

THE ART OF LAYERING

Interior designer Kara Adam layers tone-on-tone patterns and rich textures to help neutrals get noticed in an art-filled Houston home.

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It can often take weeks—even months—for an interior designer to accurately pinpoint a clients’ style and lifestyle. However, this wasn’t the case for Dallas-based interior designer Kara Adam when she embarked on the redesign of her clients’ new home in Houston’s tony Tanglewood neighborhood.

“My clients were my parents, so it’s fair to say I had quite an advantage going into this project,” Adam says. “Knowing firsthand how they live and what they love gave me a big head start, so I was able to dive right in.”

Barely ten years old, the sprawling French-inspired manse boasted all the bells and whistles of new construction and checked-off all the boxes on the homeowners’ wish list. With everything in its place and no major renovations necessary, Adam could focus on personalizing spaces to make her clients’ house truly feel like home.

In the entry, hand-painted wood floors in a bold honeycomb motif put a playful spin on the iconic marble checkerboard tile foyer creating a multi-dimensional mystique that permeates

Left: A silk-wool Shiir rug grounds the all-white living room. Its restrained palette and geometric design provide an edgy platform for elegant French antiques and traditional upholstered seating. Above: Stucco, limestone, copper, and slate give the new build Old World appeal and introduce interiors that brim with European antiques.



throughout the interiors. Its basic gray-and-white color scheme proves that a limited palette can yield unlimited opportunities for creativity. The bespoke runner leads the way to rooms peppered with architectural details from the curvy staircase, archways, and cove ceiling to the angular mantels, moldings, and millwork. Large-scale antiques from England and France pair with contemporary furnishings in transitional profiles to round out the mix in spacious, light-filled rooms. According to Adam, the *mélange* of styles marries her father's love of classical design with her stepmother's penchant for a more contemporary aesthetic. A cohesive neutral palette of taupes, tans, grays, and whites strengthens the bond between them while providing a clean backdrop for the couple's colorful art collection.

"The homeowners are collectors in every sense of the word," Adam says. "They do not seek out a particular artist or medium. They wait patiently for the perfect fit and are very purposeful in their selections. From the antique landscapes they scored abroad to the modern abstracts we sourced together at local galleries, each piece tells a part of





their story. Keeping the background quiet allows those stories to be heard.”

But it was important to Adam and her clients that clean and quiet did not translate into minimal and museum-like, so she swapped vibrant colors for rich textures and tone-on-tone patterns to heighten visual and tactile interest. In the dining room, matte mohair seat cushions and natty grass-cloth walls practically glisten in the reflection of the lacquered ceiling. Although they are the same putty hue, they give off three completely different vibes. In the living room, nubby linens and smooth silks used for pillows and upholstery distinguish themselves through the subtle color variations in the damasks, tweeds, and windowpane plaids.

“When it comes to color and texture, the optical illusions can be uncanny,” Adam says. “Sometimes, you have to give it a close look or gentle touch to understand and experience the differences among them.”



Opposite, top: In the family room, classic and contemporary furnishings unite thanks to their clean lines, neutral colors, and luxe textures. Opposite, bottom left: Antiqued mirror walls visually expand the breakfast nook comprised of an antique French wine-tasting table paired with a channel-back banquette and vintage chairs. Opposite, bottom right: The dome shape of the stainless steel range hood brings curve appeal into the kitchen. Top: Clancey, the homeowner’s beloved Tibetan terrier, sits atop an antique bench. Above left: Adam created a cozy sitting area at one end of the bedroom for reading, movie-watching, and taking in the views. Above right: In a guest room, the straight lines of an antique canopy bed are softened by plush linens.