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OFFICE SPACE

A local designer details how to create a work area that perfectly suits your personal style.

BY SOMER FLAHERTY

WHETHER YOU'RE STUCK IN A CITY of cubicles, or your at-home work area provides views of the Pacific, your office environment can be just as creative as you are. For interior designer Anna Nguyen-Shiwlall of local firm 27 Diamonds, the space has to be "effective while still constantly inspiring its occupant."

If you're redesigning your current workspace, begin by clearing off your cluttered desk. Get an organization system, whether it's with files or movable storage carts, and then only add well-thought-out desk accompaniments—such as a single lamp, a patterned catchall tray and a single-framed photo. "When you have too much stuff, things

get chaotic," Anna explains. If a large collection of photos is a must for you, she advises creating a single-framed collage.

For Anna, no space is too small to inject personality. Put some color into those boring gray cubicles and add background fabric by pulling material taut and pinning the edges inside your cubicle walls.

"If you have hard surface floors in your office, add a rug; it will warm up the space," Anna says.

"I know that a lot of designers can be more high-end, but really, you can achieve any great look on any budget," she continues.

One way to save money is to reuse or refurbish items you already own,

like reupholstering an old chair or secondhand items you may find at a flea market. "When you find the piece, you will be so much more proud than if you just paid through the nose for something," Anna says. Good items to get at discount stores are mirrors and wall hangings.

When you can splurge, do it on the drapes—even in an office setting, they are essential if you have windows and really bring the whole room together, the designer advises. And if space isn't an issue, spend the money on bringing in elements like a sofa or chair. You shouldn't be sitting at your desk the whole time; having a kick-back spot in your office is a great way to relax into work.



ANNA NGUYEN-SHIWLALL



Clarence Hinkle

June 10-October 7

Laguna Art Museum presents a retrospective of the work of Clarence Hinkle, an early twentieth-century artist who radiated the spirit of modernism.

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LAGUNA ART MUSEUM

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