

Daring Design

Lesbian interior designer Lena Gordon makes nesting glam. **By Emelina Minero**

Whether you're redecorating your house or creating a shared space with your new girlfriend, overhauling your home goes a lot deeper than just moving around furniture and picking pillow fabrics together. It's exciting, it's fun, but it can also be stressful. Whose stuff will go where? How will you decorate with your contrasting styles? This is a process that Lena Gordon, lesbian interior designer and owner of Dare to Design, understands. That's because Gordon doesn't only see her profession as making only aesthetic changes to a space but also as a way to understand and strengthen relationships.

How does interior design impact the way people live?

Whether we're talking about live, work or play spaces, the interior design impacts people's lives in the way they feel. Environmental psychology plays into how well you work, how productive you are, how well you sleep, everything. Interior design is set up to invigorate and energize you. Bottom line, it's about making people's lives better.

How do relationships play into interior design?

Every residential family I work with is different. Their needs are different. Their tastes are different. Combining [two people's tastes together is] one of the most exciting things for me. When a couple or a family tries to plan for something like a kitchen remodel, one of them likes one thing, the other one likes the other thing and they end up arguing about it because both people feel like if they compromise, they're going to be giving in and not really getting what they want. I'm sort of like a relationship counselor. I find out what everybody really wants.

Is it challenging to be a lesbian in an industry dominated by gay men and straight women?

Sometimes it feels a little bit lonely, but on the other hand I feel like I have an advantage because on the outside no one is going to guess I am a lesbian when they first meet me. I'm out, but I don't broadcast it. So when I first meet a client, I choose whether I am going to let that information out to them. Some of my clients I become really close with. They know about my life and I know about theirs, but [with] some people it's more of a professional relationship where I don't really talk about that kind of thing. I definitely get along with contractors really well and I've developed a lot of really good long-term relationships with my contractors and I think for some reason there's this weird way in which a lot of those men respect me just a teeny bit more. I end up being kind of one of the guys a little bit more.

How do you describe your aesthetic?

I always like to add something shiny, a little teeny bit of glam. Something that's going to be real wow and luxurious, even if it's a casual room that will make you go, Oh, I love where I live or I love where I work. I also like to use color in bright pops here and there.

I'm not trying to push my personal style on anyone because it's my personal style. Everybody's home has a soul that is as complex and deep as all of the people who live in it. That's what I try to convey in each space: the complex stuff, the personality of the people who use the space. (d2dstudio.com) ■





GET THE LOOK

Daring interior designer Lena Gordon shares four DIY decorating tips.

1 Make a plan first and stick to it throughout the whole design process so that you end up with the vision that you started with, no matter how long it takes you to get there.

2 Don't be afraid to paint and don't be afraid of color because you can always repaint.

3 Sometimes just rearranging your furniture will help. Try to bring your furniture in from the walls. Most people think that a space looks bigger if you push all of the furniture up against the walls and then there's a big open space in the middle of the room, but that's not true. It actually creates a homier, cozy environment if there's less space between the furniture.

4 When trying to plan your room, draw it out on a piece of paper. Measure and draw out the room. First you plan with the intention of being able to walk from space to space, room to room easily, then you move your furniture around. It actually makes life a lot easier and you don't realize it until you get your furniture in that kind of environment.



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