

Atlanta Gift Show Trends Fuel Inspiration and Creativity

Does what happens at the Atlanta International Gift and Home Furnishings Market make a difference in your life? Will the new décor trends for 2014 provide you better energy or will they somehow create more clutter and chaos?

From a Feng Shui perspective, the answer is yes to all of the above. Just because the latest designs or color of the year are different than what you have doesn't mean you should run out and change everything. The energy of the new designs and colors may not be the best for you – or they may be fantastic and provide just the lift you are looking for in the new year.

The Atlanta Market is always awe inspiring with creativity flowing everywhere. It is filled with so much “eye candy” that you can easily overdose as you try to digest the new colors, styles and trends. This year's show was outstanding, packed full of both trends and lots of potential retail buyers including a significant international contingent - eager to find exactly the right new products and emerging trends to present to you, the consumer.

“Eye candy” Influences Buyers

Whether you were looking for transitional or traditional style, retro (think 1950s) or modern, or vintage and classic, there was something for everyone. On the gifts side of the market, colors were vibrant and the color of the year, “Radiant Orchid” was everywhere. The other two well represented colors were bold orange and cool blue. Just think of the colors of lollipops and popsicles – and for design trends, polka dots, chevrons and stripes were in abundance – on glassware, picture frames, dishes, patio items, linens and paper goods. Also prevalent were lots of coastal or seaside designs including seashells, fish, flamingoes, whales and turtles. And, the apron is back big time for those who cook or carry in, a strong reminder of the 1950s.

The same vibrant colors were obvious in the Christmas trends for the 2014 holiday season except in some cases the radiant orchid colors were muted almost to an orchid/beige tone and often placed with a similar value of aqua/beige giving tribute to the retro look of the 1950s. On the other hand, a very traditional Christmas red and green theme was also quite prevalent featuring old world Santas wearing earth tones, realistic deer and other woodland animals, especially the bear and snowy owls. There was also a very whimsical side displaying elfish Santas, deer in fun and funky colors with elongated legs and slim snowmen with long skinny legs. The owls were large, small or in between and adorable. Many of the holiday items were wearing snow or excessive bling. Visit my Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/PatHeydlauff/>, click on photos then on the Atlanta Gift Show – 2014 album.

In both the gifts and holiday categories, burlap was the new ribbon ranging from two to ten inches wide and silver was “the” bling color. Besides being used as ribbon, burlap could be found on everything from occasional pillows to pictures frames. Before tossing

this idea out, the burlap of today is very soft and touch-friendly making it much more appealing than the “feedbag burlap” of past generations.

Home Furnishing Trends Follow 2013 Design Elements

Furniture and major home furnishing items remained similar to 2013 trends with neutral gray ranging from light to charcoal, with darker hues leading the field and the more recent trend setters like white, cream, beige and linen falling far behind. Colors like radiant orchid were present in the accent pieces such as pillows, throws and occasional chairs but definitely more muted than in giftware.

Area and accent rugs continued their reign as king living very nicely with the neutral gray furnishing. Wall-to-wall carpeting and priceless Oriental and Persian rugs are still out, allowing for the trendy rugs made from natural fibers, tribal prints, animal prints and geometrics or enormous art deco floor art designs to flourish.

Notably, reappearing in a dramatic way are animal prints, leopard, giraffe and zebra, often in a variety of colors. Right along with the animal prints are the animals themselves, especially the elephant appearing on fabric, wall art, and décor items. Birds, besides the snowy owl are making their presence known as well, especially tropical birds, Midwestern birds and the peacock. If the animal print was crowned king at this show, the peacock was queen.

Furniture continues to be simple, understated and lean with straight lines, or is Old European in style or features wood with flaking paint or patinas. It's the rug, instead of the accents, that continue to turn up the volume in a room.

Category Trends

Inspiring Gifts continued to be popular due to consumers demand – people are looking for products and items that bring faith, hope and inspiration into their daily lives. Inspirational and spiritual items are no longer relegated to the New Age or Christian marketplace but rather permeate the entire gift and décor arena.

Funky and Fun is silver and crystal shown beside burlap and metal. It was also featured whimsical long legged deer and woodland animals or smiling leather giraffes and winking zebras. These characters added a bit of whimsy to offset the neutral grays on larger ticket items.

The Great Outdoors made a real statement at this show. The prevailing theme was indoor/outdoor living with gardens and patios reflecting the adjoining room from within your home. Furnishings and accents were a brighter more cheerful color, enlivening and expanding your outdoor enjoyment. Camping, hiking and sports were an integral part of this trend.

Green/Eco-Friendly was also a growing theme. According to these vendors they were following the four “R” rules - reduce, recycle, reuse, and renew helping to raise the awareness and desire to improve the health of the planet.

Some of these trends can provide you wonderful Feng Shui if the colors and styles feed into your need to ground yourself or re-create some of the fond memories you shared years ago. Others may provide a spark of color just where you need it to lift your spirits.

Whatever you do, make sure your surroundings provide you security, serenity and comfort to uplift your spirits or inspire you so you can deal with the chaos and maintain calm.

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