

A CONSCIOUS STEP TOWARDS THE GLOBAL FUTURE OF MINIMALISM

BY KARLO STA. CRUZ



DESIGNER: ALIX LAWSON
LOCATION: DUBAI

For London-based Interior Designer Alix Lawson, the most effective method of jumpstarting the creative process begins with one simple task-- escaping a cramped, isolating indoor space for a wandering walk. And so, with just a few strides down the block and a couple breaths of revitalizing fresh air, the pesky mental clutter from living, working, and existing in the same repetitive space for the past year, completely vanishes. Shortly after, Lawson says she begins to see words in her head, and, subsequently, the big jigsaw puzzle of designing a space unfolds.

In, fact, this creative-block panacea inspired me to wondrously pace through the downtown sector of Red Bank, relentlessly seeking inspiration for my own word puzzle. There's just a simplicity with re-familiarizing with nature.

Alix Lawson's philosophy of appreciating the outdoor, simplicity of the environment comes at an appropriate time with the current COVID-19 global pandemic. With the mounds of physical and mental clutter from the makeshift WFH office to the monotony of existing in the same space, Alix Lawson's soothing simplicity in conscious minimalism reflects the wants, needs, and dreams of the current isolating era and beyond.

"Conscious minimalism reimagines the way we construct a space, adapting our respective environment and our tailored needs with the clarity of less. I like to think of it as reducing the blaring volume while bolstering the sound quality," said Lawson, the prestigious creative mind behind her eponymous interior design company, with nearly 20 years of extensive industry experience all over Europe, Asia, and her homeland of Australia.

Did I mention Lawson was nearly 3,500 miles away across the Atlantic in the United Kingdom during our Zoom call at 11 in the morning EST and, well, 4 PM by her?

Alix Lawson valiantly envisions the global future of modern, luxury interior design as an iteration of conscious minimalism, a rejection to loud and opulent design in favor of quiet thoughtfulness and conscious steps towards simplicity. Lawson advocates for an intentional approach to constructing a room, referencing the environmental factors like climate, lighting, and geographical location.

Think of a carefully curated selection of bright white, naturally painted walls defining the endless infinity of a room. Close your eyes and imagine an ethereal room seamlessly incorporating light stone, airy linen, and rattan with the captivating, whirling knots of a wooden furniture piece. And reference the conscious relation to the environment and building-style, whether the brisk atmosphere of a wintry London townhouse or the endless, arid, palm oasis-dream of Dubai Hills. Now you've consciously entered the realm of minimalism.

With the extensive toolbox of bright and neutral white paints and a library of sleek furniture combined with the natural elements of the surrounding environment, Lawson's approach involves a proactive commitment to less is more. Lawson draws on a mix of Japanese, Australian, and Scandinavian design, or "Japandi" style. Each puzzle piece provides a clear spatial and functional purpose.

Born and raised within the salt-air coast of Queensland, Australia, Alix Lawson combines her affinity for the outdoor landscape with an innate talent for piecing together a space. Drawing direct inspiration from a childhood immersed in the prolific work of Queensland's household architect Geoffrey Pie, Lawson's appreciation for summoning the outdoors in her interior designs comes almost naturally. The insights of the whimsical land bordering the cerulean, coral sea juxtaposed by the vast, rusted desert is omnipresent in her prolific designs.

Shortly afterwards, Lawson crossed the globe to the United Kingdom where she classically studied design and architecture at the distinguished Inchbald School of Design based in London. Lawson describes her early career with a "purist minimalist" vision, and after thriving in the industry for nearly 20 years, the accomplished designer revisited her authentic ideals with her own company, Alix Lawson Interior Design.

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Wondrously exemplified in her “Dubai Hills” project, Lawson’s tailored approach to a space’s climate and architectural components seamlessly blends with her conscious minimalist touches. From there, the designer adapts the needs of her clients, woven into the world of simplicity. Lawson’s Dubai Hills design brought “Bottega Veneta” in the mystical context of the desert, capturing the glamorous side of the prominent city with the naturalistic homage to the desert-scape. The purified white walls mirror the sandy elements of the outdoors while introducing the verdant, greens from the native palms.

For a more cohesive work-from-home space, Lawson recommends going digital when possible, separating the “work” and “home” elements accordingly. A separate study room for work enables a compartmentalized approach, however, a cabinet or storage unit to hide equipment works as well. Combined with a fresh coat of sleek white paint, a space effortlessly elevates. “Paint” by Alix Lawson cleverly curates a selection of five white paints to simplify the tedious process of choosing the perfect shade.

Yet, after completing a project, Alix Lawson perceives conscious minimalism as a momentous cultural movement of stripped-back design and an integration of more natural elements. Although popularized among industry leaders, simplistic design appears in high street settings, reflecting the rising relevance into popular culture in the future. In fact, if the designer could travel to any time period of design, it would be the future.



“With a conscious step towards minimalism, I can only imagine high-tech buildings woven into their respective environments in response to climate change. Perhaps more reflective outer panels for buildings to reduce the prominence of carbon-footprint exhaustive air condition? Technology continues to materialize the framework of modernist design,” said Lawson.

Placed in the context of the recent lifestyle changes as a result of the pandemic, conscious minimalism design fosters a more intentional approach to living. And so, the once fleeting, finite, and fast-paced modern city life finally hit a wall with impending lockdowns, accelerating the need to slow down even more. Lawson’s distinctive simplistic design combined with the outdoors reaffirms a cultural reset towards slow, intentional moves.

“The calm we pursue in retreats and detoxes begins in the home. The choice of materials, lighting, finishes and furniture you surround yourself with, offer you peace and quiet from the world.”