

Homes



Appealingly textured fibres and extensive use of wood evoke the Nature theme in a modern apartment designed by Olivia Bailey. **ARNAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Designing spaces that meet emotional needs

Mood-boosting colours and textured materials play a role

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Wondering where interior design and décor may be headed in the next few years? A new study from Cosentino offers some intriguing theories.

The Spanish-based manufacturer of engineered stone surfaces recently released *Shaping Tomorrow*, a report on architecture and design trends. Based in part on a survey of 184 architects, interior designers and industrial designers from around the world, the report groups trends into five themes: Origin, Solace, Nature, Urban and Wonder.

ORIGIN

“Origin” predicts increasing interest in local materials and approaches, as opposed to a universal esthetic that makes it hard to distinguish an Osaka penthouse from an Ottawa century home. The study’s authors trace this interest in hyper-local design back to the pandemic, when it was suddenly expensive or

impossible to buy materials and fixtures from afar.

APPLY IT: Sandstone, limestone and copper are used in many of Ottawa’s landmark buildings, including the Parliament Buildings and the Fairmont Chateau Laurier. And pine was the source of many a local lumber baron’s wealth in the city’s early years. Incorporating these materials into your home is one way to make your design hyperlocal.

You may also be able to find products that mimic vintage materials. For instance, Cosentino’s Dekton porcelain comes in various finishes, including one that resembles limestone. “Even though it’s new technology ... it has that look of stone,” says Reen-Ann McBean, general manager of Cosentino’s Ottawa showroom.

SOLACE

“Solace” refers to designing spaces to meet emotional needs, not just practical or esthetic ones. That might mean creating a contemporary bathroom that’s also soothing or a com-



A curving wooden coffee table, natural fibres and stone accents bring a hint of the Nature theme into a living room designed by Olivia Bailey.

pact home office that also makes you feel inspired.

That approach resonates with Toronto interior designer Olivia Bailey. “I don’t design spaces just for the look and function. I’m trying to create a home,” she says.

Mood-boosting colours and textured materials play a role in this theme, but the Cosentino study’s authors note that not everyone will have the same response to the same hues and fabrics. As one designer interviewed for the study observed, “A lot of people say too much colour makes them nervous.”

APPLY IT: Start a design board to capture colours and materials that evoke the emotions you want to feel in a particular room. Be honest. Don’t pretend to like a look just because it’s popular in magazines or all your friends are adopting it.



An orange sofa, curvilinear coffee table and rug, and unique light fixture in this Olivia Bailey interior are all surprising, delightful elements that fit well with the Wonder theme.

NATURE

“Nature,” not surprisingly, involves incorporating plants and other organic elements into spaces, and using shapes and textures inspired by the natural world. This theme also relates to interest in environmentally friendly, sustainable materials and technologies.

Bailey is currently drawing on these inspirations to design a luxury home for a client intent on bringing the outdoors in. For instance, a green wall along a staircase is planted with preserved plants and mosses. There’s also a Zen garden in the foyer, as well as a huge, bull-nosed aquarium separating the kitchen from the piano room.

APPLY IT: Consider eco-friendly technologies, such as a heat pump, solar panels or a green roof. Look into sustainable building materials, such as recycled wood, composite decking, engineered stone and bamboo. If you don’t have a green thumb, a preserved green wall might be an option. It requires no watering or special maintenance, but it’s more expensive than a few potted plants from your local garden centre.

URBAN

The “Urban” theme has a lot of elements, many of which relate to city planning but some of which apply to residential design. In general, choices under this theme are made to solve a modern problem,

such as climate change.

Intriguingly, this trend also relates to the way architects and designer are responding to social issues. Loneliness and the high cost of housing may lead more people to consider multi-generational houses or co-living buildings, the study’s authors predict.

APPLY IT: If you’re living in closer quarters with more people, consider sound-absorbing materials and room dividers to ensure everyone still has privacy and quiet when needed.

WONDER

“Wonder” may be the most fun of the five themes. “It brings you back to your childhood—that whimsical part of design that makes you feel like a kid again,” says McBean.

The Cosentino’s study’s authors take this idea even further — they believe that design should inspire joy. “In our fast-paced, often predictable world, there is a deep and growing need for moments that surprise, delight, and uplift us,” they write.

APPLY IT: The study notes that symmetry, rounded shapes, bright colours and abundant light are among the elements that inspire joy in people of every age and background. However, joy can also be intensely personal. Whether it’s your collection of vintage teacups, a vibrantly patterned rug, a statement light fixture or something completely different that makes you smile, roll with it.