

FASHION INSPIRATION



COUNTER CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SARA D. DAVIS/AP, LUIS M. ALVAREZ/AP, COURTESY CALICO CORNERS, MANDEL NGAN/GETTY IMAGES, EVAN AGOSTINI/AP

The same techniques used to create the latest fashions can be perfect for custom interior design. The bright, cheerful floral prints worn by first lady Michelle Obama can be equally refreshing as a window treatment.

Dressmaker finishes spark trends in interior design

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to *The Washington Examiner*

Whether adding fringe to pillows, gathered fabric over windows or pleats to a sofa, the same techniques used by fashion houses to create the latest looks are perfect for custom interior design.

“One of the advantages of having something custom-made is that it fits perfectly,” said Jan Jessup of Calico Corners, which retails custom furniture and fabrics for the home. “You can add dressmaker details to window treatments that make them unique.”

Fringe, a hot trend from red carpets to runways, is used on pillows, skirts and window treatments. Jessup likes the buillon fringe, which is thick and made up of long twisted loops of yarn covered in gold and silver threads.

“Buillon fringe is often 7 to 10 inches long and that can give you a traditional look,” Jessup said. “Use a shorter brushed fringe on pillows and a tiny brushed fringe on window treatments.”

Jessup suggested petite ball tassel trim as an alternative to fringe on pillows and drapes. Beaded trim works well on pillows, curtains and



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Contrasting fabrics add drama to design. Here, a tassel fringe (a hot trend on the red carpet and on window treatments) on balloon shades contrasts with the chairs below.

even lampshades. Beads, sequins and other “bling” are in for both clothing and home fashions.

“Embellishments are a very strong trend in home fashion as well,” Jessup said. “You see beading and embroidery on everything.”

Floral prints on fan-pleated summer dresses are a favorite of first lady Michelle Obama. The bright, cheerful style looks equally refreshing as a window treatment.

Because interior design requires far more fabric than dressmaking, it

Resources

- » Cannon Upholstery
cannonupholstery.com
- » Calico Corners
calicocorners.com

often is best to hire a professional to complete a project.

David Cannon, owner of Bethesda-based Cannon Upholstery, works with interior designers to deliver dressmaking details.

“Our seamstress and upholstery professionals are highly skilled and have 25 to 30 years experience on average. It’s not something you can pick up overnight.”

Cannon said sometimes a professional upholsterer serves as a reality check to designers who may draw up furniture in fabrics that just don’t work.

“Designers come in with an idea and sometimes it won’t work with certain types of materials they want to use. We can deliver 85 to 95 percent of what they dream,” Cannon said. “The client has the desire, the designer has the vision, and the upholsterer and seamstress make those desires and vision a reality.”

These visions also include animal prints — think leopard spots and zebra stripes — as accents in interior design. “Pillows are a great place to bring in a stronger color of striking pattern to really jazz up a room,” Jessup said.

Webbing involves covering cord with fabric and using it as trim in the seams of upholstery or toss pillows.

“Most often people use the same fabric on cording as they do for the entire sofa. There’s no reason you can’t use a contrasting color,” Jessup noted. “It draws attention to the lines of the upholstered piece.”

Contrasting fabrics add drama to design. An ordinary upholstered chair becomes extraordinary with contrasting pleated fabrics added to the base. Pleats and skirts on upholstery often determine style. A box pleat is a flat double pleat made by folding under the fabric on either side to create an inverted pleat. A kick pleat is used on a straight upholstery skirt with smaller skirts placed behind. A waterfall skirt, often called a dressmaker skirt, extends from the base of the cushion to the floor.

Gathered balloon shades feature soft and voluminous folds of fabric. This traditional, formal dress detail is commonly used for ball gowns and wedding dresses.