

Bricks & Mortar

INTERIORS

Bookcase inspiration — make space for an Instagram-worthy shelfie

How you style your favourite reading matter can change a room's look



The modular nature of these Canaletto units by Ligne Roset means you can expand your storage and display space to accommodate a growing collection

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The humble book has become the No 1 celebrity accessory of 2019. The actress Gwyneth Paltrow caused eyebrows to be raised in August when it emerged that she had hired a book curator to add “five or six hundred more books” to her Los Angeles home. This year the supermodel sisters Bella and Gigi Hadid made headlines when they were accused of using books as fashion accessories — Bella with Stephen King’s *The Outsider*, while Gigi toted *The Stranger* by Albert Camus.

While sales of printed books have dipped slightly this year, they accounted for more than 80 per cent of the £3.6 billion combined print and digital book market in the UK last year, according to the Publishers Association. “People still love physical books,” says Stephen Lotinga, the chief executive of the Publishers Association. “[This] is a trend halt. Sales are still up 8 per cent over the past five years.”

So why the renaissance of the physical book? “In an age when everything is digital it’s a beautiful thing to have something tangible to hold in your hand,” says Irene Gunter, the founder of the interior design studio Gunter & Co. Books give an interior a lived-in feeling and a flash of personality. The educational reformer Horace Mann once said: “A house without books is like a room without windows.” A quiet, book-filled nook gives the opportunity to slow down from our lifestyles.



Group books by colour for visual impact

“Displaying books has become fashionable as part of the rise of the new eclecticism,” says Victoria Wormsley of French-Brooks Interiors, a design studio in South Kensington, west London. “People are enjoying the pleasures of colour and collecting, turning away from the mass-produced and towards older, handmade pieces and a layered style.”

Instagram is changing the way books are displayed, consumed and marketed. There are more than 35.7 million posts tagged with the hashtag #bookstagram, the corner of Instagram where bookworms post eye-catching images of their favourite stories and latest novel recommendations, while the #shelfie — displays of books, artwork and other beautiful objects — has racked up 1.7 million posts. Martha Roberts, the author of the book *Shelfie*, says: “Where selfies are a very obvious, overt expression of self, shelfies also tell people about us and what makes us tick, but in a less conspicuous, possibly narcissistic, way. How we style our shelfies is individual. One person’s maximalist ‘embrace the clutter’ arrangement is another person’s minimalist hell.”



Built-in shelving provides plenty of storage space from K&H Design

The look is about making a statement, even in the smallest of spaces. “Bookcases don’t need to be very deep for a big visual impact,” Wormsley says. “A wall of vintage Penguins with their trademark orange covers will only need shelves 15cm deep.”