

Colors That Shout

By TIM McKEOUGH OCT. 9, 2012



BRIGHT LIGHTS Jamie Drake favors the Duchess satin throw pillows in various hues at Wolf Home in the Flatiron District; \$125 each, (800) 220-1893, wolfhomeny.com. Andrea Mohin/The New York Times

FOR as long as Jamie Drake can remember, he has loved color.

As a child, he experimented with various color combinations by making silk-screens, paintings and tissue-paper collages. “That fascination with color and its juxtaposition is what I’ve taken from my childhood into my adult life,” he said.

Today, as an interior designer with high-profile clients like Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, he is known for his audacious use of color. A Jamie Drake interior might have bright turquoise draperies, walls painted a sunny yellow or upholstery in pink and purple — or maybe all of the above.

For a while, his passion for color extended to clothing as well. Mr. Drake, now 55, said that he “had a closet filled with pink, purple, jade green, Tiffany blue and lime colored suits.”

But “as my hair went grayer, my wardrobe went more black, white and silver.”

Still, he often uses a tiny hit to brighten up an outfit. During a recent meeting, he sported a pocket square he described as the shade of “a sunlit Caribbean Sea.”

In a similar way, he noted, a single brightly colored piece of furniture or decorative accessory can enliven a sedate room. “It’s the sense of surprise,” he said. “It wakes you up.”

Throw pillows are a good place to start. At Wolf Home, in the Flatiron district, Mr. Drake admired the Duchess satin pillows, which come in a range of colors and have a simple, elegant design, without embroidery or piping. “I have a few in my own apartment,” he said. “The colors are so saturated.”

In Chelsea, at 21st Twenty First, he was impressed with the Semainier by RU Edition, a seven-drawer cabinet clad in pieces of repurposed window frame painted lime green. “It’s a magical cabinet,” he said. The color would make it the focal point of almost any room, he added, though it would be especially nice “in a foyer, with scarves and gloves for each day of the week.”

He also liked the KIT Chair by Maurice Marty, with its “vivid plum” epoxy finish and perforated steel components and visible bolts that made it like an “Erector Set for adults,” he said. “I’d love to see a pair of these on either side of a console. It would say, ‘This apartment is going to be full of surprises.’”

And at the Jonathan Adler store in SoHo, Mr. Drake found vivid colors everywhere he looked. “This is just a nice, happy place to shop,” he said.

He was particularly attracted to the fiery orange of the large Okura Kidney coffee table, which “takes the classic ’50s shape and puts a surprise on top,” he said.

Is that his favorite color? Surely, he must have a preference, the reporter speculated.

“I couldn’t possibly pick a favorite color,” Mr. Drake said. “That would be like picking your favorite child.”
