

8 designer tricks to decorate with texture

“New York designer Lorri Dwyer makes a sea grass rug her go-to favorite because it's affordable and can be topped with another texture such as a shag rug.”

By Barbara Ballinger

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Walk into some rooms, and you immediately feel welcomed, nurtured, visually excited. You want to curl up on the room's plush velvet sofa, wrap yourself in its nubby thick throw, and enjoy the flickering, warming flames from the fireplace with its big rustic stone surround.

What's the room's secret? Often not its size, style of furnishings, or color palette. A mix of textures may be the catalyst. "Texture makes all the difference between a room seeming warm and inviting rather than cold, flat and unfinished," says Erica Islas, owner of EMI Interior Design in Los Angeles. Chicago architect Elissa Morgante with Morgante-Wilson Architects agrees, "Texture's definitely the total buzz, especially because neutral palettes have become so popular." And for Sarah Barnard, another LA designer, texture, not pattern, is the go-to tool.

Welcome to 2016, and a world awash with textures.

Textural trends have come, gone and returned before. But not all's the same this time around. Today's update? An overall subtlety in the finished design, and one chunky show-off texture to act as a focal point or foil.

8 tricks with texture:

- Be playful; use a texture with a small scale next to one with a larger scale to balance it out. "Part of the fun is exploring and doing things differently, though in moderation," says Boston-area designer Tiffany LeBlanc, who loves using sisal rugs, topped with handmade overlays.