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HOMIE

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Art &
architecture

Gallery Crawl:
A tour of local exhibitions

Inside the home of artist Stephen Wilson

Contributor

BUILDING A
BETTER HOME



M A R Y
L U D E M A N N



THROUGH
THE
CAMERA'S
EYE

Send me your inspiration pictures,” I say. It’s what I request of each client to help give me a starting point for their new home design. An array of Pinterest boards, Instagram screenshots, and Houzz ideabooks pour in, full of beautiful photos of stunning homes with perfect styling. A virtual flood of design ideas, the possibilities are endless. The inexhaustible design potential for some can become entirely overwhelming, and it’s my task to discover what’s drawing my client to each of those photos. In my experience, often, it’s an emotional attraction to a photo, not necessarily an architectural component they would like to incorporate.

I’ve found that the allure is often the result of excellent photography and well-balanced styling. Good overall design and workmanship play a critical role. But to capture the overall feel of a space, to draw people to that space, top-notch photography and photo styling is imperative. How a space actually feels in person is not the same as it feels in a photo. A photo must capture the feeling of the space as well or better than the actual physical space itself. Photography can either elevate a space or downgrade it.

In my line of work, it is essential to have good photos to showcase our work and win new business. New clients need to see a sampling of work, and as we can’t continuously parade potential clients through previous client’s custom homes, photography is the next best thing. While it’s easy to understand why good lighting and crisp pictures are essential, I think most people don’t understand how influential photo styling is for a noteworthy shot. Recently I had the pleasure of working with Kendra Surface, a professional photo stylist, and wow what a difference it made!





Surface is the first to tell you that she is not an interior designer. “Interior designers design spaces for the human eye. [She] designs spaces for the camera’s eye.” As a photo stylist, her main job is to see what the camera sees, and her goal is to highlight her client’s talent. She adds elements of color and proper placement of props to best showcase what is being photographed. She explains that people are drawn to images that have elements they can relate to, such as a blanket softly thrown over a chair or a pair of shoes tossed about on the floor. In each shot, she tries to bring warmth and life into a space. “Flowers are an essential part of photo styling,” Surface says. “Everybody loves flowers. They are the best way to balance the space, give a pop of color, and add life to an image.”

And all those blankets and flowers, she brings them right to your space! She arrives bright and early to each shoot well-armed in a midsize SUV loaded to the gills with more props and flowers than you ever knew you needed. Once unloaded she gets right to work — a mini-hurricane of her various styling props and accessories swirl together with yours. Hours later,



alongside uber talented photographer Brie Williams, voila — my photos have life and feeling. Oh, and that emotional attraction to a photo that I mentioned earlier, thanks to Surface and Williams’ combined super talents, it’s there. And it makes my beautiful tile and hardwoods and cabinetry look even better!◆

Using her trademark blend of tradition and innovation, New Old co-founder Mary Ludemann has been designing and building dream homes for over a decade. To find out how she can bring your ideal home from a dream to a reality, visit www.newold.com, call 704-975-3723 or email building@newold.com.