



**HOMEWORK**  
DESIGN STUDIO

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# What has HGTV done to us?!



It is possible that in nearly every residential client meeting I have there is a reference to HGTV. I hear "I love HGTV makeovers - can we do that?" or "I want my home to look like those on HGTV" or "I've seen them do "this" and I'd like to incorporate "that" from HGTV. HGTV, HGTV, HGTV!!!

The recent popularity of television makeover programmes, where enthusiastic participants transform rooms in a matter of hours, have only served to promote the idea of interior design as a form of consumption, as immediately gratifying as shopping. Therein lies the problem - instant gratification. We often forget that design is a complicated business. It is not completed in an hour. The planning, budgeting, sourcing and implementation stages consume very many hours and a lot of brain power, many of which are spent on choosing the materials that are used in a space.

Materials engage all the senses. You can paint your walls a different colour, but you will not alter the way they physically feel or smell as if you used wood or other elements instead of paint for example. Change a floor covering and a whole range



of ambient factors comes into play. Add a multi-layered lighting plan and that can completely change the mood of the space. These decisions are a few of the many hundreds of details that the designer takes into account when designing and planning for a space but are rarely the focus in detail on the makeover programmes - they simply do not have the air time to demonstrate the volume of factors required for the finished space.

So it is not that I have a problem with HGTV and the effect these makeover programmes have on us - definitely not, as I too am possibly the biggest fan! These shows serve to show the homeowner the importance of using a professional and the effect that choice has on a space. I have been lucky enough to have had a few of my local projects featured by HGTV.com and also had the privilege of meeting with Candice Olson of HGTV fame to discuss her line of upholstered furniture, lighting, paint, fabric, rugs, broad case goods, wall-paper, etc. etc! She herself is like a full scale industry, and she is as charming, grounded, witty, funny and intelligent as she is on her TV show. Ms. Olson of all people best illustrates the power of HGTV, as her shows have made her a star of the interior design industry, and obviously one in which the big businesses that serve that industry see the relevance of her name attached to their goods. But in the end it's because of her design aesthetic that people hire her to do their homes, and not because she has a multitude of stuff with her name on it. All those things need to work in conjunction with one another to make a space beautiful, cohesive and reflective of the homeowner's personality and vision. It takes the interior designer to know and understand when and how to put it all together for a successful space.

So, what has HGTV done to us? It's a double-edged sword really, as on one side it makes for a more sophisticated client, someone who sees the need for reinvention in their space, and they can see through those TV programmes that there is a way to make it happen. On the flip side however, I perhaps think that people sometimes do believe that it could all be accomplished in an hour and that all the problems are easily solved. The truth is that the real business of interior design is, well, just that - a business - a tough and multifaceted one at that, but also a highly rewarding one.

I love seeing the reactions from clients when they see the completed space and I am lucky enough to work with a team of talented, hardworking people who understand the importance each other brings to the success of the project. Interior Design is a joy and it brings joy - I couldn't ask for a better job than that! Thanks to HGTV for spreading the word!

