

july-august 1996 • \$5

# art TRENDS

## The Joys Of Summer

Sail Away With  
NAUTICAL PRINTS

Military Art  
Takes to the Sky

Special Section:  
Celebrating Life  
With African-American Art

ID# 642100

HOBBY GALLERY  
(908)446-4900  
225 GORDON'S CORNER RD  
MANALAPAN, NJ 07726-3356

# On the Wall

## Mix or Match?

**Y**ou've just walked into a gallery or print shop and suddenly you see a print that you absolutely love. The only problem: the color or the style just doesn't seem to match your decor. What should you do?

The key words here are "doesn't seem." While you shouldn't try to force something into your decor, the possibilities of framing and displaying a print are almost limitless. Fortunately, prints let you take more decorating risks than do expensive originals. The challenge is to think creatively. If you love a print, buy it and find a way to make it match. Wouldn't you rather live with a print you love than one that matches your furniture but you may grow tired of?

Try finding a place for a print different from the spot you initially envisioned. There's always a way to make room for art. Don't rule out the untraditional. For example, you might think art belongs over a mantel in the living room, but a bathroom or kitchen might also be appropriate. Or perhaps you bought a print thinking it would make your living room the

showpiece of your house, but you discover that it doesn't work there. Instead, try putting it in a hallway.

Be creative. Say you have a huge formal coat closet that everyone uses regularly. That might be a place to hang a print that doesn't match the living room sofa. It will be very unexpected, but also an interesting surprise for guests. You probably wouldn't do this with an expensive piece, but with a less expensive one, you might be pleasantly surprised.

As bizarre as it might sound, a print might also be mounted on a ceiling if the space is right. After all, frescos have been painted on ceilings for centuries. Why not put prints there, too?

These places might actually help you enjoy a piece because you would see it more often than if it were in a room you use only for special occasions.

Another approach is to frame a print in a way that complements your decor. You'll never make artwork truly match your design unless the colors are identical—and that's not the primary reason to buy art.

Use what surrounds a print to match your

By  
Sheila Bridges

When a print you love just  
doesn't seem to go, what  
are your options?

*Artist Peter Stanek's paintings,  
available through Exit Art,  
capture the problems many  
people face when they buy prints.  
Enter 324 on reader service card.*



**"I'm so confused... I love the painting, but the colors are wrong... they don't match!"**

**IT'S SIMPLE!**

**IT'S EASY!**

**It gets you  
immediate  
response to  
all the  
prints in  
this issue!**

**It's Art Trends'  
Reader Service  
Card!**

**Just insert the  
numbers on the  
Reader Service Card  
that corresponds with  
the number below any  
print displayed in  
this issue.  
Fill out the remaining  
information and  
mail it in.  
It only takes minutes  
to get all the  
information you need  
from your local gallery.**

**On the Wall**



decor—the matting, the frame, etc. Frames come in every color, style, and look, so you can match them to virtually any interior. And by matching the mat to your decor, especially to secondary colors, you'll be amazed at how many styles and colors a print will go with.

For example, if your furniture is traditional and you like a print that's more contemporary or abstract, you'll probably make things work by using a traditional frame to match your furniture. The purpose of the frame is to make a print look its best and to tie artwork into its surroundings. It doesn't have to match the style of art to do that.

Another innovative way to display art is to group smaller prints together, such as hanging a series of prints in a row. Grouping can be done in a number of ways, such as by subject matter, size, or color. If you have a number of prints of birds and you get a print of a lion, for example, the different subject matter might not stand out as much if it's framed the same way as the others and mounted in a group.

You don't have to hang all prints on the wall in the usual manner, either. Try hanging a print on a door that you don't want to be used. Or put a framed print on an easel or mount it on a folding screen. You can also display small prints on or above a bookshelf or even on an attractive side chair that you don't really want people to sit on.

If your house has traditional

hanging-type mouldings, use them as they were intended, by hanging pictures by chains or cords. Don't be afraid to mix things up so they're eclectic—old things and new things together—to give a unique look.

Say you like a traditional piece but you have mostly abstract art. Acknowledge the difference by displaying this odd piece very differently. This might be the perfect piece for an easel or a table. Not only will it look creative, but it also won't interrupt the flow you've created with the other art styles in your home.

The best way to avoid most conflicts of decor and art is to own a range of art—different subjects, different styles, different moods. This makes it easier for everything to fit naturally into your decor. Don't be afraid to contrast subject matter and the way it's displayed. And with an eclectic touch to your decor, you don't need to be so concerned about colors. Artwork doesn't really have to match your sofa.

Finally, try turning your thinking on its head. The answer may not lie in matching a print to your decor but to make your decor match a print! If you're planning to redecorate, strongly consider choosing the artwork first, then select the other elements of your decor. If you really love a piece of art, changing your decor makes perfect sense. ♦

*Sheila Bridges is an interior design consultant based in New York City.*