



ideaBOOK

01. Displaying and Organizing

Introduction

We all have prized possessions. This ideaBook is about displaying and organizing mine. I discovered a pleasure of setting up an “exhibition” as a child, after visiting The State Russian Museum in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) for the first time. I aligned postcard reproductions with little annotations my mother had typed up on the wall of my room. Even then, presentation was of paramount importance.

I lived in the Soviet Union for the first sixteen formative years. We left as political refugees, but my affinity for Russian culture stayed with me. Not intentional, rather ingrained – layered and woven through, almost subconscious, it sets the tone in my design aesthetic, collection of books, teapots, even wooden spoons.

Ten vignettes presented here showcase how I curate, choreograph, frame objects that are near and dear to me. I delight in designing ledges, display rails and stands to feature personal treasures, interpreting the expression “all at your fingertips” in a private language – focusing on beauty as much as functionality. Here and there, you will discern that eloquent nod to my Russian heritage. Please enjoy!



entry



living room



kitchen

.01

reveal *(dining room)*

Problem: Impossible to hide new electrical conduits within the existing raw redbrick wall.

Solution: Conceal eloquently – create an additional layer.

Introduce a freestanding hollow partition to house everything required.

Added Benefit: “Wire management” wall reveals a provocative niche.

& consolidate

Problem: Relocating 10 years later.

Solution: Downsize intelligently – crop the shelves to cantilever from one bracket.

Added Benefit: Enough wood left over to use on a custom valance; virtually zero waste.



LAYERING



cantilevered shelf



left-over wood put to use — reinforcement

structure & reconcile *(living room)*

.02

Problem: A living room has to function as an office + library.

Solution: Plan for success – fine-tune and bring everything together in one receptacle – a framework, backdrop, container.

Design shelving that is diligent about keeping things pared down.

Hang narrow “in-between” display trays to maximize capacity.

Added Benefit: Every surface becomes a tidy mini-gallery.



FINE-TUNING



modular CD shelf



modular CD shelf repurposed — reconciliation

take it to the ceiling *(kitchen)*

.03

Problem: Wasted space above wall cabinets.

Solution: Shift attention – highlight as if it were a focal point. Install wall-to-wall floating cabinet/shelf for a streamlined feel.

Feature a teapot collection where functional storage is out of reach.

Use track lighting for a salon atmosphere.

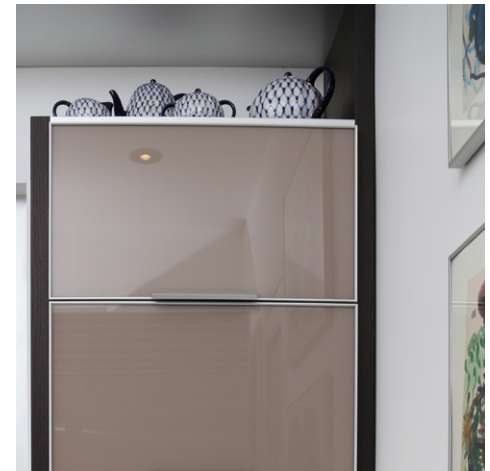
Added Benefit: A chance to concoct a new organizing and displaying “recipe” with a pinch of unexpected flavor.



HIGHLIGHTING



wall-to-wall floating shelf



a teapot set showcased — clarity

frame & reinforce *(hallway)*

.04

Problem: Very long, narrow and poorly lit hallway.

Solution: Take creative control – illuminate by ushering in light and art.

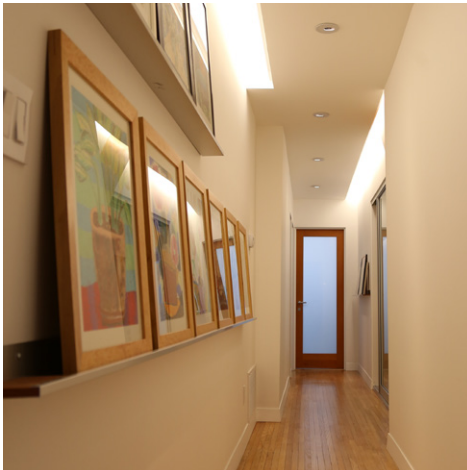
Widen where possible.

Create light coves.

