



ideaBOOK

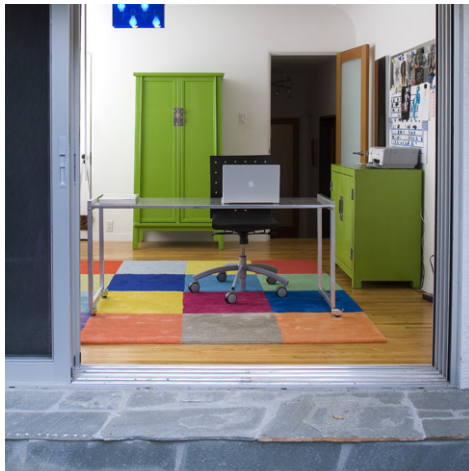
02. Upcycling IKEA

Introduction

IKEA's design aesthetic – characterized by simplicity, minimal lines, and functionality – is truly appealing to me. However, as an architect who has to do everything her own way, I can't resist giving IKEA products a personal twist to avoid that straight-off-the-showroom-floor look. They are cost-effective and fun to customize!

Whether you live in a studio apartment or a chateau, taking full advantage of the space available can be a challenge. With the right mix of IKEA's ingenious space-saving solutions boasting adventurous spirit and built-in flexibility, you can expand without adding.

Yes, IKEA's friendly vibe puts you at ease and in charge, inviting to reveal your inner engineer, multi-function spatially, splurge on a budget. In this ideaBook, I share 10 examples of how I upcycle and personalize IKEA in my own home. Please take a look.



IKEA chair & rug



IKEA hooks



IKEA toilet paper holder

maximizing instead of sacrificing *(laundry room)*

.01

Built-in Folding Table altered

In a space where every square inch has to double its capacity, only a disappearing table would do.

IKEA's built-in folding table compact silver powder-coated steel mechanism was ideal for squeezing into a narrow space; however, the top (which incidentally came in two different finishes) was oversized. Since it was made out pressed board, it couldn't have been modified as required – exposing a raw edge was not an option. No problem. I fashioned an alternative top using IKEA's butcher-block cutting board by trimming it a bit to fit within the constraints.

IKEA's stuff works like a charm!



upright position



IKEA mechanism



folded-down position

not reinventing the wheel *(laundry room)*

.02

Kitchen Cabinets repurposed

Customizing something ready-made to fit my needs makes more sense than starting from scratch.

In addition to storing household cleaning supplies, the laundry room had to accommodate a sizable heating unit – an eyesore. I solved this problem by employing two tall IKEA kitchen 24" wide cabinets. Identical visually, yet one (12" deep) stows away and conceals household products, while the one on the opposite wall (24" deep) disguises the unsightly contraption.

IKEA's products are cost-effective.



IKEA 24" deep cabinet with door closed



IKEA 24" deep cabinet with door open



IKEA 12" deep cabinet with door open

working with what you have *(laundry room & hallway)*

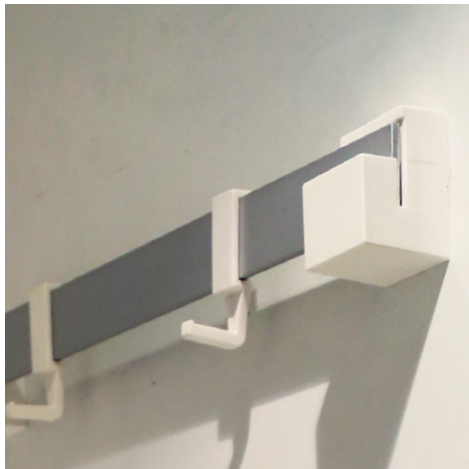
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Modular Hanging System individualized

Display and Quick Access are my first and middle names. *(See ideaBOOK 01)*

This aluminum rail with slender plastic hooks brings out a curator in me. In the laundry room, the system serves as a hanging holder for tools, cleaning aids, and even an IKEA ironing board – saving inches and keeping everything flush. In the hallway connecting two of my daughters' rooms, it allows me to turn a passage into a gallery by grouping together their self-portraits, some of which are custom-framed, while others live in a variety of IKEA ready-made picture frames.

IKEA offers options, especially when space is limited.



