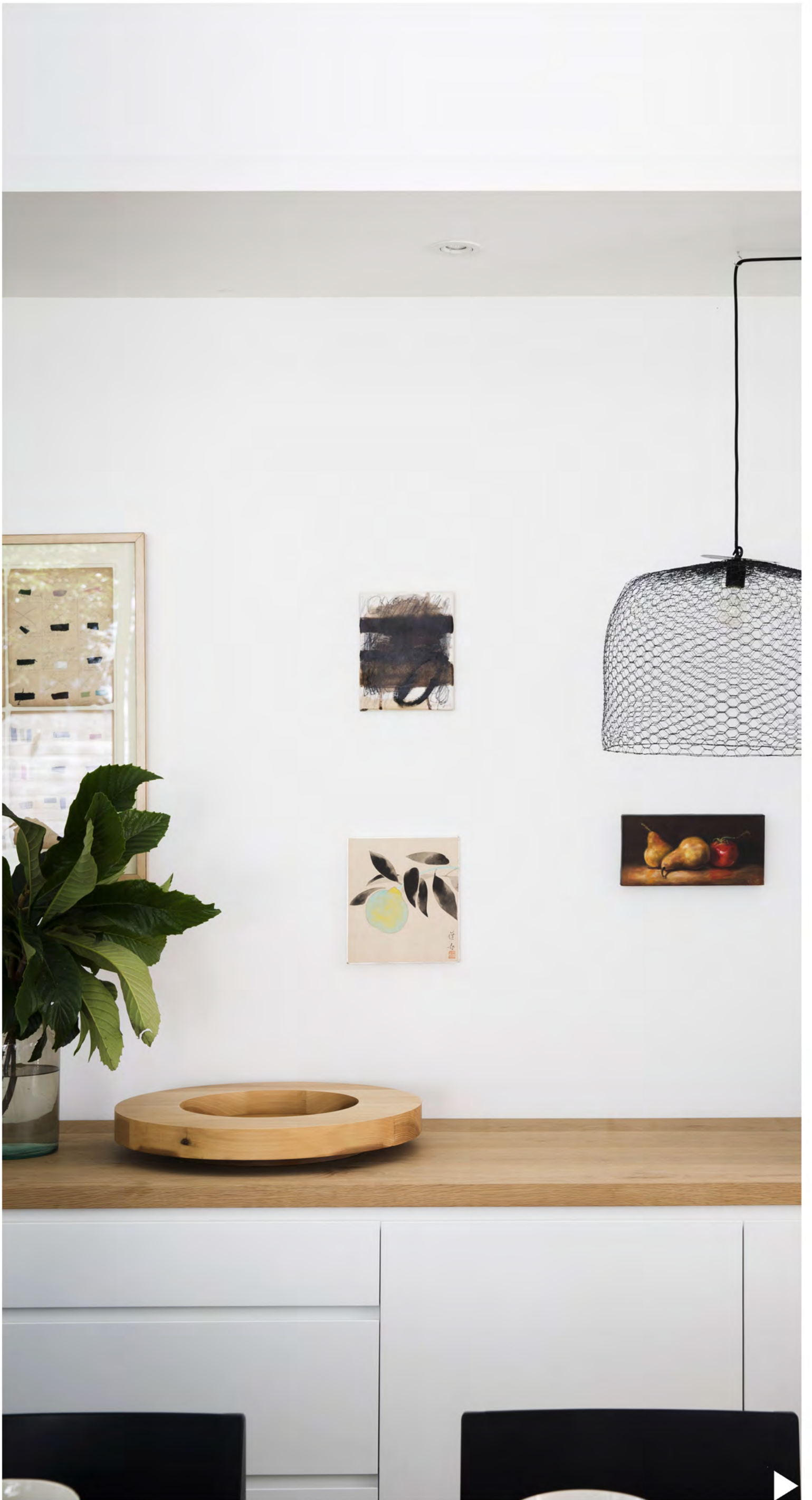


Finishing touches

Fresh and fabulous ideas from the home of interior designer Fiona Shakespeare.





Hang Time

The first thing to decide when decorating a wall is what you want to achieve. I wanted to add softness to the clean modern cabinetry and tiled floor, and have something interesting to look at when eating at the table. One of the best ways to achieve that is to make sure whatever you hang has a lot of texture. Texture will offset hard shiny surfaces and flooring, and usually comes with handmade objects and art.

Everything on this wall has a handmade feel as well as a story behind it. The light is made in France from chicken wire and I spray-painted it black; the picture of the aqua fruit with black leaves is something I bought on holiday in Japan and the large picture with the timber frame is a collection of pages from a 1930s tailor's order book showing cuttings of fabric from each dress he made.

Everything needed to be beautiful up-close as well as attractive from across the open-plan room. Hence most of the pictures have a little black in them, which makes them stand out from a distance.

I made sure the pictures were arranged in the shape of an arrow head so the eye was drawn across the wall. The bowl and vase anchor it to the timber benchtop and the light was hung so the cord ran down the wall to accentuate the high ceiling.





