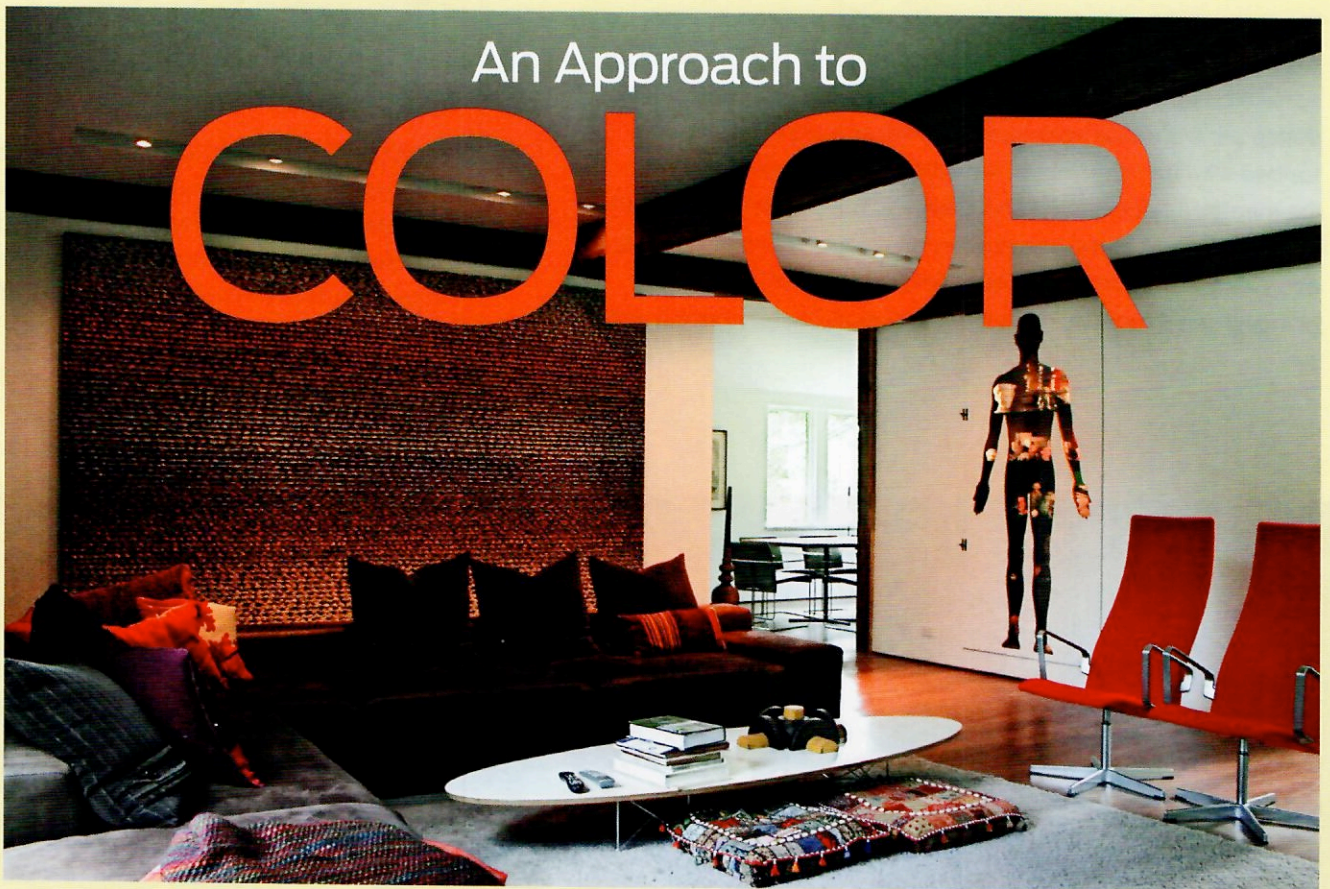


Makeover

Masters

SHOW HOUSES are exciting to explore, and each one offers a notebook full of ideas for the DIY designer. On the other hand, these houses are usually over-the-top fabulous—the lessons they offer can be difficult to translate into a 1980s three-bedroom in the 'burbs or a studio apartment near campus. We wanted to see how the pros use color in designs for “regular people” in “regular homes.” At our request, a handful of experienced professionals opened their portfolios to describe how they used color to make over spaces for real clients.



By Deborah Schmidt

COLOR is a wonderful tool. It can calm or excite you, make you feel cozy, entice you to eat, or even to shop! A large room can feel smaller with dark colors and a small room can seem larger with light colors. Of course, personal tastes in color range widely, and regional differences matter, too. Spaces vary greatly in function and so, too, does the approach to color.

In order to manage these variables and make a customer happy, designers still have a few rules that make up their personal style. My basic approach to the use of color for interiors is as follows. ↓

→ **ON A RECENT** home renovation, we discovered a spectacular stone wall buried behind dark red shelving. We planned to use the room as a cozy home office. While we loved the wall, it was dark and the stone seemed harsh next to white walls. We knew the adjacent sheetrock needed to be painted in a darker

Use the color of given natural materials as a grounding color. Use neutral colors or the same color family in varying values for the main surfaces, and use bright color to enliven the space with art or accessories or to help direct from one space to another.



value to tie the stone in with the room. The color scheme we chose revolved around the stone, with tone-on-tone walls and flooring in a color not far from the wall color. The barn door was stained to match painted walls and carpet, and the large wooden door helped soften the stone.

→ **IN ANOTHER RENOVATION,**

I was asked to create a viewing room and adult entertainment space in a basement. Since we had only one wall of high, smallish windows, it was clear that colors needed to be light in value. We also wanted a warm palette to compensate for the cold feeling of the largely concrete basement.

First, we added a wooden beam framework to set the stage for an Adirondack-style room, suited to the house. For walls, we found rich brown fabric to cover acoustical panels in the viewing room. This created an intimate feeling and reduced glare on the screen. We chose grass cloth wallpaper for the more active spaces. Carpet in the



same color family as the grass cloth and wooden beams continued the warm, natural scheme and created a neutral backdrop for beautiful, custom twig furniture. The twig cabinetry is both the focal point and the art of the room.

← **IN MOST INTERIOR DESIGNS**

or renovations, there are certain elements that will remain in the new space. In this barn renovation project, the wooden beams were in place, and we decided to leave them

exposed—they were a terrific place to start building our color palette. We chose Brazilian teak, wide-board flooring in rich brown to complement the beams. Next, we found a textured wool carpet in taupe, and we repeated that color on the accent wall to bring out the architecture of white cabinetry. The large chocolate sectional grounds the space, and bright fabrics on chairs and pillows give it energy. Wall-wash lighting highlights the large painting, which is a focal point. The neutral colors in

this design support the art but don't compete with it.

↓ **NATURAL SLATE** in the back-splash of this barn kitchen repeats colors in the wooden beams. Note the window trim painted in a warm brown, so that it disappears and draws nature into the space. Dark bronze fixtures and a travertine sink complement the barn wood cabinetry. The mix of natural tones sets up a nice background for my client's colorful flowers, foods, and friends.



DEBORAH SCHMIDT specializes in interior, furniture, and architectural designs. She has more than 30 years of experience transforming spaces for people to live, work, and play. Although her home and studio are both in New York, Schmidt has worked across the United States and abroad.