

DESIGN & DECORATING

THAT’S DEBATABLE

It’s Fine on Moccasins, But Is Fringe An Asset to Décor?

YES Fringe, the feathery trimming that migrates in and out of fashion, is showing up again in interiors. Why? For the same reason it’s all over the runway, said Moscow- and New York-based designer Kirill Istomin: “It can communicate a feeling of playfulness.” Mr. Istomin often edges a sofa or slipper chair in subtly tinted fringe, a delicate complement. For a more potent effect, he suggests outlining cleanly designed pieces with high-contrast trim (say, a simple blue velvet fringe with an opium red mane). On her blog Trim Queen, trimmings designer Jana Plantina Phipps champions examples of really radical fringe, such as an upholstered bench by Kelly Hoppen for Century Furniture dripping long strands of ball chain. “You can see through to the legs of the piece and it’s really sexy,” she said. She advises using fringe made with matte fibers like linen and raffia, as opposed to the traditional glossy silk or rayon, for a more sophisticated, artisanal touch. How much fringe is too much? “Passementerie is jewelry,” Mr. Istomin said, using the French term for fancy trimmings. “It’s all about the right amount.” As Ms. Plantina Phipps cautions, it shouldn’t “look shaggy.”

NO Unless you’re careful, fringe can date or clutter a room, say decorators who shy away from the trimming. Use too much, or a relentlessly ornate variety, and it can appear as if you look to frontier bordellos or the Addams Family for design inspiration. Susie Coelho, author of “Everyday Styling,” said she once festooned her homes in fringe, but got rid of it when she shifted to a sparer and easier-to-maintain decorating style. “Fringe collects a lot of dust. It frays,” she pointed out. Another strike against fringe is its visual heaviness. Los Angeles-based designer Madeline Stuart is especially averse to bulging tufts of moss fringe, a particularly fluffy sort which she associates with the 1980s. Not only is it clumsy, she said, “it now seems so dated that it can’t even be used ironically.” Robert Brown, an Atlanta designer who describes his style as clean and functional, warned that fringed couches, curtains and pillows distract the eye. He said he keeps textiles low-key so they don’t hog more attention than he thinks they merit: “I let fabrics be a background for the more important parts of the room, such as art.” —Julie Lasky



LEADING EDGE Decorators like Kirill Istomin, who applied Samuel & Sons’ bullion trim to this sofa, are embracing the ornamental aspects of fringe. Others find it too fussy.



TRENDING TRIMS // FOUR LOVE-THEM-OR-HATE-THEM OPTIONS

- 1 Kravet Pom Pom Fringe, \$157 per yard, D&D Building, 212-759-5408
- 2 Schumacher by Mary McDonald Hula Linen Fringe, price upon request, Schumacher, 800-523-1200
- 3 Two-Inch Chelsea Brush Fringe Performance Trim, \$40 per yard (five yard minimum), Kerry Joyce Textiles, 323-660-4442
- 4 Zoffany Tassel & Bead Fringe, \$175 per yard, D&D Building, 212-759-5408



FLOWER SCHOOL



THE ARRANGEMENT

NORTHERN WHITES

Nostalgic for home around the holidays, Canadian-born floral designer **Lindsey Taylor** riffs on countryman Lawren Stewart Harris’s ‘The Old Stump’

■ **AS A CANADIAN** living in New York, I get a little homesick during the holidays. So I was happy to learn of “The Idea of the North,” an exhibition of paintings by Canadian Lawren Stewart Harris at Los Angeles’s Hammer Museum. Harris (1885-1970) was a founding member of the Group of Seven, Canadian landscape painters who documented the country’s wilderness in a modern, expressive style in the ’20s and ’30s. They’re heroes to Canadians, and it was a no-brainer to base December’s arrangement on “The Old Stump” (1926), one of Harris’s works. His lonely tree stump in its frigid landscape embodies the sense of isolation we all feel at times. For me, it also recalls the snowy holidays of my youth, when the family hunkered down at our week-end getaway, a farm an hour outside of bustling Toronto, welcoming a slower, more pensive, insular life. I chose a footed porcelain

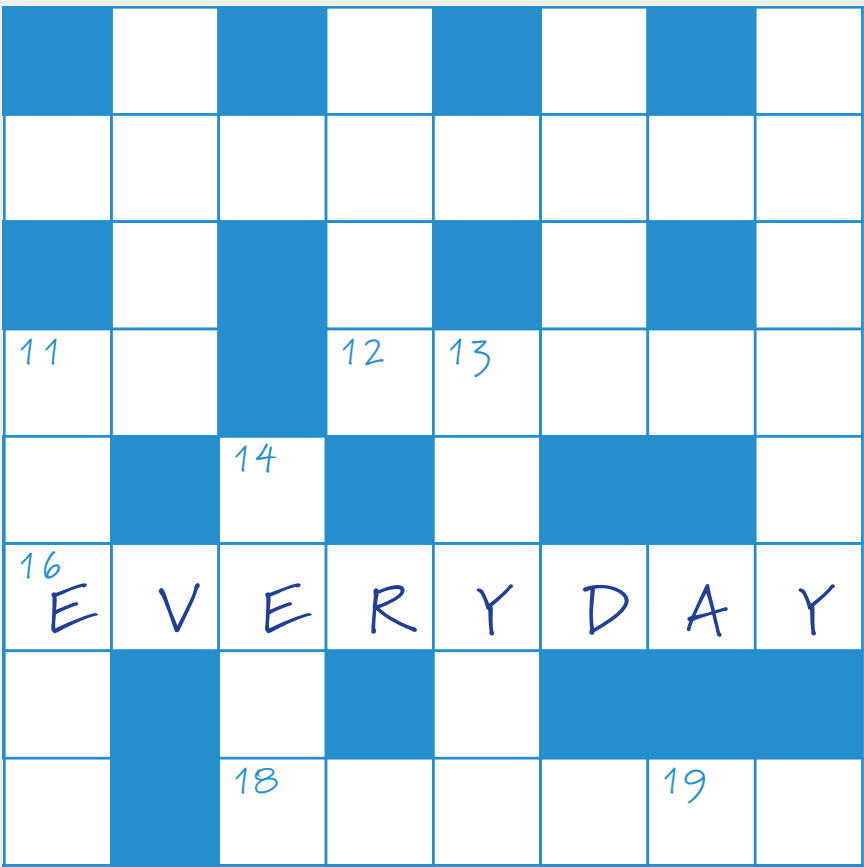


THE INSPIRATION

Lawren Stewart Harris’s 1926 painting “The Old Stump” (above) was the jumping-off point for a wintry bouquet of carnations, lamb’s ears and eucalyptus seed pods (top). *Eeos Large Bowl, \$284, KleinReid, 718-937-3828*

bowl for its icy blue-gray glaze. White carnations and amaryllis stand in for the brooding clouds while the silver of the oversize lamb’s ears, as vertical as the stump, and branches of eucalyptus seedpods add more frosty

tones. For the deep hues of the earth, I used bronzy purple cuttings of *Physocarpus ‘Diablo’* and cherry-laurel leaves, which also offer a vibrant contrast to the decay-evoking seedpods and dried *Hydrangea ‘Limelight.’*



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