

From research to redesign

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Fourteen years ago, Reisa Pollard was still working as a library researcher.

The founder and lead designer of Beyond Beige Interior Design in North Vancouver, Pollard laughs when she admits it didn't really seem like a natural fit. "I'm typically much louder than the average librarian," she notes.

Although she had an interest in design from an early age, Pollard didn't think it was a viable career path so pursued other options while working on design projects for family and friends during evenings and weekends.

It didn't take long, however, for those side projects to take over and she decided it was time to "take the plunge." In 2003, she founded her own business, which also includes The Living Lab Furniture Co.

"What I think I just loved the most was the sense of change, the fact that you could create all sorts of change. You could change the feeling of a place, you could change the function of a place. There's just so much change that you can create with interior design, and I found that really captivating," she says of what first attracted her to design and has kept her interested.



Obsessed with before and after photos of redesigned rooms, Pollard says she used to have stacks and stacks of magazines under her bed. Those stacks are gone thanks to a proliferation of design content now available on the Internet, which has also allowed trend information to travel faster.

It used to take a long time for a trend to come out of Europe and hit North America and then the West Coast, but now trends tend to be "out" almost as fast as they are "in," explains Pollard.

"That's why you have to be so careful with them. You have to really extract certain elements of a trend that you feel have sustainability," she warns, adding those elements should have some uniqueness and longevity.

This fall, one of the biggest design trends comes out of white and grey kitchens that have been popular in recent years. Pollard says there is now some warmth being added to those colours with warmer metals (e.g. true gold and aged brass), and interesting textures, such as reclaimed woods, or a backsplash with a stone that has texture.

"It can make it so that neutrals can be very interesting," explains Pollard.

Another trend that is being used in a broader context than just kitchens is the incorporation of world elements, adding touches such as Moroccan-patterned mesh or some sort of Moroccan light fixture. Pollard says this is an interesting way to throw a curveball at modern design.

"Make sure that design remains fun and it remains true to you," she adds.

Reisa Pollard will be one of the speakers at the 10th annual Interior Design Show West (IDS West), at the Vancouver Convention Centre, Sept. 25-28.