

Furnishings Trends

INTERVIEW WITH DESIGNERS GARY INMAN & ZACH HODGIN

Gary Inman and Zach Hodgin anticipate a post-pandemic flood of designs focusing on new materials and colors. Get ready for less beige and boring and a number of hard-to-reconcile, diverse design trends.

Back in 2016, Furniture World interviewed Gary Inman for a wide-ranging article on interior and product design. Inman's advanced studies in fashion, textile and costume history, as well as art history and architectural history, inform his work as a furniture and interior designer, author, educator and lecturer. He is sought out for his expertise in commercial, residential and product design.

After recently leaving his position as Vice President of Hospitality with the iconic commercial design firm Baskervill, Inman decided to move from Richmond, Virginia, to High Point. There he will pursue teaching as well as the practice of interior design at the company he founded in 1998, Gary Inman Home Couture. Inman, along with his associates Dani Blake and Zach Hodgin brainstormed a new interior design business model.

"I had worked with designer Dani Blake for a number of years at Baskervill imagining luxury projects," Inman told Furniture World. "After we left Baskervill, an idea emerged for a business model to bring together a group of like-minded synergistic firms in creative alliances."

Zach Hodgin who was also inter-

viewed for this article is an interior designer who grew up styling wholesale showrooms in High Point, before earning his Interior design degree at UNCG. After college he took a job in home staging and then moved on to working on the retail side of interior design. Said Inman, "One of the reasons I wanted Zach on my team is that he has experienced the manufacturing side as a visual merchandiser, most recently joining the team that created the

"There's been a lot of talk about healthy lighting, vegan leather products, fragrances and the type of fibers used in bedding. We're seeing a lot more interest in organic materials such as linen, bamboo, cork and wool."

INMAN & HODGIN

Gary Inman, founder,
Gary Inman Home Couture



buzzworthy Gabby Home showroom in High Point. He's also experienced on the retail side, and now on the full-service interior design side as well.

"Zach and I became friends due to our shared interests in historical period styles and new traditionalism. He's an excellent renderer," added Inman, noting the upcoming exhibit, "The Eye and The Hand" at the Bienenstock Furniture Library during the fall High Point market that will feature Hodgkin's renderings. "Although he's 30 years my junior we developed a surprising camaraderie."

Design in the Age of COVID

"During the pandemic," Hodgkin observed, "people are making their homes better and cozier. It's crazy to see the number of people who are buying furniture right now. They are looking for adaptable spaces suitable for living and working. Everyone in our industry has seen a spike in home office and outdoor furniture sales."

"There has also been a huge paradigm shift during the pandemic," noted Inman. "A change in the way people want to live their lives has affected how they purchase home furnishings. COVID has been the elephant in the room, so to speak. A new zeitgeist has emerged, much like there was during the art deco period, the jazz age, or the machine age.

New Focus on Materials

Hodgkin has noticed that consumers have developed a heightened interest in how things are made and what they're made of. "They are asking what chemicals are in home furnishings products and what types of VOC emissions they produce."

"We've seen shifts in materials usage associated with this," added Inman. There's been a big uptick in copper and zinc being used by manufacturers for their anti-microbial and anti-viral properties. The outdoor furniture company Vondom is using an extruded shaped resin that is anti-microbial and anti-viral, as well. We will see more introductions incorporating these kinds of materials at upcoming High Point shows.

"There's been a lot of talk about healthy lighting, vegan leather prod-

"As we move into a period characterized by a renewal of hope and energy, the color green will be favored, including earthy sage, pistachio and leafy greens."



Zach Hodgkin,
Gary Inman Home Couture

renovate and freshen up."

Hodgkin agreed, and as evidence pointed out an art deco design revival. "That includes organic materials, bold patterns, colors and metal geometrics. The design has been updated with the bold purples and greens, ochre and mustard colors people are wild about right now."

"It's a different kind of aesthetic," added Inman. "What we're seeing with art deco is an energy

shift that ties into a current design environment that emphasizes bold patterns, bigger scaled textiles and prints. People are looking for excitement. They want their spaces to be more dramatic and have grown

tired of looking at mid-century furnishings. Mid-century won't totally disappear, but taking its place will be art deco design. The work of my friend, the Australian designer Greg Natale (www.gregnatale.com) comes to mind. He's an incredible designer whose work channels the energy of Paris in 1920 or a chic London boutique hotel circa 1918.

"The design community is aching

to get away from so much boring beige and grey. It will be replaced in part by a strong trend toward using simple deco-inspired geometric forms, but also curves. Home furnishings product designers are incorporating radius curves everywhere. Historically it was called streamlining. Curvaceous sitting pieces are a big part of art deco. It's a trend that Style Spotters have seen building over the past two High Point markets."

The Luxury Mindset

"On the fashion front, energy and passion are emerging. It has a celebratory feel, like there's a party going on. And right now," Hodgkin said, "in fashion, we are seeing, lins and flowing women's dresses that are free and floral. Whenever people have been cooped up and



Corcoole



Tamarion Rugs



Century Furniture

"The design community is aching to get away from so much boring beige and grey. It will be replaced in part by a strong trend toward using simple deco-inspired geometric forms, but also curves."

feel deprived they want to experience extravagance, decadence and deliciousness.

"There's also a new trend that has been embraced by younger home furnishing customers called Grandmillennial or Granny Chic. It's associated with nostalgic chintzy upholstery, updated needlepoint cushions, tassels, florals and elements of classic design from a previous generation.

"They're buying on Esty," he said, "as well as finding items at consignment shops or antiques malls. Beautifully ornamented and period styles are used to create a fresh, new, personalized and eclectic style that's luxurious in its own way. They might take a chest found in their

grandmother's home, and place a modern lamp on top."

"Then maybe put a fun shade on the lamp," added Inman, "They're mixing good craftsmanship with decadent ornamentation to create a kind of luxury that's become cool."

Earth Colors Rising

"There has been a lot less clarity in color trends due to pandemic-related fashion and design show cancellations over the past year," observed Inman. "There's a lot of guessing going on right now. I speculate that black and white will stay with us and we will move away from salmon, pinky colors. Blue is a color furnishings retailers can always count on

to be important. It appears in cycle after cycle in different shades. For those who missed the last High Point Market, autumnal colors including cognac, orange tones, cinnabar, plus purple and a lot of green were a fresh surprise. I believe this natural color pallet is going to stick with us. As we move into a period characterized by a renewal of hope and energy the color green will be favored, including earthy sage, pistachio and leafy greens."

Throwaway Culture's End?

An appreciation of how furniture is made with craftsmanship and joinery details has become more explicit. This is a trend mentioned by

Trend: ART DECO

Art Deco inspired designs, said Gary Inman, signal a shift "that emphasizes bold patterns, bigger scaled textiles and prints. People are looking for excitement. They want their spaces to be more dramatic."



Bernhardt Furniture Co.



Bernhardt Furniture Co.