



The last WORD



A TOUCHY SUBJECT

Architect and interior designer **Dorothee Junkin** discusses the use of texture in design

These days there are countless material options for interior designers and clients to choose from. So, why do we choose certain materials? Is the colour or a particular pattern the driver? What influences our decisions?

People dress in clothes - buildings and interiors in materials. A certain texture often aims to express individuality and character.

Textures fascinate me and I like working with them - they are part of my style. I once presented four swatches of an almost identical blue velvet to a client of mine. As there was no obvious difference in colour, she picked up the samples to feel each material swatch. Within seconds she picked the fabric that seemed the most pleasant to the touch to her and kept toying with it for the rest of the meeting.

My client wasn't the only one responding to a texture, as I do the same almost everyday when making decisions about my designs. It's not only the colour or the pattern that matters, but also the feel. I strongly believe that textures of materials are an important aspect of interior design, as a material with a unique texture can give a space its very individual character and identity.

Stone tiles with a structured surface may appear as a subtle texture in daylight, but show more dramatic shadows when light washes over the same surface at night. In both cases the actual space has a certain identity related to the material.

When choosing materials for a

private residential home, it is particularly important that the materials reflect a certain mood/feel and atmosphere that the client identifies with, but that is also pleasant to the touch. Sometimes textures influence our perception on a more subtle level than colour or pattern does. We are not even consciously aware that we respond positively to a particular texture and just feel comfortable in a certain space.

For one of my recent projects I designed a contemporary version of a Chesterfield sofa and had it covered in a sumptuously soft pig suede. Everyone who enters the room wants to sit on it and most of the first time visitors ask about the material, as the pig suede is softer and more flexible than your average suede. Being perceived as particularly pleasant, the material of the sofa does quite often become a topic in conversation and the client has a unique piece creating a unique setting that differs from other homes.

But, textures don't always have to be bold and striking. Some designs call for very subtle materials that don't attract immediate attention. Every composition requires a different mix of textures to achieve the appropriate effect. In the end it's all determined by the type of atmosphere and mood one attempts to create. Personally, I really like designing with textures as they are a wonderful means to express a certain style and feeling in the rooms created with them. Textures add just as an important layer of design as do colour and pattern. ■

Having gained a Masters degree in Architecture, Dorothee worked for Foster + Partners on the Abu Dhabi World Trade Centre 5 star hotel and Munich's Lenbachhaus Museum amongst other prestigious projects, before in 2009 forming her own company Architecta. Since then she has worked on a number of large private residences in London's premier neighbourhoods. Her aim is to create unique environments based on diverse narrative concepts and the client's individual needs and aspirations. She strongly believes that every detail matters as a part of the overall composition of materials and light and to give each and every space its deserved individuality.

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