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Freddy Grant from  
Bluethumb.  
Photography by  
Breeana Dunbar.  
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sheeting product and render over it so it looks like a troweled-on cement that looks like a concrete panel," she says. Natural stone slabs, like limestone or marble, can take your home to the next level. "These materials add movement; they are nature's artwork and you don't need to hang anything else on the wall," says Marie.

Clever and innovative use of timber panelling on walling creates clean lines and a subtle sophistication. Marie says that when designing cabinetry, where that cabinetry interfaces with a wall, one option is to disguise the plaster wall in the same finish as the cabinetry. "When you use one material on a wall it gives the space a seamless, elegant look," she shares.

Marie adds that decorative effects like recessed sections in walls and cut-outs to hold treasured curios or art should also be considered. "They add depth, a three-dimensional effect and become a feature or talking point," she says.

### FLOORING THAT DAZZLES

The right flooring can anchor the overall look and feel of your home. From concrete to tiles, vinyl planks and timber, flooring options have never been so diverse and varied. Concrete flooring is cool underfoot and very contemporary. It has a commanding presence in a space, but it also possesses a chameleon-like quality and blends with any look. Its strength as a flooring product is linked to its durability, and it's very low maintenance.

Hardwood timber is, hard-wearing and beautiful, adding a warmth you can feel from the ground up. Solid timber flooring might come with a heftier price tag than its composite counterparts, but it is timeless. Engineered timber, laminate or vinyl planks are easy to install and virtually maintenance-free, and they are available in many colours and board sizes.

Tile flooring has been popular for decades; hard-wearing, easy-care tiles stand the test of time. What is new in tiles is their ability to emulate other products, for example timber. Whether your style is coastal, eclectic, bohemian, classic or modern, there is a tile to match your style.

### ILLUMINATE TO IMPRESS

Lighting is an integral component of home design. Tabbi Long, lighting designer from Beacon Lighting, says well-designed spaces are lit in a way that is unique and individualised to the user and to the





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washes down the walls. “There are many downlights that do this, from fully recessed downlights to gimbal or spot options. This look can also be achieved with track lighting, whereby the track heads can be pointed at the walls,” says Tabbi. She adds that there is also a shift towards organic, natural or raw materials being used in pendants, lamps and homewares. “Fittings that have shades made from cane, seagrass or bamboo, unrefined organic beading, timbers, concrete and stone are extremely popular,” she shares.

### CREATE A GALLERY WALL

If you’ve always loved the idea of a gallery wall but have been a little hesitant to start one, Freddy Grant from Bluethumb has some tips to inspire you to get started. “This is the fun part, but also the hardest,” says Freddy. “Let go of familiar friendships, artworks that have been together for years and start from scratch. It’s time to get clinical.”

Freddy suggests looking for groups with a common thread — “works by the same artist, complementary colours, or a particular hue throughout,” he advises. When deciding on the layout, Freddy suggests playing with how you’re going to hang your art on the floor by juxtaposing matching and complementary colours. “Experiment with spacing and trying different overall shapes,” he says. “You’ll know when it’s right. Trust your instincts. Unless your artworks are exactly the same size, it’s better to space asymmetrically. This also makes it easier to keep adding to over the years.”

Freddy says he usually starts with three or four core artworks. “This anchors the look and then I add to them as I buy more art,” he says. According to Freddy, it’s OK to mix up frames on a gallery wall. “I enjoy finding bargain frames. Many framers sell great-quality frames made of offcuts at heavily discounted prices,” he says. “This look works particularly well if you have a theme, like portraits, or similar colours running throughout your gallery wall. The general rule of thumb is to hang art so the centre is at eye level (approximately 145cm). So think of groups as one artwork and make the centre of your gallery wall eye level.”

Freddy also suggests avoiding sticky picture-hanging strips for heavy artworks. “Buy a stud finder (you can get a cheap one at Bunnings) and either nail a hook or drill a screw into a stud. If there isn’t a stud where you want to hang art, use plasterboard anchors with a screw to give good support or buy special plaster hooks that have multiple small nails. It’s all easier than it sounds. Promise!” **HD**