

DESIGN » HUES THAT HOLD THE HEAT OF SUMMER



From top to bottom: Donna Boyko's painting *Red Prairie* was inspired by the hues of Western Canada, while Made Design's art installation – a sapling wrapped with brightly coloured duct tape – enlivens a boring streetscape in Toronto. Bev Hisey's new *In the Woods* rug, a medley of 15 vibrant shades, is available for \$9,900 at Hollace Cluny (www.hollacecluny.ca) and Made (www.madedesign.ca).

Lessons of the fall

Numerous designers are finding inspiration in the fiery beauty of autumn colours this season. You should, too



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When I went to school, fall meant the end of fun and freedom and the beginning of regimented captivity. There were good things such as crisp new textbooks and playground games and Friday art class. But the excitement was always dampened by bland hallways with dreary reproductions of Group of Seven paintings on the walls.

What I didn't realize then was that those sober landscapes – works such as Arthur Lismer's *Pines of Georgian Bay* – were beautiful in reality. Their subtle colouring inspired Para Paints' 2002 Group of Seven Colour Collection, comprised of 30 nature-based hues.

But tastes change. Now, it's the wilder side of the group's palette that seems like the quintessential interpretation of our landscape and is the inspiration for a new generation of artists and designers.

A few years ago, a wild Tom Thomson landscape was reproduced in three dimensions for the annual Canada Blooms garden show. This fall, Toronto textile artist Bev Hisey is channeling the vivid palette of works such as Thomson's *Autumn Foliage* (1916) and A.Y. Jackson's *Muskosh River* (1939) for a new carpet design.

Called *In the Woods*, the eight-by-10-foot carpet, which was inspired by a 1950s painting by Hisey's grandmother, is an exuberant medley of 15 colours including magenta, yolk yellow, dark plum, red, orange and apple green. The designer digitally scanned the work to recreate its pattern but



then began pushing the colour scheme in a more vibrant direction. (A second painting is on the back of the first and features a neutral palette of "birch bark" colours; Hisey thinks the piece was never framed because her grandmother could not choose one over the other.)

Canadian design mavens and retailers Shaun Moore and Julie Nicholson (they own the Toronto shop Made) are also into autumnal colour exuberance. Recently, they covered a bare stick of a tree with a camouflage pattern made of vibrantly coloured duct tape. Their installation piece was commissioned by Launchpad (an organization that rents affordable spaces to arts groups) to turn the defunct sapling and its concrete planter into a lively element in the colourless streetscape. Spiky grasses and the colourful bark make the piece a quirky spin on the Group of Seven's images of solitary trees in glorious colour against a greyer setting.

And fall colours are not just an Eastern Canadian thing. In a show at Toronto's David Kaye Gallery (www.davidkayegallery.com), painter Donna Boyko shows that the B.C. landscape is inspiring as much vibrant colour as Georgian Bay and Algonquin Park did.

Decoratively speaking, this kind of intense colour requires a two-step application. To warm up interiors, start by replacing crisp whites on trim, walls and ceilings with more natural, unbleached colours such as soft greys, taupes and off-whites – the colours of sticks and stones, driftwood or birch bark. (Try Para's *Hardwood Forest* [P2722-1] or *Record of the Day* [P2707-4], both from the Group of Seven Collection.)

Then, like the autumn leaves, go fearlessly into strong, warm oranges (General Paint's *Duppy* or *Smoked Pumpkin*) and deep yellows like Benjamin Moore's historical yellows (HC7 through HC18). A small touch of any green, from apple to olive, balances the hot colours. Dark burgundies and plums keep the heat in, anchoring accent colours. The effect will be warm and cozy but never dull.

How much nicer it would have been to go back to school and see halls full of colours like these – hues that hold both the heat of summer and the poignant beauty of fall.

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The wilder side of fall

Looking for a touch of autumn drama? Consider these tips.

For colour lovers, yellow and orange aren't too strident as main hues so long as they aren't high-key brights but nature's luminous mid-tones.

Magenta and bright greens, meanwhile, add a fresh twist to accents.

Darker greens, as well as burgundies and plums, provide subdued accents that anchor.

For those who like white walls and trim, keep the look natural by substituting a light tan for white.

The palette below is from Pittsburgh Paints and includes the shades above. The colour names are, from left to right, *Old Burgundy* (435-6), *Dusty Trail* (414-4), *Brown Mustard* (215-5), *Gingerbread* (222-6), *Pollination* (211-7), *Apple-A-Day* (334-7), *California Wine* (135-7) and *Black Walnut* (532-7).

» J.L.

