

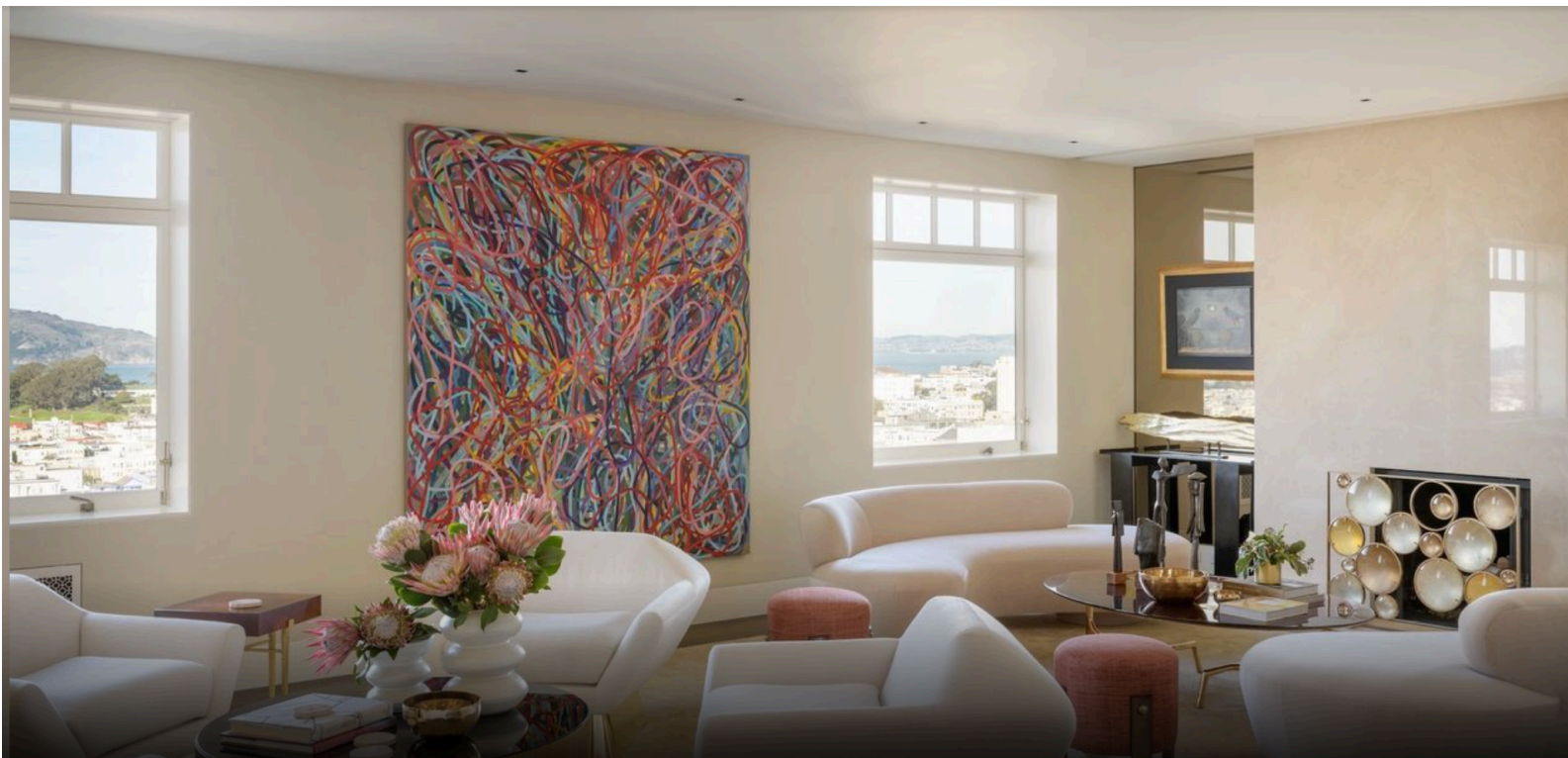
MANSION GLOBAL

DESIGNER'S CORNER

The Lure of a Sculptured Sofa

How to incorporate the bold furniture style into your home

BY **JENNIFER TZESES** | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#)



Sculptured seating takes center stage, creating a mod feel in a room designed by Alison Pickart.
AARON LEITZ



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 a sculptural sofa.

Part art, part furniture, a sculptured sofa is the kind of piece that makes a statement. Perhaps this type of seating was made most famous in 1983 by Spanish artist Salvador Dalí who iterated the lips of actress Mae West in the form of a plush red sofa. It's become an iconic piece that's been recreated by multiple designers over the years. While the look is bold and may not be for everyone, there's an undeniable presence about a sculptural sofa that immediately defines the room it's in.

