

How to Design With an Elephant in the Room—Literally

Sometimes the more eccentric, the better

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A larger-than-life wall sculpture of rhinoceros heads becomes the focal point of an otherwise neutral room designed by Chicago and San Francisco-based interior designer Alison Pickart. ALISON PICKART



Each week, Mansion Global tackles a topic with an elite group of designers from around the world who work on luxury properties. This week we look at how to incorporate eccentric design into your home.

Maybe you envision a life-sized (faux) elephant occupying one-third of your living room, or a sculptural relief spanning your wall in three-dimensional glory—whatever the eccentric flourish you're drawn to, there's no denying it will make a statement.

But, incorporating an over-the-top piece without having it hijack the room is a matter of styling.

We chatted with design pros for tips on how to choose those show-stopping elements and how to work with them so that they attract, rather than detract, from your design scheme.

Strike a Balance

“A unique and out-of-the-box piece of art is the most surefire way of putting a stamp of unique authenticity on a space—something that says you are now in a truly curated space where interesting people live.

“Choose your moment. If you’ve found something truly unique and over the top, my rule of thumb is that everything should play to it. Having too many eccentric items in a room suggests that the room itself is over the top, and the attention is pulled away from a singular statement. If you place one well-chosen item in a room full of beautiful, well-thought-out pieces, the eccentricity reads fun and playful yet still sophisticated and special.

“I like to weave statement pieces into all of the rooms, especially if you are going big with unique and fun art. For example, we incorporated a huge rhino sculpture into a home where the dining room has a mahogany ping pong table as their dining table and a life-size wool sheep serves as a footstool in the family room.”

— **Chicago and San Francisco-based interior designer Alison Pickart**