

Ep #21: The Dance with Accessories



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With Your Host

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You're listening to episode 21 of the *Decorate Like a Design Boss* podcast. And in honor of the number 21, which when added together equals three, as in two plus one equals three. I'm going to be talking about accessorizing your spaces today and about the all so important concept of my phrase, the power of three. Buckle up baby, this one is going to be oh so informative. Here we go.

Welcome to *Decorate Like a Design Boss*, a podcast for design lovers who want to create beautiful spaces in their very own homes. My name is Kimberly Grigg and I'm a professional interior designer who teaches design lovers like yourselves how to decorate. And when I say decorate I mean decorate like a design boss. If you're ready to create a space that your family loves and your neighbors can't stop raving about well, buckle up honey because it's time to design.

Hello there design lovers. I have an action packed lesson for you today, and it's all about accessorizing. Accessories are my most favorite tool in the designer tool bag. Accessory even trumps color for me, and that is a whole lot of trumping. In this episode, we're going to talk about how to approach an empty shelf, a table scape or a surface, how to do the designer dance of accessories, the edit step, and my favorite, the power of three.

So, a few weeks ago one of the designers who works for me had a true confession. We were actually prepping for a TV audition and we were pre-discussing possible questions that the producer might be asking us as a team. So, one of our team members kind of smirkingly said, "Well, so Brock, why don't you share with Kimberly that video that you made before you even knew her?" Well, it was a spoof on a video that I ran on my weekly Facebook Live show. The show is called, It's Time to Design and I was talking all about the power of three.

Well, apparently Brock had made a video pretending to be me and mocking me in a good-hearted, but it was a really funny video that he made, it was

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hilarious. And of course, creating interiors and installing together for quite a while now I must say, he has learned the value of this superpower, this power of three. And today I'm going to teach it to you and share with you its importance.

Let's start with the beginning though. First of all, every space needs accessories. Yes, this is true, no matter what your design DNA suggest. If you're tuning in for the first time then please know that while I've been a fairly celebrated designer in the media, I've also held strictly to my belief that design is, well, personal. I have had many marketers on my team, and others whom I've worked with who would tell me over and over that I need to choose a specific style, own it as mine and work with it, especially in the marketing realm.

Repeatedly I was told that I need my own unique definable look to get published, to be noticed and etc. Well, I've resisted at every turn because the hallmark of my designs is that we each have a design DNA. And it is unique to us as individuals and we have to hold tight to what really resonates with us and what brings us joy in our homes, both functionally and aesthetically.

This is the essence of my work, and this is what I believe establishes a basis for you to express who you are, how you love to live, and how you can create a home that is not only beautiful, but one that really resonates. I feel that when this is accomplished, then this is great design.

It's individual and it's creative. This is so important to me that I developed a system for helping you learn and understand your own design DNA. And if you want to discover yours, then tune into episode one, two, and three. And you can learn all about it. My point here is that no matter what your style, your accessories are a part of the expression of that style. Even if you are a minimalist you still need the appropriate accessories in your space. And if you are a more is more girl, well, you can pile it on.

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Although today I am going to talk to you about editing your accessories as a part of this. Both will work, I just want you accessorizing with confidence to go for the win.

So, from the beginning, I could write entire books about accessorizing, but today I'm going to try and equip you with a few fundamentals that will get you started and heading in the right direction. First, practice is important. There is a clear path to learning to be a good accessorizer and it is practice. I can always tell when it's been a while since we've been on install, and I have been doing this for 27 years. You would think I could just snap my fingers and accessories would appear perfectly on all the surfaces. But you do have to practice to be an effective accessorizer.

I've used my own home, and of course my retail spaces to hone my skill but trust me, the accessorizing gods didn't just smile at me, I worked on it. I would edit, rearrange, break it all down and start all over too many times to count. Don't let this scare you, put on some music and let yourself go. It really is fun. Relax and practice, this is just part of the journey. And remember, it's all just stuff and you can always easily redo things like tables, capes and bookshelves.

Here is a little tip I use to up-level my accessorizing game. It is actually a game that I play. When I'm feeling the need to get some practice time in, I rearrange the accessories on a surface three to five different ways. Often the same surface, same accessories for a few of those tries. And then if necessary I will add or delete from the pile and try it a few more times until I come up with the perfect accessory scape. When I do this, not only am I practicing but I am also searching for the right accessory scape for that surface in that moment.