"A sculptural sofa adds visual excitement and dimension to a space," says Billy Ceglia of Billy Ceglia Design in New York and Connecticut. "It can accentuate the architecture, highlight the shape of the room or go completely against the shape of the space to create cozier seating groups or help create a visual flow through a space."

Whether your vibe is unapologetic or subdued, there's a statement sofa to fit every style. Here, tips from top design pros to choosing a hot seat.

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Mix, Don't Match

"A sofa with sculptural flair doesn't have to be contemporary or modern. There are plenty of historical styles that offer up sinuous curves and glamorous lines in furniture design: Art Nouveau, Biedermeier and even English Regency pieces can add visual impact to a space. It can also go against the style of your home and décor, especially if it is a classic design like a Vladimir Kagan Serpentine sofa, or De Sede's Snake sofa. These would look gorgeous paired with more traditional furnishings, especially if they share common stylistic details.

"The sofa is the star of the space; all the other furniture should be there in a supporting role, playing up the hierarchy of shapes. Just like any successful design scheme, the other elements of the room should play off the main focal element in size and scale to complement and enhance its shape and design."



Designed by Billy Ceglia, this living area features a traditional tufted style sofa, which feels modern due to contemporary touches throughout the room.
Keith Scott Morton

— Billy Ceglia of Billy Ceglia Design in New York and Connecticut

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Work With the Shapes of the Room

“The overall feel of the piece should look at home style wise with the rest of the decor. Select as you would any other piece of upholstered furniture—to work with the other shapes and styles within the room.

“Think about how the flow around this piece affects the other seating groups around it. They all need to work together.

“Always create a balance. A sculptural sofa should not be the only wild card in the room. A sculptural sofa loves to be free of a wall so it can be appreciated from all angles.”



Designer Chad Graci created an unexpected moment under a staircase anchored by a uniquely shaped loveseat.

Sara Essex Bradley

— Chad Graci of Graci Interiors in New Orleans, Louisiana

Let Other Pieces Complement Rather Than Compete

“A sculptured sofa adds drama and an element of surprise. Because it serves as a focal point and can stand alone, I like keeping the other elements around it simpler in design to create some open space. Consider adding a round cocktail, a curved back chair or round ottoman. These pieces can also complement the softness and create uniformity.

“For one project, we designed a custom curved settee for a large foyer. To help blend the adjoining open spaces together, it allows for seating on both sides of the sofa as it floats seamlessly in the space. It’s like a sculpture that adds softness and brings the two open spaces together cohesively.

“For a high-rise city condo with windows and views all around, we chose a custom curved sofa to bring all the angles and views of the space together. It invites the outside in and enables various conversation areas to work together. The curved angles can take up extra space, so don’t forget to accommodate for this.

“In one city condo, we anchored a floating geometric sofa with large bookcases against the wall. Because the bookcases added a surprise element and color, we chose to keep the other upholstered items (including the curved sofa) neutral. This accented the city views and also helped the eye move around the space more seamlessly.

“In another great room, we left it simple with a two-sided curved sofa serving as a sculpture in the space. It’s balanced by a large black grand piano, the curves of which also help soften and create a sense of welcome.”



In a home designed by Robin Rains, a sinuous crushed blue velvet sofa provides a dramatic focal point.
Alyssa Rosenheck

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Find a Balance

“There are so many variations now when it comes to sculptural sofas. There are those that feature stunning curves, some that feature artistic forms and some that even feature abstract materials and upholstery. The key is to find one that will accent your home’s architecture, as well as create a bold statement piece.

“Matching isn’t key, but finding a balance with your accents and decor is important when creating a space that flows. Having everything too matchy-matchy can make your space seem dull and lifeless, so it’s nice to have pops of interest here and there.

“You can incorporate sleek and minimalistic items to balance out the space for an overall calming aesthetic. You can also incorporate other bold pieces, such as an organically shaped coffee table, that complement the sculptural sofa and tell a story without creating too much chaos. It is important that you give your eyes a moment to settle on the particular moments you’ve created within the space. Custom rugs with bold pops of color and organically shaped tables and stunning stones are always great touches to mix in.”



Two sculptural sofas lend a modern minimalist vibe to a living area designed by Nina Magon.

Julie Soefer

— Nina Magon, creative director and founder of Contour Interior Design in Houston

Let it Stand Alone

“A sculptural sofa is usually best paired with other simple sculptural elements. Giving sculptural sofas breathing room to really shine is key. High volume, architecturally simple spaces are perfect for a big sculptural sofa moment, but a classic like a vintage piece can also hold its own within highly ornate and traditionally detailed spaces as a way to calm down, neutralize and bring to date otherwise older looking spaces.”

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