



Bring Your Creativity Home: the art of micro-decorating

by Marney K. Makridakis

Perhaps nothing else influences our general mood and productivity more than our home environment. Even if we work full-time in a space outside the home, our feelings about our living space affect us powerfully. Our workplaces can be inspiring, affirming environments (and aren't we lucky when they are?), but do we have an automatic expectation that our workplace be cozy, nurturing, comforting, and relaxing? Of course not. Do we have a deep desire for our workplace environment to be an expression of our deepest loves and passions? Not likely.

Deeply ingrained in each of us is the desire to relax, let go, and be who we truly are. Whether we are aware of it or not, most of us have a deep longing to assume this authentic personal posture when we are at home. The desire to have a comfortable space to relax and rejuvenate is a very basic one. After all, consider the members of the animal kingdom. They are motivated by the same innate desire: to create nests and other comfortable, functional shelters.

All too often, however, our living spaces tend to be "last on the list". Home is the last thing that gets our time, money, or attention. The idea of our perfect "dream home" is so far away from what we can feasibly obtain that we lose hope. Much like the way we shut out extraneous sensory input from the world, clutter and uninspiring decor causes us to put up mental blinders around the areas of our space that are displeasing to us. We get to the point where we don't even think much about our home at all. We become unconscious to what Thomas Moore calls the "mystery of home". In *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, Moore says:

Nothing is more intimate than home, and therefore nothing more proper to the soul. Whatever it takes to call forth the spirits of home, our own lares and penates -- ancient Roman household spirits -- is worth our effort and expense. It is always time to trim a plant, glaze a window, clean a rug, or write a poem about home...All of these go into the making of the soul's home, a daily work that prepares us for our death and gives our lives the intimate focus that is the primary gift of home.

If you are looking to bring more creativity to your life, sprucing up your living space is an easy way to do it. Spring has just sprung, so the timing is perfect! I know what you're thinking...you don't have the time, and you don't have the money. But making inspired changes to your space doesn't require free weekends, a Home Depot charge card, or visits from the Trading Spaces designers. There are lots of small, easy actions you can take right now to instantly amp up the creative juice in your home. Think of it as micro-decorating!

The great thing about micro-decorating projects is that you get double the impact! First, the actions themselves engage your creative vision in a fun, non-taxing way. No matter how busy you are, you deserve to take the time for a playdate with yourself as you tackle a simple creative project or two. Beyond that, you'll also get to enjoy the results of your efforts in your home for many days to come.

Here are a few micro-decorating suggestions to get you started:

Create a narrative tablescape (that is, a “landscape” of objects designed on your tabletop) by selecting items that have a story attached to them - perhaps items picked up on a trip or objects that symbolize the courtship between you and your partner. Arrange the tablescape in “chronological” order or in another order that symbolically makes sense to you.

Buy a basic wreath at a garage sale, thrift store, or craft supply store, and ask each member of your family to contribute mementos to be tied to the wreath with lengths of pretty ribbon. You will have a work of art with special meaning that you will treasure forever!

Place tall taper candles in chunky vases or glasses and display as a twosome on a coffee table, end table, or even on your kitchen counter. Invite a bit of ritual into your life by lighting them daily while taking a moment of quiet reflection.



Display items that you have specifically chosen to be representative of your home. For example, select a “house gem” and wrap a string the faux version around a lamp or on top of an armoire. You can buy gem-like beads at any craft store and string them on a thin ribbon. Select a “house scent” and buy candles, room sprays, and aromatherapy oils in the scent.

Take a walk outdoors while thinking of the new room you have brought into your home. Keep an eye out for natural objects (leaves, pinecones, grass, twigs) that remind you of your vision of your home. Then, create a mobile by wrapping some wire around the items and hanging them from a branch so they are balanced. Hang the mobile somewhere special, a place that will always remind you of the warmth and vibrancy of your home.



Select a private space that no one need see but you. It could be a small shelf above your work desk, the top of a dresser, or even the inside of a drawer of your bedside table. In this area, place items that inspire you, and change them often. Consider this area as an altar that expresses the true inner you - your own personal act of “interior” decorating!

Keep your eyes open for simple changes you can make in your home. Keep it simple and enjoy the process. Your creative spirit will thank you!

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