

NOVOGRATZ DESIGN FIX

Chic and Stylish Tips for
Every Decorating Scenario



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NEW YORK



FLEA MARKET FINDS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ➔ Quirky decorative objects: Look for whatever speaks to you. If you love it and can afford it, bring it home.
- ➔ Someone else's family heirlooms: Other people's loot will bring history, mystery, and personality to a shelf or table.
- ➔ Small furniture: a fun chair or colorful end table can change the entire feel of a room. It can become a focal point or perk up a dull area of the house.
- ➔ Interesting lighting and lamps: Lamps are easy and inexpensive to rewire, so don't worry about whether or not it works. The only question is, "Will it bring life to the space?"
- ➔ Inexpensive but interesting art: The question you should ask yourself is not "Is it good?" but rather "Do I love it?"

TIPS FOR A BETTER FLEA MARKET EXPERIENCE

- ➔ Always get there at dawn or as soon as they open—the best pieces always go fast and early.
- ➔ The best vendors are usually in the front, right in the middle of everything, so start there.
- ➔ Bring cash as most vendors don't take checks and many still don't have credit card machines.
- ➔ We pay quickly if it's something we love because most of the time, it won't be there if we leave and come back.
- ➔ After we purchase something, we leave it with the seller until we are ready to go home. If this is your MO as well, a word to the wise: take a photo of the booth number as we have spent hours trying to find the booth at the end of the day and sometimes even forgot a piece or two.

MIXING HIGH AND LOW: ESSENTIALS FOR THE NOVOGRATZ STYLE

We've been incorporating a mix of high and low decorative elements and furnishings into our designs since the early days. We had to make the most of our small budgets so we got creative and fell in love with all the amazing finds at flea markets, garage sales, and roadside antique stores. Incorporating flea market items into our projects started out as a necessity, and now it's an essential part of our style. We recognized early on that furniture and accessories from these sources brought a lot of fun into a space, made a room or home less serious, more interesting, and most importantly, made it personal.

We began to add art into our designs as soon as we could afford to. In many projects, we spend a good portion of the budget on art and less on furniture as we believe these pieces will increase in value more than a couch or chair. Buying inexpensive art is easier than ever, which wasn't true when we first started designing houses.

FLEA MARKETS

Back when we were getting started, during the early morning hours on Saturdays and Sundays, while our friends would still be out partying, we'd wake up before dawn and head out to the flea markets all over New York City and up and down the East Coast. We've kept up that tradition for 25 years.

Many of our favorite pieces, antiques, and fun decorative items tell the stories of our time scouring the fleas. Over the years, our knowledge has grown and we have more to spend, but the fun and excitement remains the same. You never know what you'll find. Even if you don't buy anything, it's always a fun day to walk around, people-watch, and be inspired.

OPPOSITE: Another view of the living room and the dining room perfectly illustrates our high/low style: Tom Dixon prototype orange chair (high); pale blue salvaged chairs (purchased at a flea market and reupholstered—low); and decorative objects on the coffee table are all from flea markets (low).

“Style is something very individual,
very personal, and in their own unique way,
I believe **EVERYONE IS STYLISH.**”

—Salman Khan





TIPS FOR BETTER BOOKSHELVES

- ➔ Incorporate decorative items such as action figures, keepsakes, photographs, and art.
- ➔ Arrange books by color or size.
- ➔ Shelf the books in horizontal stacks to create a fun look.
- ➔ Add plants—a little bit of green is always a good thing.
- ➔ Stay away from staged books, wrapped in paper.

OPPOSITE: The blending of interesting objects, heirlooms, photos, and books on a library shelf is an affordable way to create a space in the room that has personality and life. Let the books be the main feature, as a beautiful book is timeless, elegant and affordable, and use the decorative items to bring color, humor, and variety. Bookshelves should evolve over time—collections

don't just come together in a single day, so be patient.

ABOVE: Somehow that Tom Ford book ends up in every library we ever come across.

FOLLOWING PAGES: The dining room with the living room in the background.



The painting of the girl in the yellow dress by Erwin Olaf is one of our favorites. It has been an anchor in every new house we've lived in since we bought it. The word painting by Graham Gilmore.



“Architecture is the thoughtful **MAKING OF SPACE.**”

—Louis Kahn

We love to entertain and by installing a large glass garage door in the living room that adjoins the patio, we essentially merged the interior and exterior space, which allowed parties to get a whole lot bigger. We also extended the stairs that led to the door to be as wide as the house so that they could serve as stadium seating for large gatherings and performances.

We had a lot of art in this house, and it was designed with opportunities to showcase it in mind. When we began our design career and our budget was limited, we purchased a lot of art from artists on the streets of New York City. Some of it was great and some was not so great but it was our way of surrounding ourselves with art, which is something we love. As our tastes changed, we gifted much of the art to family and friends. They loved it, as not many of them had received art as present or a housewarming gift.