Take advantage of the wall expanse to set up an eye-engaging gallery of my daughters' work.

Float slim exhibition rails directly under the light coves on alternating sides.

Added Benefit: Prominent display of children's art encourages individuality.



ILLUMINATING



an exhibition rail



creativity celebrated — reinforcement

uplift & connect *(bedroom)*

.05

Problem: Not enough room for two conventional nightstands.

Solution: Let it soar – embrace setbacks.

Explore a residual in-between space.

Suspend bronze anodized aluminum ledges from the headboard and adjacent dresser.

Added Benefit: No-clutter, tranquil bedroom promotes restful sleep.



EMBRACING



a headboard ledge



opportunity seized — connection

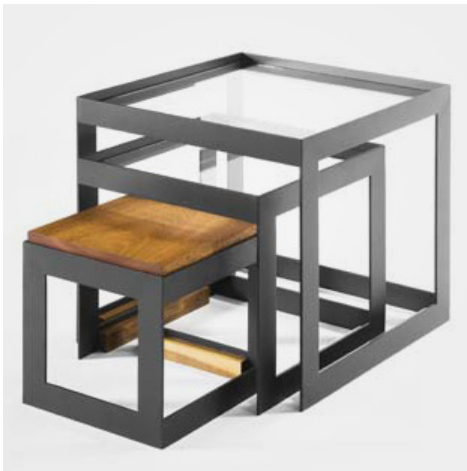
enhance & refine *(bathroom)*

.06

Problem: Tiny.

Solution: Make every inch work twice as hard – outsmart constraints.
Convert previously designed Smart Set nesting tables into a compact vanity.
Create a shelved alcove in lieu of counter space.

Added Benefit: Spatial intimacy is conducive to luxuriating.



OUTSMARTING



Smart Set vanity



less is more — refinement

enliven & energize *(laundry room)*

.07

Problem: Half of the existing utility room has to be donated to adjacent bedroom.

Solution: Avoid clichés – infuse with a fresh approach.

Create visual interest.

Stack washer/dryer.

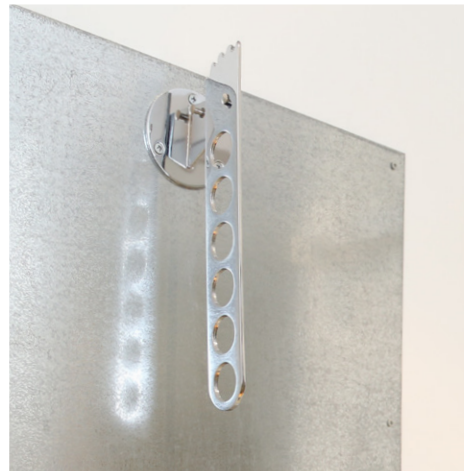
Compress by upcycling various IKEA space-saving offerings.

(see more in ideaBOOK 02)

Added Benefit: An opportunity to display and organize my Russian wooden spoons.



INFUSING



laundry valet



visual appeal amplified — energy

augment & align *(garage)*

.08

Problem: Underused.

Solution: Double as a studio – multi-task, as usual.

Allow new glass doors to fold back for occasional parking.

Design lightweight flexible shelving to house books, reference materials.

Keep in mind intermittent client presentations.

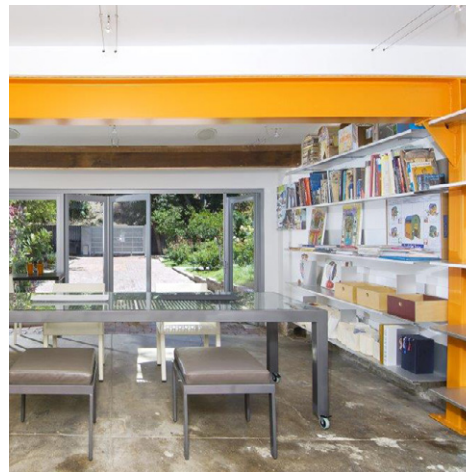
Design a conference/work table on wheels for maneuverability.

(see more in ideaBOOK 03)

Added Benefit: Merging seamlessly with the garden; paradise found.



MULTI-TASKING



storage wall



shelving systematized — alignment

show, don't tell *(wine storage)*

.09

Problem: Working on a wine bar project for a client who lacks integrity.

