



Interior designer Jan Michelle suggests using a strong neutral background color for a dramatic effect.

The Frame Game

You've got the goods—family photos, a vintage map, a work by your favorite local artist—now here's what to do with them. Making your house a home is all about the finishing touches, so pick your favorite look, and get to work!

GALLERY WALLS

The Gist: Expand the power of your pre-existing collection of art and wall décor by creating a large-scale collage.

Get the Look: “In decorating today, a lot of people are using this technique,” says Steve McKenzie, president and CEO of Larson-Juhl, a custom framing company based here in Atlanta. “The key is—of the three elements—the object being framed, the mat and the frame itself—there should be cohesion between at least two of them. This can be accomplished through a unifying element in the artwork or the color of the mats or frames.” Interior designer Jan Michelle suggests using a strong neutral background color, like a chocolate brown or navy, to create serious drama. “Lighting is key,” Michelle says. “You can use small puck lights or arm lights, which are great and DIY-friendly, to add interest.” To get the layout that you want for your gallery wall, McKenzie suggests either mapping your design out on the floor with masking tape, or cutting out pieces of Kraft paper in the size of each frame and taping them up on the wall.

FRAMING FABRIC OR WALLPAPER

The Gist: An affordable alternative to purchasing fine art, when done correctly, framed fabric or wallpaper packs a serious punch.

Get the Look: “Using vintage or modern wallpapers and fabrics is a

wonderful way to make a powerful visual statement,” McKenzie says. “It's important to go to a custom framer with this to make sure that it's done the right way.” Michelle recalls a client who was moving, but had a room in the old house with wallpaper that meant a lot to her. She cut a piece of the wallpaper and had it matted and framed. “They got to keep a piece of their old home as a memento in their new home,” she said. Vintage scarves work well and make a statement on their own, or for the ultimate bargain (as in less than \$5!), pick up some super chic wrapping paper from Cavallini & Co.—it's available at Paper Source, Papyrus and Anthropologie, and head to the framer.

SHADOWBOXES AND DISPLAYING FOUND OBJECTS

The Gist: An effective way to artfully showcase family heirlooms, meaningful mementos and other trinkets.

Get the Look: Incorporating shadowboxes with traditional frames adds depth and interest to a gallery wall or other display. Michelle and McKenzie both cited flea markets as favorite sources for one-of-a-kind pieces, while Ben Collins, principal of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Atlanta, says mounting antique letterpress letters on old linen creates a look that's “not at all common or expected.” He also referenced Pheromone by Christopher Marley (formandpheromone.com), a California-based artist who preserves plants, fossils and insects in striking presentations. Michelle imports intaglios



To create a successful gallery wall, at least two of the three elements of each piece of art (the art itself, mat and frame) should be cohesive.

(seals with sunken or incised designs) from the United Kingdom and creates custom framings for her clients. “Keep it simple, and use a custom frame with an oversized mat,” Michelle says. “This provides a break between the object and its surroundings.”

STAIRCASE GALLERIES

The Gist: Make the hike upstairs more interesting by decking the walls with a well-composed grouping of artwork.

Get the Look: Fair warning, to accomplish a successful staircase gallery wall with more visual appeal than your standard dated-looking wall of yearbook and wedding portraits, it’ll take some time and effort. “To do a staircase gallery correctly, you really have to commit to decorating a large expanse,” Michelle says. “If you don’t, it will look unfinished.” Collins recommends using this space for more sentimental pieces. “You should base this area on personal things that you have in your home,” he says. “It’s a more casual space.” Michelle suggests using the area that leads to your home’s personal quarters to display family mementos. In her own home, she showcases her grandmother’s broaches and other heirloom pieces.

LEANING ART AGAINST THE WALL

The Gist: An artful display with a strong visual component, minus the hammer and nails.

Get the Look: “This is a really great way to display a lot of art,” says McKenzie, who is an advocate of layering pieces to create depth. “It’s perfect for someone who likes to change things up seasonally or as they acquire new things.” Michelle adds that this method works well for renters and commitment-phobes alike. “When you get tired of it, you just move it around.” For a visually powerful display, she suggests leaning the piece that will be the focal point of the series a bit off-center, then surrounding it with the rest. —LISA HORTEN



Antique letterpress art starting at \$315 at Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams



Pheromone art starting at \$275 at Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams



Antique maps starting at \$595 at Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams

Get Framed In Atlanta

Our experts share their favorite local resources for custom framing.

Thompson’s Frame & Gallery

1062 Johnson Ferry Road
770.579.9200 or thompsonsframe.com

Antonio Raimo Galleries

700 Miami Circle
404.841.9880 or antonioraimogalleries.com

The Framers on Peachtree

2351 Peachtree Road
404.237.2888 or framersonpeachtree.com

Framing by Design

2165 Cheshire Bridge Road
404.325.1254 or framingbydesign.com

Vinings Gallery

4686 South Atlanta Road, Suite F
404.794.7762 or viningsgallery.com