ART DOESN'T HAVE TO COST A FORTUNE. IT'S EVERYWHERE:

- ➔ Family photographs.
- ➔ Family heirlooms.
- ➔ Your kid's art—add an inexpensive frame and it will instantly feel more polished.
- ➔ Tag sales and flea markets are a great source for inexpensive art—and you never know, you might find a Picasso one day!
- ➔ Local art fairs—we've found incredible art at fairs. And it's always a bonus to support local artists.



HOW TO CREATE CUSTOM WORD ART BOOKSHELVES

- 1** Before you begin, unless you are a carpenter or spend an enormous amount of time at Home Depot, we highly recommend using a skilled artisan.
- 2** We chose the word “EAT” as the bookshelves would be installed in the kitchen. We liked this word because each letter was rectilinear, which is better suited for creating a bookshelf.
- 3** We drew “EAT” on a large piece of craft paper and indicated exactly where the shelves would be installed to make sure the sizing was perfect.
- 4** The shelves were created from a high quality plywood because it has enough bend yet is durable and strong (and inexpensive).
- 5** We painted the shelves with furniture paint, using the same color throughout. By painting them dark grey, the colors of the books stand out.
- 6** In keeping with the theme, all the books featured are cookbooks.



MAKING A CUSTOM CHILDREN'S DESK

Believe it or not, a custom desk isn't much more expensive than a slightly pricey store-bought version, provided you're able to find a skilled carpenter.

- 1 We used painted MDF plywood. It is really affordable, readily available, and gives the desk a sleek look.
- 2 Ask your child to help with the design. You would be surprised how many great design ideas come from kids! And they will love it more because they were a part of the process.
- 3 No matter the ceiling height, we recommend building the desk high to use all of the space available.

ABOVE: Each of the children's bedrooms reflects their individual personalities and different tastes, as it should be. We worked with the clients' children closely in creating their bedrooms, asking lots of questions and listening closely. We learned about their hobbies, how they use their rooms—are they extended playrooms or just a place to sleep and do homework—and their

habits. The end result is a bedroom that truly functions well.

OPPOSITE: Wallpaper is used throughout the house: more classic patterns and color schemes in the main living areas, and whimsical and bold patterns in the kids' rooms. The example *par excellence* of our approach is this bedroom with an

accent wall in butterfly-patterned wallpaper. It's easily one of the most joyful rooms in the house.



WALLPAPER ISN'T JUST FOR WALLS

- ➔ Inside the closet doors
- ➔ Ceilings
- ➔ Inside kitchen cabinets
- ➔ Staircases: on the riser of each step
- ➔ Inside bookshelves
- ➔ Headboards
- ➔ Overhead beams



DISPLAY WHAT YOU COLLECT

A collection of almost anything can add personality to a home. The beauty of white walls is that they are a perfect backdrop for personal treasures. We learn a ton about our clients by understanding what they collect. It's one of the first things we inquire about when starting a job. Most of the time they aren't thinking about using their collections as décor, but they are always glad we did at the end of the process. Here are few suggestions about what you can use:

- ➔ Vintage quilts (in baskets or on the beds)
- ➔ Design, art, and photography books, books in general
- ➔ Family photos
- ➔ Old tickets (to anything) can be displayed in cases or in frames
- ➔ Kids' art
- ➔ Old sporting items: paddles, polo sticks, surfboards, old trophies
- ➔ Antique anything
- ➔ Toys: Pez, Bobbleheads, snow globes, comic books
- ➔ Vinyl records
- ➔ Musical instruments

We have designed a few homes for surfers, and even a hotel with a surfing theme. We've learned a lot about the lifestyle and the sport in the process (though neither of us can get on a board!). We love surf photography and art with a beachy vibe. We purchased the art for this house locally and online. A listing of our favorite websites that sell original

