



Eight great trends from the Interior Design Show

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This year's Interior Design Show, the first to be sold out of exhibitor space in the event's history, was indeed packed with new design ideas. With Toronto continuing to outpace other global markets for residential development, big international players such as Miele and Audi were tripping over each other to make the big statement. Here are eight of the trends to emerge from this year's strong show:



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Ikea gets soul with a richly sensual black-on-black kitchen.

1. Fun and Fabulous

One of the most encouraging signs was how much the notoriously uptight world of design has decided to unbutton its collar, let its hair down and maybe even have a little fun. Not only were there few signs of the deadly dull taupe pretension that has so dominated North American interiors, but the downright wacky — like a fun fur modernist lamp (for hip Neanderthals?) — was out in full, class-clown flourish. Elements of the trend include visual puns, odd juxtapositions and a sense of humour that pokes fun at all of our decorative seriousness. Toronto's Style Garage weighed in with a Lucite side table etched with wood grain to look like a see-through tree stump, while Upcountry took the stuffing out of a classic British sofa by upholstering it in a giant Union Jack. In all, it's a good sign for the economic recovery when design folk are betting that people will shell out good money for something that makes them smile.

2. The New Green

From fabrics made out of recycled pop bottles to high-tech, non-toxic paint formulations, design is all over the eco-imperative. The most stylish edge of this phenomenon is the notion of adaptive reuse — building something new and compelling from existing abandoned materials — as with Elte's new line of old, worn Persian carpets that

have been redyed in pop colours. In the concept spaces, the Brothers Dressler showed their ingenuity and enviro chops with a beautiful space entirely constructed from abandoned bits of wooden furniture. For a metalwork concern aptly named "Modern Revision," designer Jody Racicot showed how one could construct the most elegant writing desk from cast-off metal scraps.

3. Haute Handicraft

Thanks to the '70s, the word "craft" automatically conjures either a clotted textile weaving or misshapen mug dripping with mud-coloured glazes. Enter the 21st century, however, and craft has taken on not only a new importance, but a new refinement and elegance. The wonderful Avenue Road showed many fine examples of this direction, particularly in a graceful side table by German artist Sebastian Herkner that appeared to float on its green glass base. Tahir Mahmood's beautiful wood work shows a similar sophistication. And activist designer Patty Johnson's fantastic work with cooperatives in Guyana resulted in several knockout, must-have pieces, including a collection of turned wood vases that put the haute in handicraft.

4. Warmed-up Minimalism

The future isn't only friendly, but possibly smart and sexy too. As Francesco Angiulli's Mobius strip of a desk aptly illustrates, the minimalism we once imagined as our future is here, but given the right touch it can achieve a whole new engaging warmth, if not an alluring sensuality. A result of new technologies and computer design capabilities applied to familiar materials, the approach is arguably the beginning of a whole new esthetic. And let's hope it's one that's here to stay.

5. Heavy Metal Grunge

With '90s retro looks in the fashion stores, is it any surprise grunge is back in home decor? Look for slouchy linen-upholstered looks mixed with found objects and heavy metal accessories, like a French artist's rough iron arch of a coffee table — part of the rusted hull of an old submarine — made for the folks at Montauk. Junction vintage dealer Metropolis showed some similar work, such as desks and dining tables fashioned from old industrial metallica. The look is both nostalgically postapocalyptic and another example of adaptive reuse.

6. Going Graphic

Goodbye glamorous damask and rich velvet brocade. These dire times call for desperate action in the form of bold graphic prints, such as these charming raw linen pillows covered in hand-screened Canadiana by Toronto designer Nicole Tarasick. Indeed, message-laden pop-art graphics were everywhere: on a vent hood in an Italian-designed kitchen, in tone-on-tone glazes on the sides of porcelain bathtubs, and as accents on pillows and upholstery, adding iPad-era visual interest and giving the literate vibe of T-shirt art to interiors.

7. Having it Your Way

So the 450 million different prints already out there aren't enough for you? The good news, thanks to the wonders of digital design, is that bespoke has come to interiors in a really big way. Kate Thornley-Hall of Source UK can

turn your own design into a one-of-a-kind carpet. And Lucia Kinghorn's extremely fun purple and canary yellow "pop toile" wallcovering can convert your sketch or snippet of an archival textile into a wallpaper or yard of fabric in any length or hue. Still, it's not only all about you and your needs, it's also about being green, so Kinghorn only prints as much or as little as you require.

8. Black is Back

It's been awhile, but sexy, sensual black-on-black is back. How do we know? Because Ikea's prizewinning booth was a Goth fantasy kitchen of floor-to-ceiling cabinetry in matte black, with black granite countertops spilling over with dark nuts and plums and illuminated with sexy red-lit Chinese lanterns. Said Ikea Canada's Madeleine Lowenborg-Frick of this exciting and welcome style departure for the Scandesign brand, "It was time for us to move away from the all-white lab."