Brave
HEART

Far From Timid's Alona Elkayam reveals how to create bold rooms with minimalist sensibility.

By Jennifer Barger // Photography by Greg Powers

It's wonderful to have a vision, whether it includes minimalist lines and bright abstract prints or hip-hop music and midcentury-modern furniture by names like Eames.

Designer and image-maker Alona Elkayam delights in such edgy mashups in her Northwest DC apartment and downtown work studio, where she dreams up ideas for her new home decor, art and lifestyle line, Far From Timid (farfromtimid.com). "The name comes from lyrics in a Biggie Smalls song," says Elkayam. "It's meant to inspire people to be bold."

The idea for Elkayam's brand is both simple and innovative. She designs prints and patterns spurred by street art, song lyrics and architecture, then offers the geometric, bright designs on luxurious wall canvases, throw pillows, shirts and more. Everything is produced on demand, keeping the experience exclusive. "I'm a minimalist at heart, but these patterns are how I scream and have fun," she says.

In her own home, that means lots of sleek, white furniture spiked with items and art in rainbow hues. "You need some quiet and calm, but the prints and colors provide contrast," says Elkayam, "Patterns are like vibrations; they're very spiritual and add so much to a room."
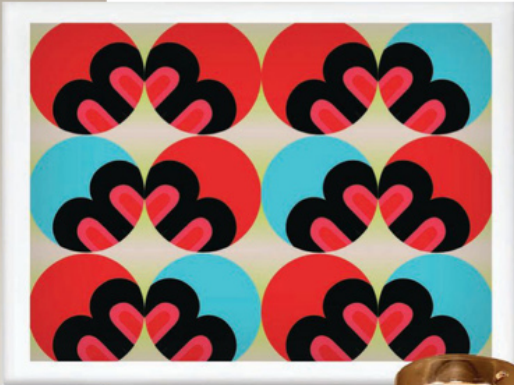
To master the yin and yang of such a brave and modern style, Elkayam recommends starting with just a hint of pattern. "Maybe you pull a single color from a print and pair it with something like a rug that's in a similar hue, but not matchy-matchy," she says. "That way, your mind's eye can wander."

She's also a fan of corralling meaningful objects—an Elvis poker chip, business cards, knickknacks in Lucite trays. She'll change out the items every month or so. "My friends come over and can't wait to see what's next," she laughs. Here are her tips for getting the mix right in your home.

PATTERN PLAYFUL
"I'm obsessed with 1950s patterns from Eames and Girard," says Elkayam. "This pattern I designed is simple, sophisticated and so much fun." $525, "Neural Pinball Traffic" framed print, Far From Timid, farfromtimid.com

SPOTLIGHT CHIC
"I wake up happy every day. One way to maintain that good mood is great lighting, and a lot of it," says Elkayam. "This ceiling light is not only decorative, but it also gives off a lot of soft light. And for your dinner party, dim it and be done." $1,600, Urban Loft, Bethesda, urbanloft.com

WORKSPACE STATION
"Having a space where you can think and create is important to an artist and designer, but I want it in my living room because that's who I am." $1,100, Urban Essentials, downtown, urbanessentials.weebly.com

TOUGH PUFF
"I love it when rock 'n' roll meets craft," says Elkayam. "Having pieces like this pillow in your home are conversation starters." $165, Jonathan Adler, Georgetown, jonathanadler.com

COLOR WHEEL
Alona Elkayam's home studio showcases her aesthetic of chic lines and bountiful pops of color.

LOUNGE WIZARD
"This sofa is colorful and clean-lined, and if you love having family and friends stay over like I do, it's also available as a sleeper," says Elkayam. $3,500, Design Within Reach, Georgetown, dwr.com

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