So let yourself go a bit, have fun and practice. You can take photos in between each design that you create and select the one that you like best. You can also save these photos and come back to them. I like to also chart my growth as an accessorizer because really I've come a long way, baby,

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and you will too. Save these photos in an accessory album on your phone, and from time to time look back and see how much better you have become.

Next, when placing objects, just remember that objects placed together are best grouped in odd numbers. While I use all of the odd numbers from time to time, I tend to use threes the most often. Hence the power of three. You will want to experiment with this concept in your practice sessions. I prefer large objects in ones, or I refer to them as onesies and different shaped and sized objects that are similar in their feel, I like those grouped together. I will tend to use small items grouped together in fives a little less often, but it is a great way to display a collection especially one that is small.

Let's just say you have a collection of small vases, put five or seven together on a tray and voila, now you're making a statement. In the same scenario, one would just seem lost and would need to be grouped somehow even if it is a part of a three. Over time I began to notice that I often grouped accessories in varying ways but most often in these groups of threes. This eventually led me to coin the phrase, the power of three, when I'm relating to my accessorizing.

Apparently it stuck, as when I was moving my son into his freshman door room I heard the mom in the adjacent room helping her son tell him, "Hand me that box over there. I am practicing the power of three." It was a funny moment. And I assure you it works and she did a great job working it out.

The next thing that I want you to consider in your accessorizing is rotate the variable. Now, this is a big phrase and it could be confusing but let me break it down for you. If you're styling a bookshelf, I want you to vary the position of your items from shelf to shelf so that each shelf isn't a repeat of the previous. You have to mix this up. You will find certain recipes that work for you in styling that tend to be your favorites. Rely on these but have more than one combination or all of your shelves and surfaces will look alike.

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The fourth thing that I want you to consider is: edit. Just when you think you are done with an accessory scape conduct an edit. Take a picture, study that picture. Is it really cohesive? Is it really flowing? Is it really what you were going for? Most people trying to create a beautiful accessory scape struggle with too much or not enough. Place your items following the guidelines that I am presenting and then remove some of the items and see how it feels.

Frequent mistakes that I encounter are too many onesies, while large, if you have too many it will just look like big clutter. Make your onesies impactful, but simple. I also see people choose items too small to be onesies. If a onesie is standing on its own and it is on the smallish side compared to other items, it is going to be lost and look awkward. Another common faux par is to not group the items close enough. When you're placing items in groups they should almost be touching one another so that they look cohesive.

Number five, I want you to dance. Yeah, I said dance. Accessorizing is a lot like a dance. It's a dance with objects and you are switching out and adding in while letting yourself create in a rhythm and in a harmonious blend. Editing and adding back are part of this dance. I typically arrange it all, I stand back, I study, ponder, remove and edit. Then I carefully add back in and change it up. I do this about five to six times until it feels totally right. My staff has gotten used to it over the years and they affectionately coined the phrase, don't mess with her right now, she's doing the dance.

I say get in the zone and don't ever be afraid to abandon ship. I have many times struggled with a specific accessory scape and removed it all and started all over again only to achieve great success. If it's really bothering me and it doesn't feel cohesive and I don't seem to be making headway I just take it all down and I start all over. This is allowed, remember, it's only stuff.

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Often using the same items that I previously had gathered I typically will just try to erase from my mind what I had started with and just start all over. It really sometimes happens when I'm trying too hard, or I'm not allowing myself enough time to really create. Somehow pulling it all down and starting all over is kind of like hitting the reset button on your computer. It often just makes everything better. So don't be afraid, again, it's only stuff.

The sixth thing that I want you to consider when you are thinking about accessorizing is rhythm. You want to create a certain rhythm in your surfaces. Run your hand over the tops of the accessories. Does your movement look like that of an orchestra conductor? Your hands should move up and down in a rhythm. If it moves across in a straight line this is an indication that you need to vary the heights of your objects.

The seventh thing that I want you to know is that everything should vary. Vary your heights, vary your shapes, this will help you achieve rhythm but it will also help you achieve balance. It just feels more cohesive and yet interesting when the shapes and the sizes of your accessories are varied. That also goes for varying your placement of the objects from shelf to shelf. You are not trying to create identical rhythms all the way down a bookcase, or for that matter, on all of your accessory scales throughout your spaces.