Flooring Focus

There are a lot of advantages to using multiple rugs in a very large space such as an open-plan living room. I would have needed a huge rug measuring 4x5m to cover this space, so rather than wait a long time for a custom rug to be made or use a large piece of carpet off-cut, so I've used four rugs to do the job of one. I love white rugs and by having more than one, I was able to find different materials that were washable such as the sheepskin hide and shag-pile, which hides marks. The smaller sizes are also easier to handle when moving the rugs around. Finally, I love that I'm not restricted to choosing just one pattern, and can mix and match a combination of simple geometric patterns.

This room is a good example of how you can match your decor to architectural features in your house. Here, the zig-zag of the oak timber stair treads is repeated in the patterns and colours of the rugs.



For product information throughout, see final page.



Bedtime Bliss

I like bedrooms that are cocooning and decorated in neutral colours such as white, cream and grey with some small touches of accent colours such as cornflower blues, soft greens or pinks. I think bedlinen should be considered part of a bedroom's decor and an easy way to make it co-ordinate is it to choose bedding similar to your wall colour.

Also consider investing in a timber bedhead painted one shade darker than the wall colour; here I've chosen tones of soft grey. Then mixed with natural linen sheets and quilt cover, your bedroom will take on a contemporary look that is relaxing and comfortable. Another winning strategy is to use white sheets and different coloured pillowcases that match a lamp shade or a chair in the room.





Cosy Corners

Furnishing an empty corner usually requires a lot of layers to make it feel welcoming and functional.

The best way to start is to find a chair you like that's also comfortable, so you're drawn to the corner and want to stay there. Next, hang pictures or mirrors on the wall or curtains on the windows to make the corner feel more like another zone in the room rather than an empty corner to sit in.

Think about the purpose of the corner – it might be a cosy place to read, with an ottoman and a blanket, or a place to put on shoes and get ready to leave the house or a place to work on a laptop. All of these require some sort of storage, whether it's shelving for books, a hanging space or a small desk. So the purpose will determine the second piece of furniture you need for your corner. Good lighting is also a must, so choose either a corner with good natural light or set up a beautiful floor or table lamp.





Office Inspiration

The most obvious way to keep your work space inspiring is to keep it tidy. I've recently started using a shallow box where I place the pile of paper related to the things I've been working on that day, so when I come back I can plan what I need to do without getting distracted.

An instant way to improve a work space is to put up a pin board with images you find inspiring.

Wallpaper can make an office feel cosy and smart too. I'd recommend choosing one that has a repeating pattern so it's restful on the eye, rather than a loud busy one, which will add to the feeling of clutter when you're having a stressful day. Add a piece of art to finish off the walls. Finally, if possible have a plant or window box in your office, and if it's something that flowers, well that's even better. Plants definitely help recharge a tired brain. Just make sure it's well cared for and thriving!





Family Friendly

I like furniture for the home that everyone can enjoy and for this to work it might mean using a mix of cheaper furnishings that can withstand being spot cleaned. But it can mean sometimes choosing good quality fabrics, for example, that are super strong and built to last. Our sofa is covered in a quality wool boucle that withstands wrestling boys and cat's claws.

Like most families we're always trying to encourage more outdoor play and having comfortable outdoor seats where the kids can sit and eat with friends has helped. The other big success has been the hanging rope ladder and tyre swing - kids seem to like chatting to friends while spinning and climbing together. Last, having tiles in the kitchen and living areas has meant the kids can come and go without having to worry about tracking dirt stains over carpet or scratching floorboards with sport equipment.



Flooring focus

Porte wool **rug** in Black/Coconut, \$890, Citta Design; www.cittadesign.com. Pampa Puna #17 wool **rug** in Monochrome, \$990, Greedilulu; www.greedilulu.com. Coil paper **placemat**, \$3.75, Madras Link; www.madraslink.com.

Bedtime bliss

The Bedroom Society linen **sheet set** in White, from \$389, I Love Linen; www.ilovelinen.com.au. Linen **flat sheet** with border in Smoke Grey and White, \$175/each, Cultiver; www.cultiver.com. Australian House & Garden Mossman cotton **cushion** in Natural, \$60, Myer; www.myer.com.au.

Cosy corners

Felt and sheepskin **slippers** in Grey, \$40, Mozi; www.mozi.com.au. Poetry A5 **journal** with leather cover, \$79, Corban & Blair; www.corbanblair.com.au. Herman Miller Wireframe Club steel **chair** with Kvadrat Steelcut Trio wool-nylon upholstery, from \$6700, Living Edge; www.livingedge.com.au.

Office inspiration

Kate Spade **journal** in Blush, \$45, Papier D'Amour; www.papierdamour.com.au. Milk & Sugar Otis stoneware **pot** in Navy Sticks, \$50, Hunting for George; www.huntingforgeorge.com. *Herbarium I* faux-bamboo framed **print** (78x59cm), \$650, Gaudion Furniture; www.gaudions.com.au. A4 Slim leathergrain polyurethane **document box** in Black, \$20, Officeworks; www.officeworks.com.au.

Family friendly

Peak raised 75x150mm porcelain **tiles** in White Gloss, \$88/m², Di Lorenzo Tiles; www.dilorenzo.net.au. Alboo Foxy powder-coated aluminium **outdoor sofa** with self-draining foam and Sunbrella outdoor fabric, \$2095, Sebastian Alexander; www.sebastianalexander.com.au.

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