



Five ways to work optical-illusion magic on your home decor

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Moirés occur when repeating, often straight, lines are overlapping, offset or rotated in such a way that the pattern looks like a wave is rippling through. It's as though the typically rigid rows or grids are bending – even melting. They occur all around us by happenstance – when the pickets of a fence, or the structure of a scaffold, are placed together in just the right proximity. They often have a musical rhythm to them, perhaps because they look somewhat like sound graphs.

For centuries, they have been used in art and design. The name moirés, which is an old French word meaning watered, was taken from a textile-making technique dating to the Middle Ages and is applied to a method of weaving that produces an undulating, glimmering surface.

The contemporary interest in moiré goes back to the 1960s. American physicist Gerald Oster and his Japanese research partner Dr. Yasunori Nishijima started using the patterns to visualize concepts in fluid dynamics, acoustics and optics. The pair saw a similarity between the way particles interacted and the way lines overlap and create visual waves. They thought their diagrams would be a great way to teach physics to teenagers, because it relied more on graphics than complex formulas.

Whether that proved to be true, an offshoot of the effort was that it helped inspire a burgeoning art movement, collectively known as Op Art. Oster even showed some of his pieces in 1965 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, alongside noted painters and sculptures, such as Frank Stella, Victor Vasarely and John Goodyear.

The effect still resonates today. It's a clever way to add a sense of dynamism to otherwise simple, modern geometries. It makes static furnishings, such as light fixtures and chairs, feel as though they're moving, vibrating and literally adding energy to a space.

Here are five ways to get the look.



On the couch

For its new collection, Belgian brand NoMoreTwist was inspired by the fantastical, exuberant engravings of 19th-century naturalist Ernst Haeckel that captured animals and insects mid-movement. The Lepidoptera pillow is an attempt to replicate the flutter of a butterfly, the moiré patterns between the lines simulating the flapping of the wings. *\$127, nomoretwist.be*

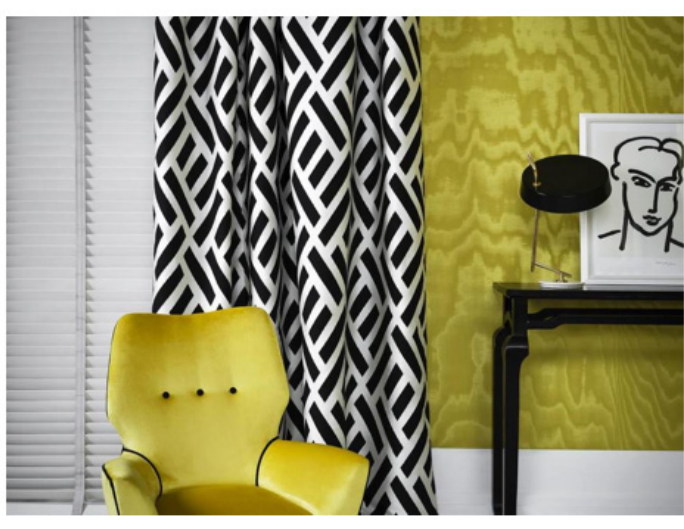


The Tropicalia chair, by Spanish architect and designer Patricia Urquiola, has the simplified geometries and alluring visual effects of a piece of 1960s Op Art. The cords that make up the woven back are offset in such a way that as you walk around it, the patterns shift from static to undulating. *From \$1,820. klausn.com*



Over the table

For his Ray lights, Slovakian designer Tomas Kral turned industrial sheet metal – the kind normally used for office wastepaper bins – into ethereal, delicate pendant lamps. The softly hued shades appear to be covered in ever-changing moiré patterns depending on the angle that you look through perforated metal. *\$395, petitefriture.com*



On the wall

The Amoir Libre cotton-blend wall coverings from Italian textiles company Dedar are a classic example of the moiré technique. Like the original, centuries-old application, craftsman hand weave the fabric so that the flat surface has the appearance that it's been washed over with water. *Price upon request, www.dedar.com*



On the ceiling

The Gridlock 7440 chandelier, by Montreal-born, London-based designer Philippe Malouin, is composed of layered trusses made of brass. The many overlapping lines are all perfectly straight, but they cast bending, bowing shadows as the light casts moiré-filled grids on the adjacent walls. *\$36,000, rollandhill.com*

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