

ARTS & ANTIQUES

Decorating A Minimalist Interior By Abby Cronin



Think of your modern flat or house as a stage set just waiting for the play to begin. There's always an interesting story to tell - and you can tell it as you transform minimalist anonymous rooms into your home. When it comes to personalising ordinary empty space, so typical of modern flats and houses, basic questions need answers. Do you want to live with 'antiques', 'vintage', 'contemporary' or a marriage of many styles? Will you recycle or buy new? What furniture, accessories, statement pieces and art are on your shopping list? The choice is endless. Think of your interior as a neutral stage set that can be furnished to reflect your taste. Explore fairs, markets and galleries. Keep your eyes open for that *ah-ha* item. There's no shortage of dealers specialising in antiques, textiles, ceramics and art. And don't forget to surf the endless online auctions and websites crammed with an infinite array of period styles, accessories, and basics. Let's get started: the 'basics' come first.

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We must eat so let's begin with 'basics'. The market for vintage kitchen cutlery offers an amazing opportunity to collect recycled

beautifully crafted vintage knives, forks, spoons and serving dishes. They will add a period feeling to your table setting. Linda Jackson has been trading in antiques for over 30 years and specialises in unusual and attractive tableware. Every item is in pristine condition. Linda's true love is silver and you will find all manner of silver perfume bottles, picture frames, jewellery boxes, enamel dressing table items, christening and wedding presents, boxed cutlery items, tableware and candlesticks. Pictured here is just a snippet of what Linda offers. She has a selection for every culinary occasion at affordable prices. Visit her shop in the Silver vaults in Chancery Lane or find her stall at many of London's antiques fairs. Looking for the perfect ice bucket or vintage wine glasses? Linda has them - plus lots and lots of silver.

When thinking about eating, the dinner hour comes to mind. If you need reminding, why not consider adding a clock to your shopping list. Large or small, clocks are both charming and functional. Roger Lascelles' (www.clockprops.com) has a collection of over 500 and has been reviving old vintage clocks for 30 years. No need to worry about forgetting to wind the clock because Roger's skilled craftsmen revive vintage and old electric clocks into fully functional clocks using a modern quartz movement. The original design is retained and all that is required is to find a suitable place - usually a wall, a table or shelf - to display the time. Some of Roger's clocks have been made into tables; others are carefully painted tin clocks and Bakelite classics from the 1950s. See Roger here holding a charming German porcelain



www.clockprops.com

kitchen clock from the 1920s. He said he's never had one like this before- "It's a real find at a modest £145".

Give serious thought to what form of art might suit your bare white walls. A stunning collection eight original Constructivist screen-prints in brilliant primary colours by the French artist Jan Albert GORIN (1899-1981) stood out at the recent Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair in Battersea. Odyssey Fine Art displayed them. Echoing Mondrian's colours and



Screen-Prints by Jan Albert Gorin (1899-1981)

Bauhaus shapes and designs, they would look spectacular in a contemporary interior. Feature them in a living room, dining room or a spacious hallway and make a powerful artistic statement.

Looking for something more familiar - like something you see when you travel around London every day? You may not have realised that the pioneering art and designs throughout London Underground reflect a unique visual history which is more than 100 years old. London Transport Museum is working with Transport for London to make authentic and exclusive Vintage Originals from London's transport network available to the public. Today several vintage items have been decommissioned and can be purchased from the London Transport Museum. Any one of those familiar logos, signs or posters would look fabulous in an interior setting. If you love London and enjoy travel by tube or bus, what could be better than to feature one or more of these pieces in your home? Several are available and an original comes with a certificate which authenticates each purchase. You might like to have a Gloucester Road Roundel or a Bond Street sign or one of the many unique posters from the London Transport Museum. Find London Transport Museum Unique Vintage & Retro Posters at www.ltmuseumshop.co.uk.

room set. These pieces tell a story. Patina and colouration tell their own history. These pieces have travelled and been loved. Their age adds to their character and the atmosphere of the home. Perhaps they're even heirlooms for a future generation.

Please don't forget to accessorise! Textiles, cushions and ceramics belong in our homes. See how they complement Maison Artefact's living room (pictured). You may find them by accident - when you're just browsing or see something exotic to take home when on holiday. Accessories add the finishing touches to your interiors and are usually found after your rooms are furnished. Take a good look at Katherine Pole's shelves of antique floral cushions, curtains and pillows pictured here. She features a shelf of exquisite antique textiles from France together with rustic linens and Indigo blues. They are timeless. And-don't forget ceramics. They are both decorative and functional. Sue Norman, a dealer with a unique collection of early English Blue and White pottery, sells a glorious range. She has footbaths, platters, sets of dishes, in all sizes and design. Sue has a comprehensive inventory: small and large and mainly from the early 19th century or earlier. Create an indoor garden planted up in a few pots from Sue and enjoy the pots and plants all year round. Pictured here is just one example of the how to arrange ceramic jardinières at home. Don't those flowers look happy?

The stage is now set. The rooms have evolved and their personalities have come to life - just as they do in a play. Anonymity is long gone. Minimalist rooms, flats and houses are no longer impersonal and ordinary. They embody the personalities of the people who live in them. Hurray! .



Three Vintage Originals from London Transport Museum



Photo Courtesy Sue Norman
www.blueandwhitetransferwaresuenorman.com

So far we've been thinking 'small'. But furnishing a living room asks us to think 'big'. Remember - a minimalist interior is your empty stage. You can let it evolve from shabby-chic, furnished with vintage curtains found in a charity shop or a sofa from Ebay. Or you might have a period style in mind. Either way, the right pieces can be hard to find. Coordinating a traditional, contemporary style or an eclectic look involves decisions. Pictured here is a minimalist living room filled with a contemporary mixture of chairs and tables. Modern lighting bathes the space and gives it a Scandinavian aura. Contrast the contemporary with furnishings of fading grandeur seen here in Maison Artefact's

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Photos by Abby Cronin
Courtesy Sue Norman photo