

Decor Score: Grosgrain ribbon can be the ultimate embellishment

by *Rose_Bennett_Gilbert*

Q: I am a new bride, an immigrant who cannot take employment until I get my green card. I wish to spend time making our apartment nice. In my country, I learned to sew and make some handcrafts, but I need some ideas. Your newspaper stories often tell how to do pretty things. Perhaps you have ideas for me?

A: Many, many ideas from many sources. One of my latest favorites is a new book by an interior designer named John Loecke, who has been named one of America's top young designers. His book, called "Grosgrain IT'S CURTAINS FOR YOU - This designer used yards of grosgrain ribbon to customize plain curtains and pillows, and glamorize a coffee table. CNS Photo courtesy of Random House. Style" (Potter Craft), is all about his self-confessed "obsession" with grosgrain ribbons and the many clever ways you can use grosgrain to dress up a room. In fact, John says, he owes his career as an interior designer to grosgrain. Seems a college friend once asked him to perk up her apartment and he did it all with grosgrain ribbons so attractively his new career was launched.

In the photo we show here, John added crisscrosses of different color ribbons to store-bought plain curtains, dressed throw pillows with grosgrain, and used ribbons to trim both the lampshade and the coffee table.

These are all no-sew projects, according to the designer. His secrets are do-it-yourself materials you should be able to find at any craft store, including a coating called Mod Podge and a double-sided pressure-sensitive adhesive that comes in rolls, called Sealah Tape, Have fun, and who knows? By the time your green card comes through, you, too, may be ready for a career in design.

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Who says that lighting fixtures are to be seen by, but not seen?

Designers used to believe that only certain, noninvasive lamp shapes and shades were appropriate, among them, classics like urns, ginger jars and candlesticks. Wearing lamps shades in decorous shapes and subtle colors, the lamps themselves were supposed to blend into the background - one noticed the light, but not its source.

No longer. Walk the halls of any home furnishings show today, and you'll be dazzled - as I was at the recent High Point Furniture Market - by the, well, unfettered imagination of many lighting designers.

Some of the brighter ideas: California designer Cindy Ciskowski fabricated a hanging 48-inch-diameter drum shade of embossed and bronzed crocodile skin and lined it with a shock of crimson silk (yours for \$2,500). Lamp-maker to the stars - she's illuminated scenes in movies like "Somethings Got to Give" and TV shows, such as "Sex & the City" and "The Apprentice III" - Ciskowski also introduced hanging lights with double shades, say, French lace over a solid interior drum. Just for good measure, she then trimmed the whole fantasy with marabou feathers (\$1,800; www.cindyciskowski.com).

So cutting edge they were almost scary, DK Home of the Netherlands recast traditional crystal chandeliers in their "Fairy Tale" hanging lights, multiple circles of chrome hung with large drips of crystal (about \$3,400; www.dkhome.com). Then there was the amazing chandelier at Marge Carson: it resembled a rain shower of Swarovski crystal necklaces, caught high in the air, then dripping within inches of the table top below. Also available in black crystals; \$7,000 each (www.margecarson.com)

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