

EXPERT ADVICE

Photo Finish

How to create a gallery

FAMILY PHOTO displays are often a decorative afterthought. Both the pictures and frames tend to be a hodgepodge of gifts and dated keepsakes. Finding a balance between sentimental images and artistic presentation can be daunting. Kennesaw-based designers Joann Kandrac and Kelly Kole often create photo galleries for their clients. Below are some of their tips. —BETSY RILEY

► **A gallery wall should have the visual impact of a single, united piece of art.** Keep spaces between pieces tight and tie them together with similar framing styles. Moldings should be complementary but not necessarily identical; for example, mix silvery tones with bleached driftwood. Mats, on the other hand, should be the same color (preferably neutral), though you can “float” a few items between glass panes for variety.

► **Vary compositions for a more**

dynamic presentation. Include candid and action shots, editing out unnecessary backgrounds. Anchor the wall with a large, intriguing, or significant piece in the center.

► **Plan your arrangement first, then select the photographs.** Determine how many horizontal and vertical images you can use (be sure to include a mix) and at what dimensions, then size the images accordingly. Use a scanner to adjust vintage photos.



Most often the designers suggest reprinting all pictures in black and white—luster finish, not gloss—for a more unified, contemporary appearance.

► **Include artwork and three-dimen-**

sional keepsakes. A gallery wall will have more visual impact with a few non-photographic objects in the mix. Shadowboxes, silhouettes, children’s artwork, and graphic elements like wooden letters can all add interest.

Note: These elements don’t have to match the overall color scheme.

► **Use both custom and ready-made frames.** The stock pieces not only save you money but allow you to easily update the display with new

photographs in the future.

► **Map out an entire gallery wall before hanging the first object.** Cut craft paper to different sizes and use painters tape to test your composition on the wall. ■

What Not to Do

Embarrassing family photographs have become so legendary that they’ve spawned a popular blog and book series—including a spinoff dedicated just to holiday geekiness (awkwardfamilyphotos.com). We asked designers Kole and Kandrac how to make sure this year’s mementos don’t become tomorrow’s Tumblr.



DON’T OVERTHINK GROUP POSES
More natural, candid interaction often makes for more interesting photographs.



DON’T OVERMATCH OUTFITS
Avoid patterns, and provide loose direction for clothing choices—such as dark bottoms and light tops.



AVOID EXTREME FASHION
“I like to see people’s personalities,” says Kole. “But remember, the picture may be on the wall for twenty years.”

COURTESY OF AWKWARDFAMILYPHOTOS