



PHOTO: COURTESY HOUSE MERAKI INTERIOR DESIGN

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AVIDLIFESTYLE: *How do you go about putting together a collection of items that are not similar in size or scale, such as pottery?*

ADRIELE GRAHAM: I don't think everything has to match, but certain things do complement each other. Look at your collection and try to group items that have a similar feeling to create what we call small vignettes. Pairing some things with a similar feel but also having contrast in height is important. Put taller items in the back with something a little shorter and a lot shorter in front.

AL: *What suggestions do you have for a collection of small items?*

AG: Small things can get lost and look somewhat tchotchke-ish if they aren't correctly displayed. Group them in a tray or a small glass box. And then instead of it looking like 15 tiny little things, the weight is really in that tray or the box. And on a different level of inspection, you then get to see each piece layered in. Our client inherited these small animal figurines about one inch by one inch. And they were lost because they were just scattered. By bringing them together and putting them on a beautiful tray, we were able to highlight them.

AL: *How do you suggest putting together a display of books in a more exciting way than all standing up on a bookshelf?*

AG: One client loved to travel and create picture books of all her travels, but she had all of them out, which was very overwhelming. So, when dealing with some extensive collections, it's worth acknowledging what space you have to use for display. For her collection of those books, we did two things. We featured two front books on plate stands on a bookshelf. And we put a couple behind it, too, so they could have some weight. In addition, we put several photo books in a magazine rack. This way, she still had easy access to them. And then, the idea with the plate stands was that she would rotate out which books she wanted to feature.

AL: *Are there some collection organizing rules of thumb you suggest?*

AG: Vignette items—group certain items together and give them space. Many people are prone to filling the entire shelf space, which feels overwhelming. You want your items to have some room to breathe. When looking at shelf space, you should only be filling about 60 percent and leaving 40 percent to put gaps between items. This allows your eyes to be able to focus on those different vignettes. ✨