



Creating the Artful Home: the Aesthetic Movement

Karen Zukowski

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Creating the Artful Home: the Aesthetic Movement and Its Influence on Home Decor covers the history of a movement that emphasized "art for art's sake"-and the influence it had on home décor. The Aesthetic Movement in America lasted just a few decades (1870-1900), and served mainly as a bridge between the high Victorian sensibility and the radical shift to the Arts & Crafts style. The movement germinated among artists who used opulent color, decorative patterning, and lavish materials simply for the aesthetic effects they could evoke. It was commonly held that a home that expressed an artful, harmonious soul would instill high aesthetic and moral merit in its inhabitants. The Aesthetic Movement in America helped to popularize the idea that everyone should be able to enjoy beautiful, well-made homes and furnishings-not just the very wealthy. Artful homes could be composed from brilliant antique store finds, discriminating department store purchases, and gems hand-made by the ladies of the house. It was the moment when people embraced the idea that only a beautiful home could be a happy home.

Karen Zukowski delves into the movement's establishment, evolution, and main characters, and shows how today's homes can incorporate Aesthetic principles:

Through suggestion rather than statement, sensuality, massive use of symbols, and synaesthetic effects-that is, correspondence between words, colors and music.

How influential designers such as Clarence Cook and Charles Eastlake popularized the idea that beautiful homes with tasteful furnishings could be available to practically everyone

How today's designers, manufacturers, and retailers deploy the very same stylistic markers of the Aesthetic Movement: rich color, layered pattern and texture, mixtures of historical motifs

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