

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

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It wasn't too long ago that I walked into the home of a new client and thought to myself, "Who is this client? Does she have a family? What in life is important to her?" It wasn't so much the blend of furniture styles or white walls that made me think as I did (although that certainly added to the mix), but the lack of any personal photos whatsoever. Not a one!

Certainly once I got to know her better, I learned that she was married with three children who were active in an assortment of activities, had a large extended family and loved family get-togethers, and that her husband had a strong Irish heritage. My mission as a decorator was to create a home that spoke of who they were as a family, knowing what I now knew. One of the ways I accomplished this was by personalizing their home (as well as adding an interesting focal point and a feeling of warmth), and creating a photo family wall. It truly was a design element that made a powerful impact in their home.

Now I know what you're thinking – "I have a million photos and arranging a photo wall is much too overwhelming and time-consuming." Take a breath; it's not as bad as you think! With a little bit of planning, you can create a wall of art that becomes a beautiful and telling story of who you are.

By following these suggestions, you'll be able to construct a work of art that is sure to become a focal point that adds personality and warmth to any room.

- First of all, don't get too caught up in thinking that you need to go through every single photo you possess. You can always change the photos in time. The key is to just start the process and have fun with it.
- Choose photos that have meaning to you and elicit fond memories. Surround yourself with people and places that bring you happiness and joy. Don't get too worried if the themes of your photos are unrelated. There are other ways to deal with this – read on.
- A good rule of thumb is to choose two of the four – similar frame, similar theme, similar matting, or similar color – when planning your photo wall. However, if you like a more inventive and authentic look, mix and match at your will!
- If you are not happy with a photo size, have the image cropped or enlarged to fit a particular frame. Color prints can also be made into black and white or sepia prints for a bold statement.
- Measure the space you intend to use as a photo wall and think balance. Your grouping should be of appropriate scale to your space and furnishings.

- Lay out your frame shapes on newspaper, trace and cut out. It is much easier to use a template when arranging to avoid unnecessary nail holes. Label them to avoid confusion and be sure to mark where the nail should be placed for hanging.
- Using painter's tape (which allows for easy removal without damaging a wall), arrange the templates on the wall until you have a grouping that is pleasing and reflects your personality. Step back and view your groupings from several angles. Don't be afraid to shake it up a bit and add an odd frame shape into the mix.
- Using your template markings, bang the nails into place. Finally, remove the template and hang the photos.

Viola! Here you have it; a delightful collection that speaks of who you are, telling a story – your story.

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