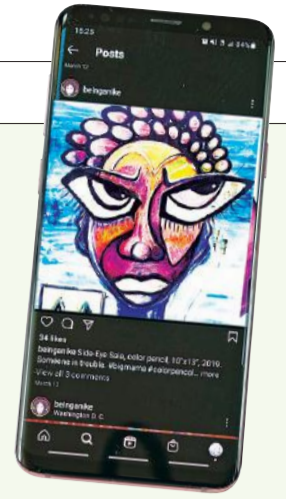


DESIGN & DECORATING



INSPIRATION UNBOUND A room from 'Jungalow: Decorate Wild' (Abrams) by Justina Blakeney, who scans Instagram accounts of global décor magazines.



A post by artist Anike Robinson on @beinganike

Unsettling Accounts

Recommendations to shake up your social media feed

For Pushing-It Palettes

Get inspired by mixed-media artist Anike Robinson's unignorable colorful riffs (above) on the African diaspora (@beinganike). Los Angeles interior designer Michelle Fahmy placed one of the artist's fuchsia-scheme painting against an Yves Klein blue wall to jolt the room's décor.

For Visions in Green

L.A. landscape designer Andrea Scharff shares not-so-secret gardens and dreamy landscapes from Naples to Napa on @andreascharfflandscape. Said Zurich interior designer Sandra Hinton, "I follow her because landscaping and gardening are really not my thing, but they are often part of creating a home."

For a Shot of Courage

Musician Sophie Straushe said she started the kaleidoscopic flashback account @retrothetoro as "a deep dive into midcentury holiday décor." It has since evolved into a hub for vintage design imagery, from campy Space Age pics to 1970s and '80s shots. "I love the idea of taking past design and resurrecting it in a fresh and modern way," said one fan, New York designer Sasha Bikoff. "Sometimes, at first, we don't think to go so bold, and it takes images like this to get our minds going."

Algorithm Blues

The echo chamber of social media feeds may be keeping you from discovering décor ideas you'd really like

By YELENA MOROZ ALPERT

WHEN A CLIENT sent Chicago interior designer Elizabeth Stamos Instagram images as aesthetic references, some depicted encaustic-cement flooring tile in a black-and-white, four-leaf-clover pattern—a particularly trite trend. Ms. Stamos's unspoken reaction? "Take a damn risk."

Thanks to home-reno TV and social media algorithms, Americans' tastes in décor have congealed into a sort of groupthink monotony. The prevailing design formula—a blend of blackened steel, white shiplap, subway tile, wood or rattan—is perpetuated by likes, sharing and targeted ads.

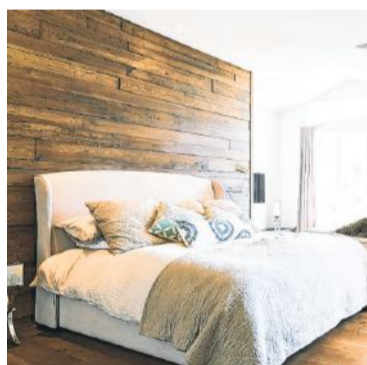
"If you engage with a post that has a gray couch, Instagram will show you gray couches," said Noriko Roy, co-founder of NK Agency, a digital marketing agency in Los Angeles. To bust up the sameness, Ms. Roy suggests you purge your search history and unfollow repetitive accounts. Turning on notifications for a novel account (our suggestions at right) alerts A.I. to your shifting point of view.

Los Angeles interior designer Justina Blakeney follows the feeds of décor magazines from around the globe to find designers and artists new to her. "If I find someone whose taste I really love, I look at who they are following to see if I uncover any gems," said Ms. Blakeney. The eclectic, charismatic results can be seen in her new book, "Jungalow: Decorate Wild."

Here, design pros on how to upend and better three decorating clichés spawned via Instagram.

