



The style of the curtain fabric should align with the interior design



The purpose of the window dressing includes its heat-retaining value

Get creative with the window dressing to light up your property



Ruth Noble There’s much to consider when it comes to window treatments for the home, from choosing blinds, shutters or curtains to the function, design, style and cost

Window dressings are both practical and aesthetic and it is worthwhile investing a decent amount of time into researching and planning the right design and style of window treatments for your property or project and a realistic budget for them. There is endless scope to get creative and the main points to consider include function, style, fabric and cost.

Functionally, curtains and blinds control the degree of light entering a property, offer privacy and retain heat, but the way a window is dressed can set a tone for the interior aesthetic of each room from understated to overly opulent and so window dressings should align with the interior style and period of the house.

Roller blinds
Roller blinds can be cut to any size. I recommend sheer roller blinds in kitchens and living rooms as they allow for privacy while still introducing a certain amount of light in when they are drawn.

I generally recommend black-out roller blinds in bedrooms and media rooms and screen blinds in bathrooms as they are more resistant to moisture than the other options.

Roller blinds can be operated manually or electrically, with the latter being most practical on larger window openings.

Roller blinds tend to be simple in style and can be fitted in a broad range of colours. They are inexpensive and can be produced and fitted quickly. I advise either white or warm white roller blinds as I consider them a functional addition rather than a design feature.

If they are being installed without curtains, consider incorporating a small pelmet to the top of the roller blind to conceal the top mechanism of the blind.

Venetian blinds and shutters
Venetian blinds or interior shutters also control the light coming into the space and enable privacy, but are more bulky and conspicuous. They are more of a design feature within the room.

I recommend Venetian blinds or New England shutters in bathrooms as they are resistant to moisture, easy to clean and offer a good degree of privacy.

Shutters on sash windows in period homes



Blinds can add aesthetic value to a room, bringing both colour and texture to the space



Roman blinds tend to be more cost-effective than curtains as they require less fabric to make



Layering a sheer curtain behind a fabric curtain adds privacy, softens the light and lends a decorative effect to the room, although it's more costly as it involves installing double tracks or poles and double the quantity of fabric; a blind can be used similarly behind curtains at less expense

are really effective for eliminating the light completely.

Roman blinds
Fabric Roman blinds are effective when installed on smaller window openings. They introduce colour and detail to a space and can be fitted either inside or outside the recess of the window. I recommend fitting them on the outside of the recess where possible to allow for more light to stream into the room while the blinds are open. Fabric Roman blinds are more cost-effective than curtains as they require less fabric to make. They can be lined with blackout fabric for bedrooms or with thicker lining to allow for a fuller effect in living rooms and they can be either electrically or manually operated.

I do not recommend them for wide or very large window openings as they will not function as well as curtains. They do, however, suit smaller rooms or children's bedrooms as their simpler design allows you to maximise the floor and wall space within the rooms.

The cost of Roman blinds includes the fabric, the mechanism, production and installation. They generally take about four to six weeks for production. I will often fit a roller blind in the window recess beneath a Roman blind for dual functionality and a nice layered effect.

Curtains
The style of tracks, poles and curtain fabrics should align with the interior style of the house and run the gamut of simple and understated to overly opulent and decorative.

It is important to keep in mind the purpose of the window dressing: is it being installed to add aesthetic value or to eliminate light, allowing for privacy and retaining heat? Simple wall-mounted curtain tracks are effective where there is a large sliding door or window opening in place. I recommend a light linen or sheer fabric with a simple pencil or pinch pleat.

Curtain poles or fabric pelmets are often used for more traditional interior schemes. Decorative wall-mounted poles with patterned fabric curtains can make a statement in a period home where the high ceilings can carry a fuller, more decorative, dramatic or opulent design.

Layering a sheer curtain behind a fabric curtain allows for privacy, reduces harsh light and lends a decorative effect to the room. It is a more expensive option as it involves double tracks/poles and double the quantity of fabric.

The possibilities with window dressings are endless. My advice is to do your research, consider style, function, practicality and budget and make sure they complement the existing decor.

Fabric, tracks, poles, bespoke blinds and curtains, trimming and beading can be ordered from and fitted by Ruth Noble Interiors.

For more inspiration, follow Noble on Instagram: @ruthnobleinteriors or visit: ruthnobleinteriors.com.