IKEA's modular hanging system



laundry room application



hallway application

paying attention to details *(laundry room)*

.04

Stainless Steel Hangers edited

Imagine: when hanging laundry to air dry, I expect it to look as good as it does at a boutique.

A hemmed sheet of galvanized metal above pre-rinsing sink acts as a backsplash and a magnet board for dry-cleaning tickets; its reflective surface makes the room appear a tiny bit larger than it is. A retractable laundry valet (from Häfele) is attached to it above eye level, avoiding any waste of valuable space vertically. IKEA's glistening hangers are critical to this composition.

IKEA's products work hard and look good.



backsplash-magnet board



laundry valet



IKEA hangers

finding new in familiar *(home office, library & closet)*

.05

Bookcase amended

Repetition reinforces an idea. *(See ideaBOOK 01)*

IKEA's utterly versatile shelving units provide neutral context or a backdrop for my eclectic belongings. This particular example is organically minimal – a modular structure for any contents. Over time, I have put it to multiple uses: an open bookshelf, a display case, even a wardrobe. As door hardware the line came with was not quite right, I upped the style quotient by changing handles, still using IKEA ones.

IKEA gives artistic license.



home office application



closet application



IKEA modular bookcase

juxtaposing stock with custom *(bathroom & bedroom)*

.06

Curtain Clips and Hooks **diversified**

Gizmos and gadgets focus on doing something well, thus on improving the experience.

I love IKEA's various curtain-hanging implements for their clean lines; they are so unassuming. They can be used with a shower curtain made out of waterproof fabric (rip-stop nylon from the rainwear section of a local fabric store), combined with a decorative rod or incorporated into a child's canopy bed. Light as a feather, they glide effortlessly to keep water out, invite sunshine in or help escape the outside world.

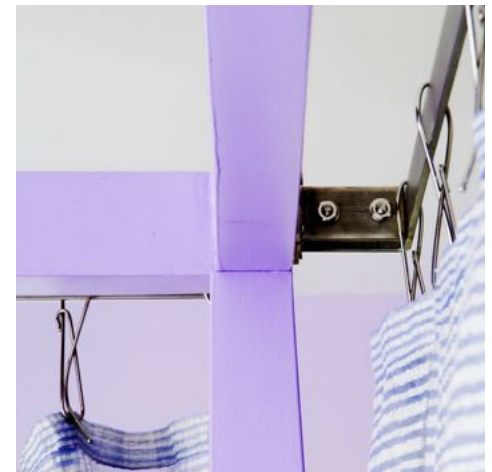
IKEA's no-nonsense simplicity is key to fresh solutions.



shower curtain



privacy window curtain (behind)



canopy bed curtain

using modules as building blocks *(hallway)*

.07

Closet System **tailor-made**

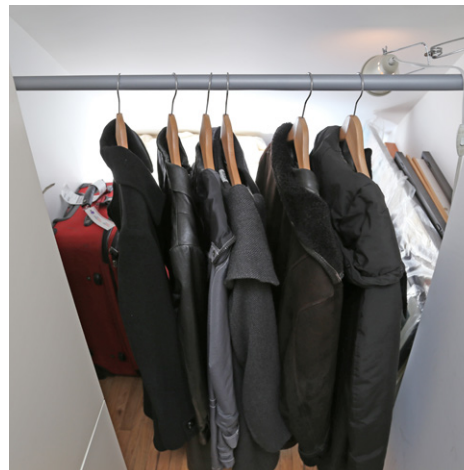
When it comes to my own home, even a closet has to have creative flair.

While remodeling my apartment, I uncovered dead space under a staircase and took it over, thus quadrupling a closet. Just accommodating clothes storage and empty suitcases was not enough; it also had to function as always-within-reach cabinet of a home office. Since there was a crawl space access panel in the floor, nothing could be permanently built-in. Most importantly, it needed to look organized with sliding doors ajar and everything exposed. IKEA's versatile solutions satisfied all of my requirements.

IKEA is a game changer.



condition A



condition B



condition C

relating unrelated *(kid's room & outdoor eating area)*

.08

Rug, Dishes and Place Settings interlaced

I group IKEA with high-end and tailor-made pieces.

