernized with maximalist accents, is shared by family and friends alike. The “sakura” cherry trees, the walnut tree wood that is sourced from the very forests at La Bourlie or the psychedelic spirals, are present in the room.

COURTESY OF CHATEAU DE LA BOURLIE



“This staircase design is punctuated with a simple massing of steel for the stair, edited to maintain a bold yet sleek silhouette which is juxtaposed with a colorful layered custom wallpaper,” said Lisa McDennon of Lisa McDennon Designs. “The paper concept was developed as a collaborative concept between myself, the client and local textile designer Diana Garreau. We wanted to create a graffiti wall that looked like it also had layers of paint and torn wallpaper underneath.”

KARYN MILLET

AN AGELESS TREND

Maximalism has been making the rounds in the design world for centuries. In early history, wealthy figures were taken to the trend as a way to display their affluence.

The story is not much different for maximalism in the Victorian era, where material goods were more affordable, and those who had accessories loved to display them in their homes with grandeur.

However, much like today, there was an ulterior motif that maximalism satiated for Victorian culture: to showcase one’s own personality and inner world. After years of more frugal or conservative trends like minimalism, it’s safe to say that many are once again ready to be seen expressing their spaces in living color.

CHAOS VS. COLOR

While “more is more” has become the motto for maximalism, it doesn’t suggest careless or chaotic design. Many designers stress the importance of being selective with one or two focal points when it comes to featuring accessories or artwork in a space. Too many becomes visual overload; a maelstrom of artistic ideas. Though, if you want to showcase a melting pot of ideas, textures, and patterns, design experts advise to draw from the same color palette to create a more cohesive look. Grounding finishes like marble or wood on side furnishings also help to avoid visual overwhelm when it comes to maximalist design.

According to SoCal interior designer Lisa McDennon, founder of Lisa McDennon Design in Laguna Beach, CA, maximalist design “is rooted in bold sweeping color and layered pattern over pattern. The concept is more is better, yet in a carefully curated way — if not, it will just look and feel like a total mess. Often times taking a core group of colors and using repetition in your layering creates rhythm and harmony in the design. This helps connect the elements in a cohesive and visually appealing style.”

Whether designing a dark and moody Victorian-esque bedroom or accessorizing a Bubblegum pink studio, the boldness of maximalist design has no category or boundaries. Perhaps that’s why many of us have, once again, fallen prey to the trend of maximalism; a visual rabbit hole of “muchness,” texture and visual splendor. There’s just something about the colors that make you want to fall in.

COURTESY OF WILFREDO EMANUEL DESIGNS



Wilfredo Emanuel’s home décor is a reflection of the designs he loves, paying homage to a life well-lived. Everywhere in and around the Naples, Florida home Emanuel, an interior designer and TV personality, has created are artful vignettes, just as he is famous for doing for his clients. In each room, each scene has a beginning, middle and end — all tiny productions that tell the tale of its inhabitants. “A house can tell a story in a thousand beautiful moments, unique to its owner and in my case, I really enjoy being at home,” said Emanuel.