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When creating atmosphere in the home, glass is one of the more versatile tools in the designer's arsenal. From windows to mirrors, it can be used to manipulate light, create the illusion of space, deflect attention from awkward-to-style corners – or draw the gaze towards that which you wish to enhance. Interior designer Nick Woodhouse, and co-founder of Woodhouse & Law sums it up perfectly: "Glass is key to design. Not only does it help to link and frame views between spaces, whether inside or out, but it also helps to accentuate the light levels within these spaces, adding interest through reflection and form."

Here, Bath artists, designers and window stylists, share their top tips for making the most of glass in all its forms.

ROSE-TINTED GLASS

Architectural glass like stained glass windows and glass panels more commonly seen in religious and commercial buildings can be used to make a bold statement in the home, too. Sally Politzer, a Bath artist who creates bespoke architectural glass describes it as a means to 'enrich' a space.

"It has a kinetic quality. Unlike a painting or other piece of art, it has both a practical use and the advantage of appearing differently as the light changes," she says. "It can be used in doors, corridors, bathrooms and staircases. Small-scale insertions can be as punchy as large insertions. Commemorating the alternation of a house into a new home is a great way of using the medium. It will give a house personality, individuality and, when required, privacy."

BELOW: Always consider form and function for window furnishings, advise Aspect Window Styling; **RIGHT:** Black slim frame round mirror by Cox & Cox, £150



FORM AND FUNCTION

Architectural glass is artwork with a practical application, says Carole Waller, who creates eye-catching works by encasing dye-painted cloth into reinforced glass.

"I made large windows for an arts centre that conveniently hid the view of rubbish bins outside, and a balustrade inside a house to replace an internal wall with split levels. This both visually doubled the size of the space and brought streams of colour in to reflect their glorious Cotswolds views."

A well-placed, colourful glass installation, whether a window, panel or even a piece of furniture can transform a room by creating a statement focal point that is forever changing according to the light source. The reflective qualities can also be used to atmospheric affect – something Carole Waller achieves with glass table tops. "I have two at my studio," she says. "One indoors and one on a garden terrace, where it works wonderfully because it reflects the trees, sky and clouds back at you as you sit."

"A mirrored finish shouldn't be limited to walls," agrees Nick of Woodhouse & Law. "Introducing console or side tables with this detail also helps to accentuate the light of a space, and adds further interest through additional glimpses of the side and undersides of those special pieces that sit on those very tables."

LET THERE BE LIGHT

When it comes to the possibilities of reflective glass, it's all about mirror placement.

The function of a mirror extends far beyond a simple hair and makeup station – used correctly, they alter the entire feel of a room. They are fantastic interior design tools, according to Clair Strong of Clair Strong Interior Design – especially when it comes to manipulating light.

"For rooms that lack windows, a mirror can create the illusion of more light," she explains. "In dark north-facing rooms, I love to use

INTERIORS



ABOVE: Mirrors can be used as a focal point in a space, like in this design by Woodhouse & Law; RIGHT: Stained glass by Sally Pollitzer changes appearance with the light source

mirrors to maximise the amount of sunlight in the space. Because mirrors deceive our eyes, you can use them to deflect attention away from awkward spaces or dark corners. Put a mirror behind a lamp to bounce light around, or hang a mirror behind a hanging chandelier or opposite a window to reflect light beautifully in a room.”

Mirrors aren't just tools for light enhancement, they have been used for centuries to create illusions of shape and size.

“The Georgian architect Sir John Soane was the master of this,” says Charlie Salter, director of Etons of Bath, designers that specialise in Georgian and Regency properties. “He used convex mirrors incorporated into corners of ceilings to give visitors a different perspective on the spaces they were in.”

While we might not all go as far as Sloane's eye-catching set up, a simple mirror placed near bookshelves, or surrounded with flourishing house plants, can also create the illusion of 'more' – whether you're looking to evoke a *Beauty & The Beast* level library or a jungle-style greenhouse vibe.

COME INTO FOCUS

Nothing makes a statement quite like a well-placed mirror. With a little thought, they can create a point of focus in the design of a room.

“Mirrors can be a good focal point above the fireplace, whilst long or full-length mirrors can be hung horizontally above sofas,” says Dani Taylor, product and creative director at Cox & Cox. “They don't just have to be practical, either. You can use them as art – think installations of small mirrors grouped together.”

Interior designer Sean Symington says mirror placement is all about what you want to emphasise.

“When incorporating a mirror into a space it is important to hold it up before you hang it to really get a feel for what it reflects,” he explains. “I use mirrors to draw attention to something I want to amplify, for example a view from a window, or a piece of art.”



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ABOVE: Sean Symington places mirrors to enhance light and artwork; RIGHT: Clair Strong recommends a mirror to brighten a dark room

Intentions are vital considerations before you buy – are you creating a statement, a frame, or an amplification? This is an especially important question if you’re buying online.

“My top tip for buying a mirror is to absolutely measure your space before you commit. It can be really deceptive, how that mirror might look in your space,” says Dani. She recommends creating a paper template of your desired piece to get a real-life picture of how it might look. “You want to make sure if you have a fireplace wall that you leave enough space left and right for the mirror to look purposeful – if it’s too big it will look like it’s not right for the space.”

DRESS TO IMPRESS

Much like mirrors, how we style a window is vital to creating the desired look and feel. Do you want curtains, blinds or shutters?

“A simple way to immediately narrow down your options is to consider exactly what you want the window furnishing to achieve,” says Nick Hewett, founder of Aspect Window Styling, Bath-based specialists in blinds, shutters and awnings. It is better to know going in whether you’re trying to solve a problem – light control and privacy are common concerns – or if your choices are driven purely by aesthetics. Nick explains, “Window furnishings can make a real difference in a room’s presentation and overall feel. For example, shutters have a sleek, timeless appeal that accentuate your home’s unique features, whereas something like curtains are typically much softer in appearance and allow the opportunity to experiment more readily with colour and design through fabric choices. Some products will also be more suitable to specific settings over others, so it’s always worth taking time to explore the different options available first.”

While functionality is a primary concern in window dressing, it needn’t be at the expense of atmosphere, according to Sean Symington. “The design scheme dictates the window treatments,” he says. “For example, in a recent sitting room design I chose to not do either curtains nor blinds as the window has shutters and I felt that curtains would obstruct the light.” ■



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