My daughter's room is a mix of objects that have grown with her from junior high to college. We made her curtains together out of an Indian sari, the bed comes from my own KidPlay line, and the Pastille chair by Eero Aarnio sits spectacularly on the IKEA vibrantly colorful rug that ties everything together. Another case in point is the spot wedged between an aboveground pool and a rose garden we use for alfresco dinners. I designed the lighting system, the table is by Gandia Blasco, stackable chairs are by Driade, while the dishes and place settings are by IKEA.

IKEA steps up to the plate.



IKEA rug



IKEA dishes



IKEA place settings

balancing logic with imagination *(living room)*

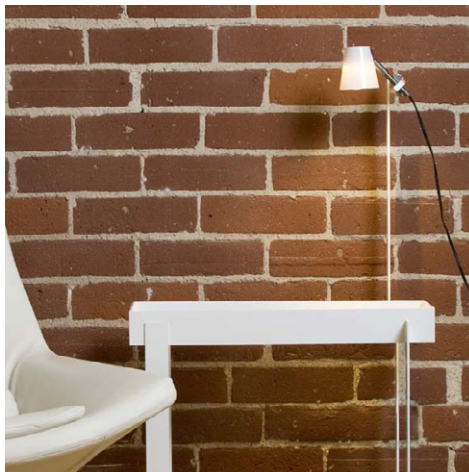
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Lampshade fused

As an architect and a DIY fanatic, I welcome collaboration of my inner engineer and inner artist.
(See *ideaBOOK 03*)

Sometimes, I roam an IKEA showroom pretending it is my tinkering laboratory. I feel stimulated by IKEA's stackable, foldable, and everything-in-between solutions. My own products often have casters for easy mobility; I tend to incorporate various expandable mechanisms that promote conversion, transformation and reorientation. In this particular case, I dismantled an off-the-shelf IKEA light fixture and integrated its streamlined glass lampshade into a never-seen-before piece – a side table with a light source. I called it Soft Sell.

IKEA is an inspiration.



Soft Sell



IKEA lampshade



bringing things to light

overriding habitual & superficial *(everywhere)*

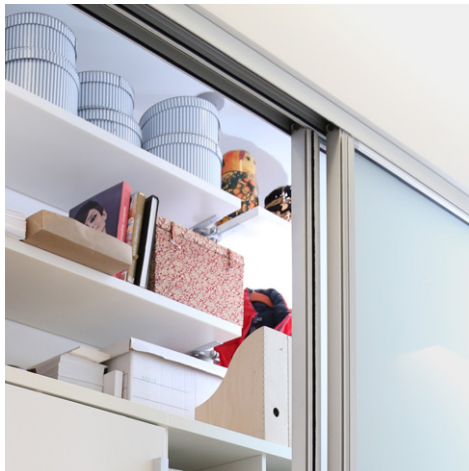
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Storage Boxes & Containers *integrated*

Sorry, if I sound like a broken record, but appearances matter to me. *(See ideaBOOK 01)*

IKEA's various storage boxes are not only crucial for de-cluttering and avoiding a mess – they are delightfully attractive. They come in a range of colors, materials, shapes consistent with my design sensibilities. Lightweight, sturdy and durable, they motivate to organize. Another good thing is that they are portable. And when inspiration strikes, I get creative with labels.

Thanks to IKEA's accessories, sorting everything from an office to a linen closet is a win-win.



IKEA magazine file & hat boxes



IKEA plywood boxes



IKEA paper boxes

ten ideas at a glance

Conclusion



.01

*Altered:
fitting within the constraints*



.02

*Repurposed:
assisting in customization*



.03

*Individualized:
saving inches and keeping
everything flush*



.04

*Edited:
attending to detail*



.05

*Amended:
serving as infrastructure*



.06

*Diversified:
solving things simply*



.07

*Tailor-made:
accommodating and
organizing*



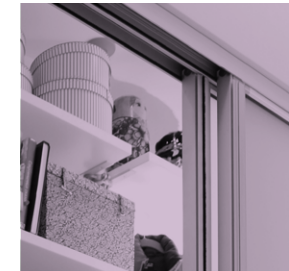
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*Interlaced:
fitting in with high-end and
custom pieces*



.09

*Fused:
being a "tinkering
laboratory"*



.10

*Integrated:
streamlining and keeping
everything tidy*

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