

THAT LAYERED LOOK

*Texture, color and personal space
are all on the radar of the
Bay Area's top interior designers.*

BY JENNIFER MASSONI PARDINI

As an editor, much of my job is knowing what to use as much as — if not more than — what not to. With each story, I layer in critical information while capturing a mood and a point of view. In talking shop with interior designers **Leo Cesareo, Kendra Nash, Jeff Schlarb** and **Tineke Triggs** for the roundtable discussion that follows, I realized how similar our creative processes really are. So perhaps it's no wonder that the world of design has been my preferred escape this last year and a half while I penned the Design Spotlight department for this magazine and tripled my subscriptions to home design magazines, ideally spread open around me over a weekend afternoon. As I

often waded through their pages, I'd close my eyes and reimagine the room around me in a thousand different ways.

On a late August afternoon, I entered a similar design dream state, but this time in the virtual company of these local interior designers whose individual aesthetics I've admired over the years. Our intention was to discuss the current design landscape and its horizon, as well as the projects clients are requesting now that Zoom backgrounds are dialed in and distance learning stations are — fingers crossed — on permanent pause. Let's dive into a conversation with the folks who feel lucky to not only reimagine what it means to feel at home, but also bring it to vivid, layered life.

One note begone.
From a blue-hued
ceiling, drapery, rug
and textiles, layers
add depth and visual
interest to this living
room by Jeff Schlarb
Design Studio.





For the "Liquid Lounge" in the 2020 San Francisco Decorator Showcase, Tineke Triggs' firm, Artistic Designs for Living, merged bold-colors with geometric interest.

We all know how “home” has had to serve multiple functions, from office to school to gym and back again. What are clients asking for now?

Kendra Nash: Obviously the offices. We’re doing a ton of those. I’ve had a lot of requests for podcast rooms. Our tech clients are getting into that as a hobby when they couldn’t travel for a while. On another note, what I’m really finding with the architectural process is that before it was just all wide-open spaces. People want to bring it back in a little bit, construction-wise and also, I would say, take out the formalities.

Leo Cesareo: Currently, I’m working on a project in Corte Madera. They want to turn a master closet into a soundproof kind of Zoom space. They’re calling it a “cloffice,” a closet-office.

Tineke Triggs: It’s all about the flexibility of lifestyle, but it’s also creating man caves and woman caves, spaces that are different than just office spaces. So I’m finding that’s a big trend right now.

So a sense of privacy or solitude is what we want now?

TT: Yeah, we already know home gyms and home offices are going to stay for a while, but it’s then that other getaway space. How do we split the homes into quadrants for people to have their own identity or get away because they can’t physically get away?

Jeff Schlarb: The most exciting thing I’ve seen is we are now able to be more artistic. The living room doesn’t have to be in the same palette exactly as a family room. And this doesn’t have to be just one note. It was always harder [when] maybe people who have just come into means don’t want to look too ostentatious in front of their friends. And then they equate layering to some sort of flaunting of their wealth. It’s just not true. It’s just: What do you want the home to deliver to you? Do you want to be lit up? Do you want to be enlightened and brightened and energized when you come into some of these spaces? And I think [that] was more evident during this time.

LS: That’s what I’ve experienced as well. People want a space that is reflective of them, that now has to be all these things at once, or at different times. Kendra, what you were saying too [about] these open-concept layouts. They’re amazing, and then you’ve got all your kids back home with you. You’ve got grandma sticking around. You’re in quarantine. What do you do? Let’s reconfigure everything so that we can push things around and give ourselves that space. And in that idea of being bolder, and yet at the same time, not being ostentatious. That is a very Bay Area thing. I’m from L.A. We’re flashy!



For Nash Design Group’s clients, it’s all about designated spaces, fewer formalities and certainly, plenty of home offices.

What trends are you seeing in textiles or color palette? I'm also mindful of how you calibrate a trend for a client — considering they are in the space for more than a season — or as you have said to me, Jeff, perhaps they only remodel or refurbish a home a few times in their lifetime.

JS: I think the value in our studio is we're trying to make places the best we can to be sophisticated, cool and artistic, and have a shelf life. I feel like one of my best assets is that I have watched furniture trends for 20 years, and I can identify what's just going to be redone, or has already been done. And I try and constantly look out and avoid trends, quite honestly. In terms of color, our studio is not afraid of color. We will do all of it.

TT: The richer, deeper jewel tones [are] starting to pop back in and the grays [are] being replaced with the greige, the beige gray, and then a lot more texture. If I don't work with color, it's got to have texture. And then the other thing that's huge right now is greenery, tons of greenery, putting in plants and succulents into bookshelves and plants in the corner, that's all back. I think this whole lack of connection to the outdoors and not being out and about has really brought that trend in, too.

LC: Absolutely. Textures, layers. Textures more than patterns. I think a lot of times people are really open to having a lot of different textural things in their home, and how that layers up. It's almost like they know something's missing.

KN: The 'burb clients are really more open to color like they've never been. They're really shying away from the grays. Thank goodness. So right now, I feel like anything goes. But the most important trend, I would say, which Jeff elaborated on earlier, are the layers. The layers upon layers. When we are given the opportunity to do that, and people see it, they just yearn for more of it.

JS: One of the stories I tell clients — especially if they're new at design — I say, "My dream for you is to walk around at the end of the project and have a glass of wine with your husband or with your wife and just say, 'I'm so glad we did it right. And we did it the whole way.'" That's what I wish for them. **NHC**

Our Panelists

Leo Cesareo, *Leo Cesareo Design*. Cesareo is a San Francisco-based artist and designer who has worked with some of the design world's premiere interior designers, including **Steven Volpe, Jay Jeffers** and **Lauren Ceremia**. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Cesareo's approach to space and composition draws from his formal education in the visual arts.



Kendra Nash, *Nash Design Group*. Born and raised in Atherton, Kendra Nicholas Nash started Nash Design Group in 2011, after cutting her teeth in the Silicon Valley real estate market. With her work spanning the entire Peninsula, Nash Design Group collaborates closely with architects and builders in the construction phase, and then continues through furnishings and finishing touches.

Jeff Schlarb, *Jeff Schlarb Design Studio*. Jeff Schlarb Design Studio delivers a classic contemporary body of work from its Presidio Heights studio in San Francisco. The firm's expertise includes custom decoration projects, interior design for new construction, and kitchen and bathroom renovations. Schlarb draws on time spent living in Europe, traveling the globe and an earnest pursuit to seize every day.



Tineke Triggs, *Artistic Designs for Living*. Inspired by designers who broke away from the pack, Triggs is known for creating soulful, artistic and imaginative interiors. By mastering both the art and science of design, her work gives rise to a unique form of design mixology. When not designing, the veteran of six San Francisco Decorator

Showcases enjoys working on her kick-boxing game, family time on the beach, and traveling down the coast with her vintage 1973 Airstream in tow.