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elements of design

Top 5 Interior Design Trends for 2021

BY CATHY PURPLE CHERRY, AIA, LEED-AP, FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL OF PURPLE CHERRY ARCHITECTS

Our clients rely on the Interior Design team at Purple Cherry Architects to fully understand today's design trends, to anticipate the design trends of tomorrow, and to have a solid working knowledge of quality and price point for a range of furnishings and accessories vendors. We take this responsibility seriously.

Thus, twice each year, the interior design team and I pack up and head south to High Point Market. Held in High Point, NC every six months, the Market is the largest home furnishings industry trade show in the world, with more than 10 million square feet by roughly 2,000 exhibitors throughout approximately 180 buildings. Serious retail buyers, interior designers, architects, and others in the home furnishings industry can be found in High Point because if you can't find it in High Point...it probably doesn't exist.

So what did we learn on our most recent High Point Market visit? Here are the top five emerging trends we observed, which any savvy designer should have on their radar.

1. Moving away from gray

In a recent *New York Times* article, Joa Studholme, the color curator for English paint company Farrow & Ball, predicted a "huge wave away from gray." She told the publication, "There is a tendency to crave warm tones in challenging times. It's all about being warm and earthy...it's about trying something that gives you a great big hug."

People are absolutely craving personal spaces filled with comfort and connection, and the current trend in home design mirrors these desires. The cool gray design trend is slowly being replaced with neutral warmer color palettes such as natural linens, calming beiges, and elegant browns. And lots of color is hitting the scene too.



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2. Modern ethnic influences

Global trends have always influenced the world of interior design, particularly in a way that really focused on and celebrated a particular design style from another part of the world. Yet what we saw at High Point Market reflected more of a melting pot of styles from around the world. Designers are increasingly mixing elements and inspirations from all over the globe and creating their own eclectic styles (think tribal inspired patterns). We see this trend becoming even more mainstream as collectively, the design community continues to become more aware of the diverse cultures around us.



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3. Natural, organic materials and shapes

Wicker and rattan, jute and rope, warm wood tones and natural stone table tops—you name it, we saw it at this year’s High Point Market. While we’ve seen a lot of natural materials over the last few markets, we saw these materials being translated into more organic, amorphic, and fluid shapes. Incorporating these elements is an excellent way to keep us connected to the outdoors, and to satisfy our longing for the grounding nature of organic pieces. The beauty of natural elements remains unmatched.

4. Bouclé and faux shearling

Bouclé and faux shearling popped up in nearly every corner of High Point Market this year, particularly in modern applications. This was likely in response to how many of us long to feel during trying times, especially in times of uncertainty. The soft and nubby texture of both bouclé and faux shearling evoke a sense of warmth, comfort and security.



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During a pandemic, this is exactly what one would turn to—a texture that makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside. The good news is that both materials are offered in an array of neutral colors and both are quite versatile—a talented designer can seamlessly incorporate them into virtually any aesthetic.

5. Lovely Lucite

Time and time again, we saw Lucite incorporated into a range of furniture and decor items, from picture frames to table bases. When not overdone, but instead used as an accent, Lucite helps to showcase an item’s true beauty. For example, a Lucite handle can almost disappear in all the right ways on a drawer. Don’t think of this as the Lucite from the 70s—today’s use of it is sophisticated, modern, and understated. A Lucite desk is a statement piece for sure.



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Born and raised in Virginia, **Cathy Purple Cherry** ultimately landed in Annapolis where she grew a large architectural firm specializing in high-end custom homes and estates. Today, the firm has four offices—Charlottesville, VA, Middleburg, VA, White Sulphur Springs, WV, and Annapolis, MD—and specializes in creating luxurious residences across the United States. A talented architect, visionary, and three-dimensional thinker, Cathy is able to marry clients’ dreams with the reality of the built environment. While she revels in the intricate design opportunities presented by high-end residential architecture, Cathy is equally passionate about her philanthropic efforts. She and her firm offer their design knowledge and sensitivity to the special needs community via the Purple Cherry Purposeful Architecture Studio. A true creative servant, Cathy Purple Cherry is unfailing in her efforts to positively impact all those around her.

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