CHEAP-SHOT ACCENT WALLS

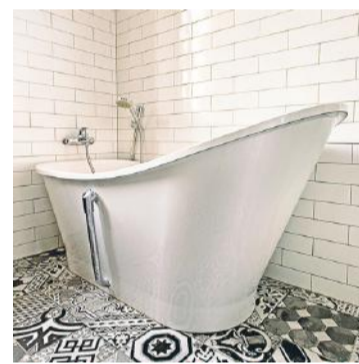
For decades, the accent wall (right) has been the risk-averse's go-to for an element of "surprise." However, the decorating move is akin to carrying an It-bag while wearing pajamas. "A well-designed room is a sum of all the parts, which doesn't happen if one part is highlighted," said Ms. Stamos. One particular take—covering said wall in shiplap paneling—has become inescapably popular due to its DIY ease. "Shiplap became synonymous with renovations," said Ms. Stamos. Consider paneling all the walls: Interior designer Kelly Wearstler rode out lockdown renting a midcentury Mal-



ibu beach house surfaced throughout in a caramel timber she appreciated. "It leads the feel of the space and provides a cohesive, organic warmth."

BLAH BATHROOMS

Instagram frequently showcases an easy-to-emulate, high-contrast formula: Showers flanked by panels of black steel and glass, white soaking tubs, subway tile and Moroccan-motif encaustic-cement tile (right). To shake up the cliché, New York interior designer Sasha Bikoff would drop in neoclassical whimsy with gilded, 19th-century French wall sconces with botanical details or a colorful Murano glass pendant globe over the tub. Similarly, Los Angeles designer Michelle Fahmy might contrast the overfamiliar hand-painted tile with pop-art elements like a Crayola-bright Vola faucet fixture. In a decidedly unformulaic bathroom in



Mallorca, Spain, real-estate developer Monty Berrow combined William-Morris inspired wallpaper with classic black-and-white checked flooring and hand-hewn beams



COLORLESS KITCHENS

You know the cut of this cookie: white Shaker cabinets, white marble, dual pendants over a center island, bar-stool seats (left). "When it comes to a custom-made kitchen, the millwork can be so beautiful, but with the white color, I feel like it disappears," said Benjamin Andres, an interior designer and architect in Jersey City, N.J. In New York City, he partnered with builder Michael Daddio to fulfill the clients' desire for a beach-shack vibe in their Fifth Avenue apartment. Cerusing the white-oak cabinets brought out the grain and added a casual, not-too-precious feel to the otherwise elegant flat-panel cabinetry. For her own kitchen cabinets, Ms. Stamos color-matched an image of a posh, cloud-blue door she snapped while walking in Paris.

Al Fresco Fragrance

Party planners and hoteliers swear by outdoor incense as a way to bring instant atmosphere to any plein-air fete

OUTDOOR INCENSE has come a long way since those hardware-store coils you picked up along with your barbecue charcoal. While the jury is still out on the question of whether stinky, smoke-born citronella significantly repels mosquitoes, new versions of al fresco scent aim higher—bringing instant atmosphere and more sophisticated fragrances (like clove, cedarwood and clary sage) to the party. Some outdoor incense sticks are nearly 2 feet long, able to burn for 2-3 hours.

Teissia Treyner, founder of New York City-based party planner Firefly Events, fires up incense to set convivial moods at outdoor soirees, from luxury weddings to intimate dinner parties. Musk and tobacco scents conjure a romantic, cozy vibe in winter, and floral-focused incense complements the warmer months' natural perfumes.

Despite the seeming futility of trying to scent an unbound space, Mrs. Treyner actually prefers using incense outside. "Inside it can become a little too much. Outdoors, you get subtle wafts of the smell," she said. Strategic placement, especially on windy days, helps smoke

drift most desirably.

Uday Rao holds up the Indonesian island of Bali as proof that plein-air incense isn't a folly. The general manager of the two Four Seasons Resort Bali properties (at Jimbaran Bay and Sayan), Mr. Rao pointed to sticks of burning incense tucked into the banana-leaf baskets of flowers, cookies and other things that the Balinese leave on sidewalks and doorsteps to honor the Hindu gods. "The scent of burning incense is one of the things that people will always remember after visiting



The Floral Society's Copper Incense Holder, \$31, food52.com

Bali," he said.