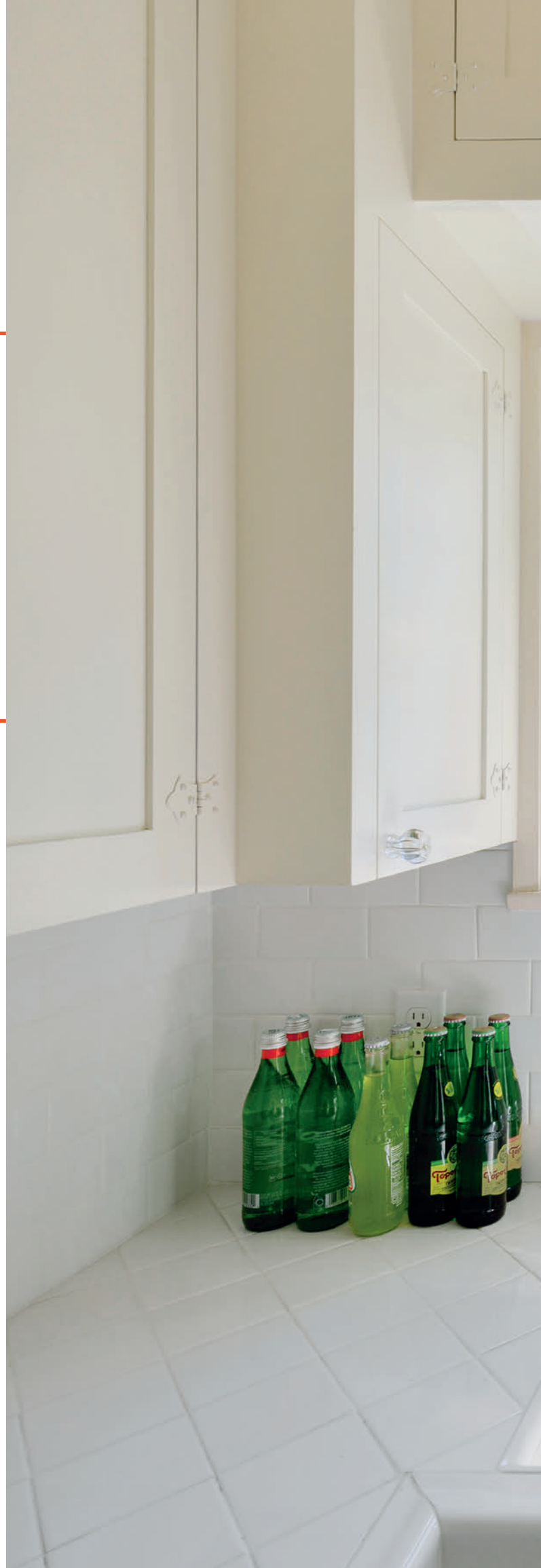
paintings, photographs, and limited edition prints can be found in the Resources section on pages 222–23. Some of our favorite surf photographers are Tony Caramanico, LeRoy Grannis, Jeff Divine, and Clark Little.



LESS IS MORE: HOW TO DECLUTTER

- 1** Before you begin, visualize how you want your space to look once the clutter is gone.
 - 2** Do not purchase anything new for the space until the decluttering is done.
 - 3** Start with the most cluttered place first. Go room by room or corner by corner.
 - 4** Remember, it's just stuff—the most important part of any home is you and your family.
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We tiled the countertops and the backsplash in crisp white square and classic subway tile in keeping with a very minimal look.







TIPS FOR A SMALL CLOSET

- 1 Simplify your wardrobe by donating old clothing every six months.
- 2 Replace closet doors with curtains.
- 3 Make sure you have excellent lighting—there are readily available battery-operated lights that have adhesive on the back for easy use.
- 4 Use a combination of hangers, shelves, boxes, and bins.
- 5 Boost storage power with risers and dividers.
- 6 K.I.S.S: Keep it simple, silly!





TIPS FOR PHOTO WALLPAPER

- ➔ Digital printing companies who can produce it are easy to find online. In New York, we work with Duggal.
- ➔ The more images the better.
- ➔ The strongest images should be the largest and placed toward the center of the layout.
- ➔ High-resolution images are a must.

ABOVE: Kids' rooms are always fun to design. The teenage daughter has eclectic tastes and the result was a mix of antiques, bold colors, and quirky elements like the swing. She also selected the images for the photo wallpaper to create an accent wall behind her bed.

OPPOSITE TOP: For the 10-year-old daughter's bedroom, we used

mosquito nets that we brought back from Brazil and added a custom pom-pom border around the edges to personalize them.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: We aimed to make the guest room bright, bold, and full of life. The accent wall features a red and blue floral wallpaper which is set off by the simple dresser in primary red.





THE ATTIC: WHAT WE DID

- ➔ Replaced the trap door ladder with proper stairs.
- ➔ Painted the entire space white, making it feel larger and more open.
- ➔ Added heating and air units.
- ➔ Placed the beds in the areas where the ceiling is the lowest.
- ➔ Moved the majority of the kids' toys and clutter from downstairs to the attic.

PREVIOUS PAGES: The main hallway on the second floor is hung top to bottom with family photographs. To make sure the effect wasn't too cacophonous, we converted the images to black and white.

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: Two views of the attic—the sleeping area and seating area, both coordinated in shades of gold.