Solution: Resign with conviction – expand instead of shriveling.

Have courage to put the work already done to good use.

Create my own product – an expandable wine rack with visual appeal.

Added Benefit: Something new to show to MoMA Retail Division buyers.



EXPANDING



stacking wine rack



assembly pre-determined — transparency

choreograph & coordinate *(organization system)*

.10

Problem: Clutter.

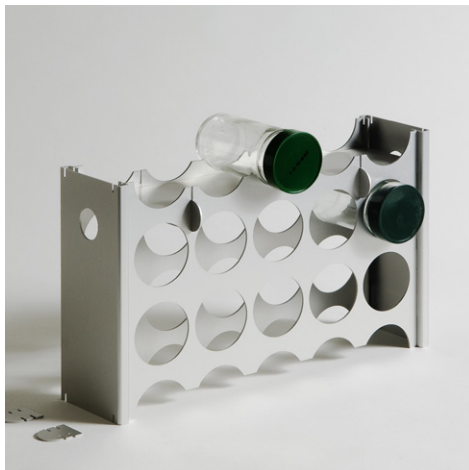
Solution: Introduce a line of accessories for kitchen, den, home office, bathroom, and closet – unify various spaces with consistent, coordinating elements.

Design a series of racks linking aesthetics and utility: Tend-on Group.

Make them stackable to multiply capacity while keeping the same footprint.

Focus on ease of assembly, avoid hardware.

Added Benefit: As it is freestanding, there is no need to attach anything permanently!



UNIFYING



"Tend-on" spice rack



framework provided — coordination

ten ideas at a glance

Conclusion



.01

*Layering:
concealing eloquently &
downsizing sustainably*



.02

*Fine-tuning:
keeping things pared down*



.03

*Highlighting:
using out-of-reach spaces
to showcase collections*



.04

*Illuminating:
curating exhibitions in
unexpected places*



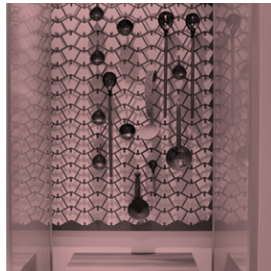
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*Embracing:
turning obstacles into
opportunities*



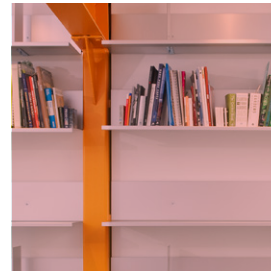
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*Outsmarting:
achieving spatial intimacy
regardless of constraints*



.07

*Infusing:
maximizing visual appeal*



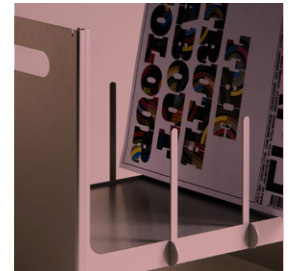
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*Multi-tasking:
doubling on performance*



.09

*Expanding:
focusing on growth*



.10

*Unifying:
avoiding clutter with a
consistent element*

Who is Alla?

Someone whose life is a never-ending DIY project.

A “cobbler *with* shoes” – I use professional skills to enhance the quality of my own life by improving the lives of people around me.

While expecting my first child, I designed everything for the nursery, which gave birth to an architectural practice focusing on children. In an effort to be a better parent, I started Children’s Architecture Workshop, which subsequently served hundreds of kids. As my two daughters turned teenagers, I became a creativity coach, which resulted in an opportunity to join the faculty of Art Center College of Design. Building a house for our family meant creating a transformational hub, which led to its selection as one of the 100 best in the world by an international architectural publisher.

Having been able to experience the thrill, the satisfaction of forging my own way, I strongly believe in encouraging self-reliance and self-expression in others. As a mother, I acknowledge my daughters in all of their creative pursuits. As an educator, I challenge my students to push beyond their comfort zone. And, as **architect on demand**, I incite DIY home improvement enthusiasts by offering advice without strings.



Winner of Product Design competitions; 1997, 2003, 2010.

Winner of Best Toy of the Year Award; Easel Art + Cart; 2003.

Winner of Good Design Award; A–Desk; 2009.

alla DIYally.com