The Floral Society's Essential Oil Outdoor Incense comes in three decidedly un-medicinal fragrances: one warm and moody with notes of cinnamon leaf, sage and coffee; another bright and herbaceous thanks to a blend of tea tree and lavender; and a third that gets its light, sweet scent from lemon grass, orange and clary sage. Madison James's Flyaway Sticks have dominant notes of clove and cedar that emit a complex, woody scent when lit. And Skeem Design's Citronella Sea Salt Incense has a bright, grassy-citrus fragrance that's tinged with jasmine. Each scent is nuanced and layered to make any outdoor gathering more memorable than routine patio cocktails.

Of course you can just poke one of the sticks in the soil of a potted plant, but why miss the opportunity for some outdoor décor? Look for weather-worthy materials, like the unglazed ceramic of Yield design's tiered Meso holder (\$64, yielddesign.co) or the speckled clay of Black Pepper Paperie Co.'s Lite incense holder (\$120, studiobppco.com). —Catherine Dash



WAFY AMBITION From left: Outdoor Jumbo Citronella Sea Salt Incense, \$45 for 30 sticks, skeemshop.com; Madison James Flyaway Sticks, \$42 for 40 sticks, shopterrain.com; Essential Oil Outdoor Incense, \$51 for 20 sticks, thefloralsociety.com

DESIGN & DECORATING

Art for Yard's Sake

The next step in decorating your outdoor space with personality? Filling it with paintings, sculptures and more

By CHRISTINA POLETTA

AS WE contemplate hosting get-togethers this summer, you might be eyeing your patio and wishing, after a year of relative confinement, it were a bit more remarkable, a bit less overfamiliar. Festive, even. One answer, say interior designers, is art, a therapeutic fix for spaces we've spent too much time in. Emily B. Collins, director of the New York Design Center's Gallery at 200 Lex, has noticed intense interest in "items that contribute to a beautiful, functional setting outdoors."

Homeowners and design pros are discovering that outdoor spaces are loaded with blank walls waiting to be decked out with paintings, mirrors, sculpture, decorative tiles—the same arsenal of art you'd use inside.

To liven up her patio's seating area, Liz Lidgett, a

gallery owner in Des Moines, Iowa, hung a painting on a nearby exterior white-brick wall with screws and wire. The glassless, wood-framed painting of pink and blue florals (below) was a \$10 thrift-store score, preserved with a coat of Rust-Oleum's water-repelling NeverWet to withstand the weather. Guests, she said, seem to enjoy the unexpected element.

Homeowners are discovering that outdoor spaces are waiting to be decked out with the same arsenal of art you would use inside.

In Palm Springs, Tamara Hill, who rents her midcentury home on Airbnb, saw a blank canvas in the cement bottom of her kidney-shaped pool. She commissioned Brooklyn artist and designer Alexandra Proba to paint her trademark madcap—and suitably biomorphic—designs under the waterline. "It's magi-

cal," said Ms. Hill. "It brings the whole style of my home together far more than I imagined."

