

Let the Sun Shine In

Rearrange, reframe, and add some new pieces to give a room a fresh look.



Angela Prond: *Goldenrod and Poplars*, oil on canvas.

WHEN YOU LIVE in an area that was recently documented as the cloudiest in the world (really!), the term “cabin fever” is more than just a glib turn of phrase. Michigan winters require stamina for the long haul and creative solutions to uplift spirits. When it is so gloomy and uninviting outdoors, turn indoors to your living space and evaluate how to make it the warm, cozy, inviting space that will comfort you as you return from the day’s toils and make you forget you have not seen the sun since former Mayor John Logie was in office.

Pick a room in your home that could use some attention, and give it a “facelift.” Strip the room so you can start with a “tabula rasa,” or clean slate. Perhaps this is the time to apply a cheery new coat of paint or just give everything a good scrub. Rearrange the furniture and pare down the knickknacks to create a clean, soothing space. Look in the closet for artwork you were always intending to hang, and find a special place for it as you rehang the artwork in your room. Create groupings or hang pieces salon-style for a fresh look. Choose a theme and hang a group of family photos together. It’s like a scrapbook on the wall.

This also is the perfect time to consider reframing a piece that looks dated, or to have family photos framed archivally to preserve them for future generations. Keep in mind artwork and photographs are not the only things that can make a statement on your walls. What about that old pocket watch of your grandfather’s or your grandmother’s teacup or wedding ring sitting in a drawer? Almost any object can be framed, and by combining them with old photos, you can create an engaging collage that will mean so much to your family for generations to come.

Your new cocoon is almost ready for habitation, but you have one wall or table area that could use something new to complete the transformation. Now is the time to get out and visit the area’s local art galleries for that perfect finishing touch. (Remember to bring those reframing projects!) Take a friend and pound the pavement. The company and the exercise will get those dormant endorphins dancing. Grand Rapids galleries offer everything from local talent to exotic imports in all colors of the spectrum and in all price ranges. Make a point to learn something about a new artist; clearing the mental cobwebs is another good way to brighten the perspective. Consider signing up for a class or attending a lecture. Many are offered by local art institutions such as Kendall College and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts.

Armed with a new addition to your collection and possibly an upcoming class to look forward to, head home, put on a pot of tea, and curl up with a good book in your renewed space. You will have created your own sunshine.



A New Look: Refresh a favorite memento with a new mat and frame.