

CENTERED BY DESIGN

# *Five Design Principles*

FOR CREATING A STORIED HOME







# About Claire

## PRINCIPAL DESIGNER & OWNER

Claire Staszak is a Chicago-based interior designer known for her holistic design process and expertise in designing and restoring homes, infusing them with authenticity and soul. She has a special affinity for crafting sophisticated and classic kitchens. Centered by Design was born out of her love of historical architecture, her well-trained eye for interiors, and her passion for personal wellness. Claire studied interior design at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and holds a Certificate of Kitchen and Bath Design from Harper College.



## ABOUT CENTERED BY DESIGN

Centered by Design works collaboratively with clients to align personal taste with the architecture and era of a home to create truly timeless design. By guiding clients through the design process, the team tailors the experience to specific lifestyles and needs.

The final result is a beautiful and personalized space, a reflection of the people who inhabit it - a home that is centered by design.

This year marks Claire's first product launch with more than 10 custom wallpapers designed in partnership with French wallpaper house, Isidore Leroy.





## PRINCIPLE ONE

# Pattern Mixing

*Before jumping into pattern mixing, establish your color palette. Take inspiration from art, magazine clippings, travels, books, textiles, etc. Be mindful of the undertone of your palette. Is it pastel, jewel tones, muted? Creating cohesion in your palette will set you up for success in your pattern selections.*

### *Scale*

*Mix it up! Combining a small print wallpaper with a large print throw pillow or drapery can create balance. Variation is key to avoiding spaces that clash or feel "out of proportion". Many times if a scheme isn't working for me, I'll pull out one pattern and swap it out for a varying scale, that'll often do the trick!*

### *Pattern Design*

*Most textiles fall within the following categories: florals, geometrics, stripes, textures, and abstracts. Now that your palette has been defined, try selecting a different print from each of these categories, all within your palette. I like to start with my "hero" print, the one I can't live without and build from there.*

### *Define Your Style*

*Do you want your space to feel eclectic? maximalist? traditional? Understanding your vision for the space will help you decide how to layer your prints. A more contemporary take on traditional design could involve mixing a graphic geometric with a more traditional floral.*





## PRINCIPLE TWO

# Creating Layers

*A layered home doesn't happen overnight. While we love to source unique furniture and accessories for our clients, we encourage them to continue to add layers over time. No room is complete without them.*

### *Art & Mirrors*

*A space is never complete without art. Try a collection of framed art or large statement pieces to elevate your walls. Mirrors are both beautiful and reflect light throughout the room. We always recommend buying original artwork and adding a budget for art into your furnishing plan.*

### *Rugs*

*Flooring and rugs truly ground a space and can set the tone for the room. This layer will warm up a space and incorporate color and texture.*

### *Small Furniture Pieces*

*Stools, accent tables, and chairs add character and functionality without taking up too much space.*

### *Books & More*

*Accessories like books and vases are perfect for styling shelves and coffee tables.*

### *Accent Lighting*

*Incorporate accent lighting such as sconces, floor lamps, and pendants. Not only do they provide visual interest but also more lighting options and moods.*

### *Window Treatments*

*They are an investment but make a statement and add a dramatic layer that really completes the room.*

### *Pillows & Throws*

*We love bringing in color, pattern, and texture through pillows and throws.*





## PRINCIPLE THREE

# Natural Light

*Natural light dramatically effects the feeling of a space. As designers, the amount, source and angle of natural light is one of our first considerations in the design and building process.*

### Windows

*Ask yourself if your windows allow for optimal natural light. Is there a valence or awning blocking light? Do you want sheer drapery to allow for light to flood the room while still maintaining some privacy? Could you add a window seat to enjoy the natural light?*

### Space Planning

*Avoid placing furniture only facing away from the natural light source. To enhance a space, add reflective light features such as mirrors and glass for light to bounce off. Consider how the space is being used. West-facing rooms are cooler in the morning and brighter in the afternoon, while east-facing rooms enjoy morning sun and more muted light in the afternoons.*

### Color Palette

*South-facing rooms are most ideal for natural, warm light. In these spaces you'll get the least amount of color distortion. North-facing rooms get the coolest light and therefore you want to stay away from any colors that will emphasize the dreariness. Yellow-based light tones will encourage light to bounce around the room more than green based colors.*





## PRINCIPLE FOUR

# *Architectural Details*

*The core of Centered by Design's design identity lies in the preservation of historic architecture. Some designers will start with a mood board heavily rooted in their personal aesthetic, we do the opposite. During our initial walk-throughs, we try to "listen" to the house. Letting the architecture lead our inspiration and responding to it as a jumping off point. We don't have a one-size-fits-all approach because each house isn't meant to look the same.*

### *Architectural Style + Interior Finishes*

*Every property has an architectural classification. Even if it is not a historic home it was built with some type of architectural integrity. Educating yourself about the time period or style of reference can help establish key elements and details such as exterior materials, windows, crown moldings and baseboards, doors and hardware, etc.*

*Knowing more about the architecture of the house is key to either running in a parallel direction or deciding to go in another direction entirely on the design and furnishings.*

*We love the book, "A Field Guide to American Houses" by Virginia Savage McAlester to help you identify your home's architectural origin.*

### *Millwork*

*Millwork is another word for cabinetry and trim details throughout a home. In Britain they call cabinets "fitted furniture," which I like because it sounds more important. Good quality and well-designed cabinets and trim can elevate your home and add value. Different types of architecture will have different trim styles, understanding this and using trim details in a classical way makes a home look and feel in proportion.*





## PRINCIPLE FIVE

# Storytelling

*We believe our homes tell a story, not only to visitors but to your own family. What is the story you want to write for your life? Being thoughtful about the story you want to tell, will help you enjoy your home to the fullest. The goal is to evoke a sense of belonging.*

### *Inspiration*

*We look to the history and style of the home for initial inspiration. But, what's most important is having an understanding of the homeowner's lifestyle, taste and how they want their home to feel. We've found the strongest projects happen when we are able to closely collaborate with our clients and help them build a vision even better than imagined.*

### *Crafting a Story*

*Blending old with new and honoring personal pieces is key to making a home feel "storied." While different rooms serve different purposes, there should be a harmonious flow between them. We pay close attention to millwork, lighting and color palettes, as these help keep a consistent flow from room to room.*

### *Balance*

*Scale and hierarchy are key design elements in storytelling. Hone in on the story you want to tell to make the space feel cohesive and curated.*





CENTEREDBYDESIGN.COM  
INFO@CENTEREDBYDESIGN.COM  
@CENTEREDBYDESIGN