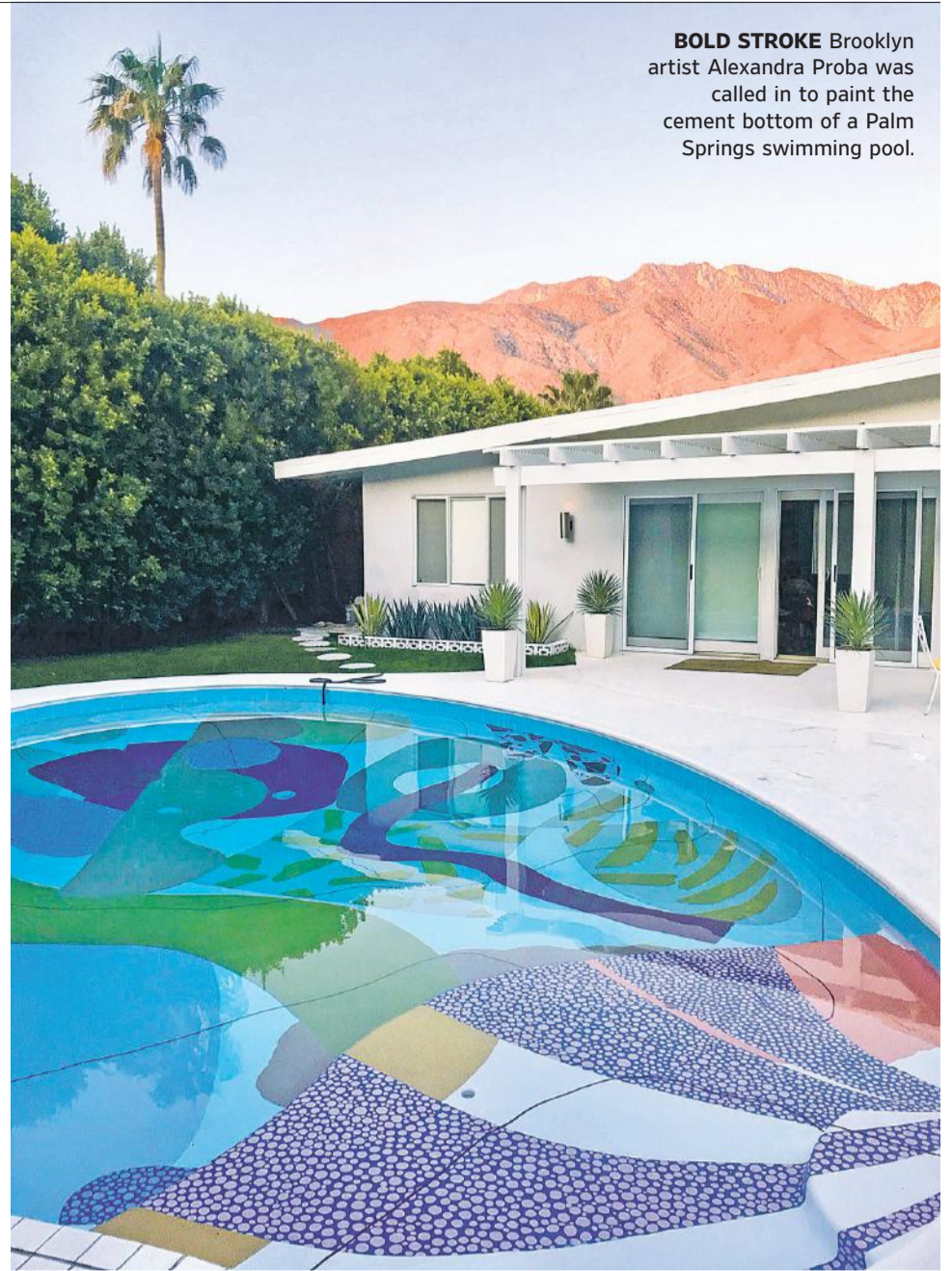
Don't have the coin to fly in an artist to paint a mural on a wall, fence or pool bottom? You can search for experienced artists near you on sites such as thumbtack.com. Plug in your ZIP Code, view past projects, read client reviews and get in touch.

Wall sculptures of metal,

wood or fired clay can dress up naked swaths of siding and fences. For a home in Los Angeles, New York designer Miles Redd invited ceramic sculpture artist Carlos Otero to reimagine a blank courtyard wall. "It called for something spectacular," said Mr. Redd. The artist delivered a cream-colored conglomeration of textures that evokes the surface of the moon, inspired by bas-relief panels of the 1960s architecture in Buenos Aires, Mr. Otero's childhood home.

"Ceramics can live safely outdoors in most climates given some degree of protection," said Juliet Burrows of New York's Hostler Burrows Gallery, which represents Mr. Otero. History is full of examples of ceramics-ornamented architecture, she noted.

Dallas designer Jean Liu likes the midcentury modern metal work of American duo Curtis Jere, which she in-



BOLD STROKE Brooklyn artist Alexandra Proba was called in to paint the cement bottom of a Palm Springs swimming pool.



