

Insight

HOW TO COMBINE FABRIC AND COLOUR

Follow our advice to confidently team colour with pattern, like Matthew Fox and Chris Knowles have

Bright hues and bold pattern can add depth and vibrancy to a scheme, but it's all too easy to play it safe for fear of making an error. However, plenty of research will produce a cohesive result, whether you mix modern, large-scale prints with intense colour to make a statement, or subtle motifs and moody hues to create interest.

Choosing a palette

Bear in mind that vivid shades can anchor a scheme and personalise your home. Although it's tempting to opt for white or neutral walls to make a room appear larger, it's also important to draw the eye into a space by creating a colourful focal point, whether through a statement wall, introducing a feature fabric or painting shelving to offset a muted backdrop, just as Matthew and Chris have done.

Remember to harmonise your approach when picking a colour palette though – stick to just two or three shades and try repeating them from zone to zone to create a sense of continuity. When choosing colours, start slowly and trial different looks. Paint some A2 sheets of paper in your desired hue and attach them to every wall in the room as the shade will look quite different in each space, then live with them for a few days before you make up your mind. View the colour at different times of the day, in varied lights, and in electric light, too. This way, you can really get a sense of the impact they have in a scheme.



EXPERT EYE *'There are many interesting ways to add pattern – consider headboards, lampshades, bar stools or pouffes. I love the Mid-Century look of hanging a Moroccan rug on the wall behind a bed, or a small tapestry as artwork'*

CATHERINE DAL, PLAY ASSOCIATES

Introducing pattern

Try looking to fashion and art for inspiration on new concepts and interesting combinations. 'But bear in mind that although designers like Kit Kemp use an abundance of pattern and colour, it's more about breaking the rules than following specific trends,' advises interiors specialist Catherine Dal. 'Tribal patterns such as Ikat or Suzani from diverse cultures are trickling into mainstream stores. This is wonderful as they come with fascinating back stories that add depth and intrigue, making them as rich as their designs.'

When choosing wall colour and patterned fabrics, remember that your decision doesn't have to be permanent. The beauty of designing your home is having the freedom to change, update and revise it as much you please. It's often a good idea to take your visual cue from a favourite piece, such as artwork.

Some of the most striking schemes will layer colour, texture and pattern. Introduce bright touches in unexpected ways – upholster an antique chair in a bold, modern geometric print for a striking contrast; frame a generous-sized fabric on the wall; create clusters of pretty glassware; or, like Matthew has done, try collating colourful collections on the wall, such as vintage ceramics. But remember to scale-up touches like this to avoid losing them in your overall scheme. Often, one statement fabric picking out key colours, can pull a scheme together.



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'Combining colour and pattern is a skill that can be learnt, but you must take risks. Experiment with things that can be affordably changed. Try a colour on one

wall or buy a metre of fabric and pin it on your curtains, for example. If you decide you like it, then it can be used for cushions.

Create a mood board using a smartphone app. Upload photos of fabric, paint, furniture and accessories so that you can build up a complete picture. If they sit well together, the chances are they'll work in your room.

Planning is key, otherwise you might end up with a chaotic scheme. But if you play it too safe with only a colourful cushion or two, the result will be underwhelming. Look to successful examples of bold interior design for inspiration, such as Dorothy Draper, Miles Redd and Kelly Wearstler.

A successful interior often depends on what suits rather than what's in vogue. Consider the proportions of the room, its orientation and layout. Your home should be a reflection of you, so opt for what complements your lifestyle.'

REBEKAH CAUDWELL, INTERIOR DESIGNER

ADDRESS BOOK

■ Designers Guild

020 7351 5775, designersguild.com

Colourful fabrics, wallpapers and furniture, including whimsical florals and bold graphics

■ Farrow & Ball: *Living With Colour* by

Ros Byam Shaw, £30, Ryland, Peters & Small

A reference book from the iconic Dorset-based brand showing how colour can be used to create atmosphere, character and charm

■ Rebekah Caudwell Design

rebekahcaudwelldesign.com

Interior designer Rebekah Caudwell is renowned for her creative colour combinations in residential settings