

ZOOMING IN

An up-close and personal look at how to style small scenes in your home.

Each small surface in your home is a canvas. Whether it be a coffee table, bookshelf, or dresser top, these are as deserving of beauty and story as the room itself. When it comes to styling these spaces, it helps to pull from a toolkit of items you're drawn to or already own—everyday elements that are harmonious when paired and can show a glimpse of who you are. There are no rules here, only tried-and-tested guidelines to serve as a starting point. After all, styling is subjective. There's permission to play, and fine-tuning is welcome along the way.

STORY BY MORGAN DURICK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHEL PRUETT

GETTING STARTED



Nod to Nature:

Our eyes are naturally drawn to organic shapes, so plants will always make an impact in a space. Their soft, irregular movement helps break up the rigidity of right angles and straight lines. Plants that sprawl or reach up look nice on a table or console, and long, trailing plants shine on shelves.

Begin with Books:

Books can lay the groundwork for a well-styled scene and lend structure to surrounding decor. You can also use them as a base for building your scene's color palette. Look for books with pretty binding or typography on topics you're interested in. Let them be an invitation to pause, be curious, and discover something new.

Create Dimension:

Feel the freedom to play with varying heights, sizes, and materials to add visual interest. Start with items you may already have on hand, like taper holders, links, or vessels. As you go, think about what to add to keep things balanced. For example, if you already have a stack of books, a bowl or brass figure will add new shape and height.

Add a Landing Place:

Your most functional pieces, like bowls and trays, can serve as catchalls for your smaller items, such as remotes, fillers, or personal mementos. These vessels effortlessly provide order and create a collected look.

Fill with Smalls:

This is your opportunity to make space for the unexpected. Atypical objects just for the fun of it, like matchbooks, dice, or dominoes, fill in the gaps of your base layers and add intrigue. Mix up shapes and materials for dimension and visual interest.



There are lots of spaces where you can put these ideas into practice. Coffee tables, nightstands, consoles, entry tables, bookshelves, and vanities are all open surfaces ready for your style and story to shine through.



MAKE IT YOURS

Do a double take. An intentional look around your home can shed light on untapped decor potential. Layer in spare change from a recent trip, a bowl of film photos, Grandma's knickknacks, home-run baseballs, or anything tethered to a personal memory. This kind of styling, with heart and soul, is what makes us feel known in the spaces we love.



Once a year, I make it a point to sort through all my photos and print off a few of my favorites. I've done this for years, and it makes such a difference to see the story of us in our home. Even unconventional decor (like Duke's "first home run" baseball) is worthy of display. —Jo