A \$10 painting enlivens the Des Moines deck of a gallery owner.

stalled in the lounge space of a client's covered patio. These cost thousands, but more than passably chic vintage wall sculptures can be found on sites like Etsy and eBay for less than \$300.

Bryan McKenzie, a landscape designer in Jacksonville, Fla., is a fan of tiles and "exquisitely patterned walls." He dolls up vertical surfaces with disks, squares and other polygons from G. Vega Cerámica, in Marbella, Spain. Against whitewashed sur-

faces, he hangs the Moroccan-style tiles glazed in shades of blue and green.

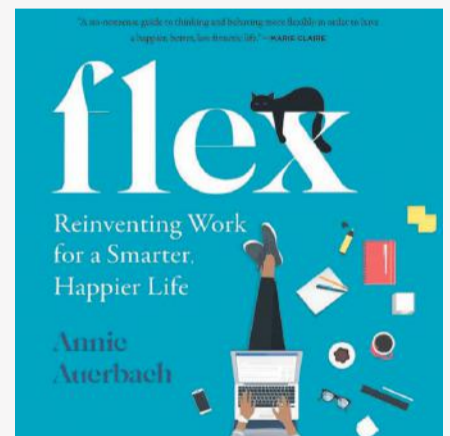
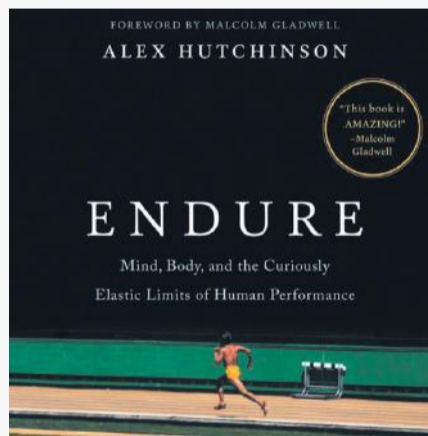
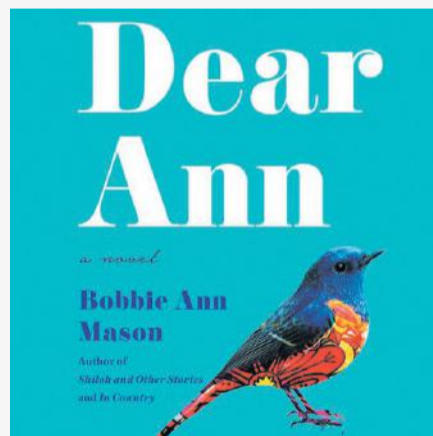
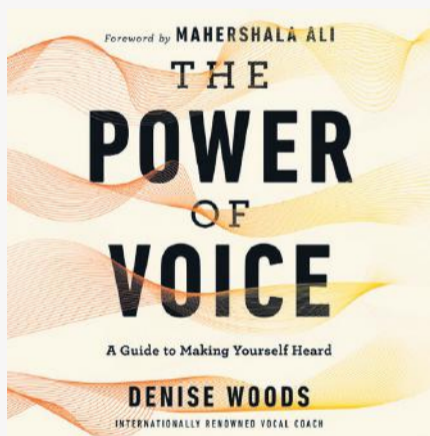
Another pro move is to hang a tapestry or fiber art in an al fresco space. Occasionally, on a side patch of her Fairfield, Conn., yard that's visible from the street, Pam Poling exhibits one of her handmade quilts, which dangle from a stand she Macgyvered using photo equipment. The fair-weather exhibition started as a way to inspect her sewing in a natu-

ral light and snap a clean photo to share. Now, she says, neighbors look forward to the rotating show of coverlets, whose geometry and bold colors vibrate against her verdant landscaping.

In the front yard of her Phoenix, home, artist Kyllan Maney draped a tree with a necklace of solar lanterns she hand painted with whimsical stripes and dots. "Some of my neighbors have had visitors ask if we are having a party."

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