BLENDING DIFFERENT DESIGN STYLES WITH YOUR PARTNER

- ➔ **Know thyself:** Before you begin, it's most helpful to know and understand what *you* like, and what speaks to *you* in terms of décor. With that information in hand, negotiating how the decorating scheme will come together should go more smoothly.
- ➔ **Communicate:** Talk through what is important to each of you, and share your visions with one another from the start. As simple and obvious as this sounds, many people don't do it.
- ➔ **Deal breakers:** Early on, share your non-negotiables with one another. It will save a lot of pain and resentment later.
- ➔ **Telling your story:** As you begin this process, take a look at the items you are bringing together for the house—the furnishings, the art, and the décor. Decide whether or not they truly reflect you and your story—if they don't, get rid of them.
- ➔ **Compromise and have fun:** The more you compromise and attempt to understand and embrace your partner's taste and style, the happier you will both be.

A vignette in the living room, a mix of "his" and "hers" design objects: his mid-century modern avocado green chair and the hand sculpture pair well with her vintage map on the wall and biomorphically shaped mirrors on the column.

TIPS FOR DESIGNING A DECK

- ➔ Plan for your lifestyle: is it going to be an outdoor living room, a place to grill and dine alfresco, a party spot? Assess your needs before purchasing furniture.
- ➔ Focus on the views: Organize the seating areas to take best advantage of whatever beauty surrounds the space.
- ➔ Include as many plants, small trees, and other greenery as you can fit.
- ➔ Add pattern, color, and texture to the benches, tables, and chairs with pillows, throws, cushions, and even outdoor rugs.
- ➔ Lighting is key. Task lighting is great for walkways and entrances, outdoor pendants, and solar string lights are perfect for ambience, and it doesn't hurt to add floodlights for security.

The home has two large outdoor spaces, one in the front (right) and one in the back (see pages 192–93). The goal was to make both spaces as inviting as possible so that they would be extensions of the interior.







MUST-HAVE ALBUMS FOR EVERY VINYL COLLECTOR

We have put together several vinyl record collections for hotels. If you are just starting out, we recommend buying 20 albums to get your collection going.

- 1 Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run*
- 2 The Beatles, *Abbey Road*
- 3 Beach Boys, *Pet Sounds*
- 4 Van Morrison, *Astral Weeks*
- 5 Fleetwood Mac, *Rumors*
- 6 Joni Mitchell, *Blue*
- 7 Carole King, *Tapestry*
- 8 Eagles, *Hotel California*
- 9 Simon and Garfunkel, *Bridge Over Troubled Water*
- 10 Stevie Wonder, *Songs in the Key of Life*
- 11 Neil Young, *Harvest*
- 12 Johnny Cash, *At Folsom Prison*
- 13 The Smiths, *The Queen is Dead*
- 14 John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*
- 15 Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*
- 16 Rolling Stones, *Some Girls*
- 17 Bob Dylan, *Blonde on Blonde*
- 18 Radiohead, *Kid A*
- 19 Led Zeppelin, *Physical Graffiti*
- 20 Public Enemy, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*

ART RESOURCES

Art is, and always has been, an important part of our home designs, regardless of budget. Luckily buying art for your home is easier than ever. There are plenty of sources online at every price point for everything from paintings to prints.

1stdibs.com: You can get some of the most amazing antiques in the world on this site and, yes, you can get great art there too. We purchased several pieces for clients and ourselves at bargain prices.

Artnet.com: You can bid on paintings, prints, photographs and more by the world's most sought-after artists.

Etsy.com: We love Etsy for all things collectible and crafty, and amazing art is no exception.

SaatchiArt.com: Buy some of the world's most famous artists weekly starting at 500 dollars. Their mantra is "be original, buy original," which we love.

YardDog.com: If you like outsider art or folk art check out Yard Dog, a gallery based in Austin, Texas, which has a robust website.

Once you have the art in hand, here are some tips on how to frame and display it:

- Frames ideally should be hung at eye level, not too high and not too low, about 57 inches "on center," which means the middle point of the work is 57 inches above the ground. This is the standard measurement all major museums and galleries use so you know it's right!
- When hanging a picture above a table, leave 4 to 8 inches of space between the bottom of the picture frame and the top of the table. When the piece is too close it looks too busy.
- For pieces above furniture, go 3 to 6 inches higher than the furniture (other than a table).
- Try to avoid hanging your artwork in direct sunlight. The purpose of framing art is to make it look nice and protect it, and sunlight and moisture are detrimental to this. Though we sometimes throw caution to the wind and use photos in our beach projects, it's important to remember that salty beach air is not good for photography.
- Place your framing wire as close to the top of the picture frame as you can. Doing this helps keep your picture flat against the wall by raising the picture's center of gravity.
- Use picture hanging strips that keep the frames from moving and shifting around—we use them all the time.