So, what can we take away from today's lesson? Accessories are the icing on the cake for a space. They are necessary and important if you want your house to feel like a home. They also are an expression of you and your own design DNA. Accessories can be personal, but they don't have to all be personal. You can incorporate small pieces of you by adding in some favorite pieces, but by no means does every object have to be personal to reflect you and your style.

If you want every object to be meaningful and personal you might never finish as you will always be searching for meaningful objects. And even if expression of your personality is part of your design DNA, you can also get that point across with non-meaningful items that you like by playing up the

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meaningful ones. It's kind of like the focal point and one while per room concept. If everything is personal, then you can't see the forest for the trees.

So, I have a client who when I first met her she wanted everything in her home to be a reflection of her and her small family. In fact, when I walked into the home that is what it looked like. But she was calling me for help. So, when I put my designer eyes on the project I could quickly tell that she was trying to express the love of her family, but she was really kind of creating a bit of a daycare situation.

There were at least 100 photos of her son on the bookshelves and all of his childhood artwork was the artwork throughout the house and everything centered around this child. I assured her that we could group together the most important pieces and create a home that reflected the entire family and her need for expression but that we could also have some grownup accessories sprinkled in. And the home would end up looking more like them as a family.

Well, she was pretty skeptical, and I do understand. I'm over here teaching you to respect your design DNA. But I'm also teaching you that you can incorporate your design DNA in other ways than just putting everything out that your child has ever done and ever loved. Otherwise, this just looks like your child's DNA and not a reflection of all the people who are living in the home.

So, the first thing that people reach for when trying to create a cozy home is photo frames. I have certainly learned this over the years. This however is not the answer, even though a few sprinkled in does invoke a lived-in cozy feel. I went on a mission to really help her discover her design DNA. I discovered favorite colors, family information like favorite quotes, favorite things to do, favorite sports teams, time of marriage all sorts of things, whether she prefers curves or straight lines and on and on it goes.

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I was able to help her part with the entourage of picture frames and encouraged her to collage them in photo albums. Of course, I had to negotiate that she would still be surrounded by her beautiful pictures of her beautiful son however, they would just be in album form. I asked her to choose her favorite five photos through the years, not just baby photos and to select two of her favorite pieces of artwork that her son had created. Her homework was to stop worrying that her home wouldn't reflect her and just to simply concentrate on getting all of the memories off of the shelves and the walls, and into scrapbooks.

I blew up the five photos of her son so that she could actually see them. And I framed them in frames that would work cohesively in the new design. I included two of those on the shelves in the great room and the other three were placed in other parts of the home. I also framed the two pieces of her favorite artwork that her son had created and placed one leaning in the kitchen where she could smile at it every day, it was against a backsplash. And then placed another in the master bath. This represented a piece of them.

I then went about creating a collage gallery wall that included a clock as a centerpiece of the family collage gallery wall. The clock was permanently set on the time that she and her husband were married. I then included their favorite quotes and other memorabilia. But I kept it all confined to the one gallery wall in a hallway on the way to the master bedroom. Then I decorated the rest of the home.

The result, she said to me with tears in her eyes, "I had all of this stuff about my family out because it's precious to me. But I've long since stopped looking at it because it looked like clutter. It was my clutter and it had stopped feeling precious. Now I cherish that family wall and I realize I can change out certain things about it as we grow as a family.

But now my home feels like grownups live here who have a child, and that we have interesting décor, not just a décor centered around my son. I love

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my family and it's obvious but I needed our home to look like a family lives here, but that it's not our only interest. I love it." She said. Those words were what I so wanted to hear, and what I want you to take away from this is that, yes, I love a good meaningful object, and you should too.

But everything doesn't have to be meaningful or sentimental to be important in making your home a reflection of you. If it is, sometimes it ends up looking like a lot of souvenirs. So, try out these accessorizing tips and techniques that I've shared with you here today and let me know what you think. I would love for you to share photos with me on our social media platforms, which are on Facebook, we're Kimberly Grigg Designs, and on Instagram we are @kimberlygriggdesigns. And of course, our website is kimberlygriggdesigns.com.

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