Left: rare early 18th century devotional penal cross carved in yew, €5,000-€7,000; right: early 19th century painted wide pine dresser, €3,000-€4,000



Banshees of Inisher

Irish traditional furniture is showcased at the upcoming sale of 269 lots, some of which were used in the internationally acclaimed film



Philip Carton
Fine Arts

There are certain moments in popular culture which cause us to pause, reflect and reassess our Irishness, one such recent moment being the phenomenal success of The Banshees of Inisherin. Incidentally, it has created a mini boom for the chunky Aran sweater

and now the spotlight shines on vernacular furniture.

On April 12, Adam's of Stephen's Green presents its first Irish Vernacular auction of 269 curated items including over a dozen pieces which featured in the Oscar-nominated movie.

Adam's describes the sale as focusing on traditional country-made furniture,

pottery, metalwork, treen (or antique wooden products), and collectables together with a small selection of Irish glass and silverware to showcase wonderful Irish craftsmanship – and this it most certainly does.

The National Museum of Ireland holds a significant collection of Irish vernacular furniture and notes it was only from the late 18th century, when circumstances of the peasantry improved slightly, together with an increase in the number of skilled craftsmen and materials, that a distinctive functional style was established, giving rise to the famed Irish dresser and hedge chairs.

Religious and devotional artefacts were also an integral part of vernacular design, an early example being Lot 10, a rare penal cross carved in yew wood, dated to 1716 (€5,000 –€7,000).

Meet the artist: Sinéad Ní Mhaonaigh

Sinéad Ní Mhaonaigh graduated with a BA in Fine Art Painting from Dublin Institute of Technology in 2001. In 2010 she was the recipient of the Hennessy Craig Scholarship and was awarded The Hotron Award 2019 by Visual Carlow for outstanding work. She was shortlisted for the Marmite Prize for Painting 2016, and the John Moores Painting Prize 2018.

Ní Mhaonaigh is represented by the Kevin Kavanaugh Gallery, Dublin, and 532 Gallery Thomas Jaekel, New York. She was recently elected a member of the RHA.



Award-winning artist Sinéad Ní Mhaonaigh Amelia Stein

At her recent solo exhibition at Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, titled Deep Mapping: Unseen Landscapes, Ní Mhaonaigh presented a series of new paintings that characteristically feature prominent elements of the built environment: vernacular structures, houses, factories, sheds.

As noted in the exhibition essay, over time some of these buildings have been demolished, thus reframing the durational function of painting as one of recording a landscape in flux.

The works portray absent forms in a moment prior to their erasure. However, they also trace the enduring hum of subatomic particles, or the ways in which enigmatic shadows continue to haunt the horizon. Movingly, the artist describes this kind of spatial and temporal dislocation as “working with an ever-present void”.

See: sineadnimhaonaigh.com



Monument No 2, Sinéad Ní Mhaonaigh



Composition Series No 2, Sinéad Ní Mhaonaigh Gillian Buckley

A place that means a lot to me
The Kevin Kavanaugh Gallery and the Royal Hibernian Academy. Both are hives of activity and central to my life as an artist. The RHA is currently celebrating 200 years and under our first female president, Dr Abigail O'Brien PRHA, female members will exhibit in the National Gallery of Ireland this summer, in an exhibition titled It Took a Century: Women Artists and the RHA.

My favourite space at home
My studio, which is a purpose-built workspace in my back garden in Co Wicklow.

regular basis helped ground me in my professional practice – they were very encouraging and supportive.

I am currently reading
Making Way by Theo Dorgan.

I have a collection of...
Plants that are suffering. I try everything, even playing them music, but sadly they are not thriving. The walls are happy with much-loved works by Elaine Byrne, Dermot Seymour, Jackie Nickerson, Patrick Graham, Amelia Stein, Pat Hall, Mick O'Dea, Diana Copperwhite, Geraldine O'Neill and Eddie Kennedy.

An object I would never part with
A framed print of the poem, The Solace of Artemis by Paula Meehan, which is a treasured gift from Mary Clayton and Niall MacMonagle.

An artist whose work I would collect if I could
Liliane Tomasko, Isabel Nolan, Richard Gorman and Tamsin Snow.

The best piece of advice I ever received
I'm not telling. James Hanley has on many occasions parted with his wisdom – too many to recount to be honest. I call him the Oracle.