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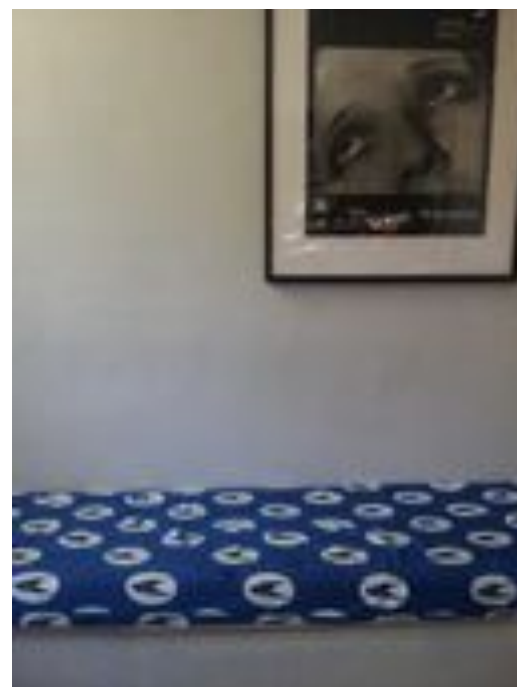
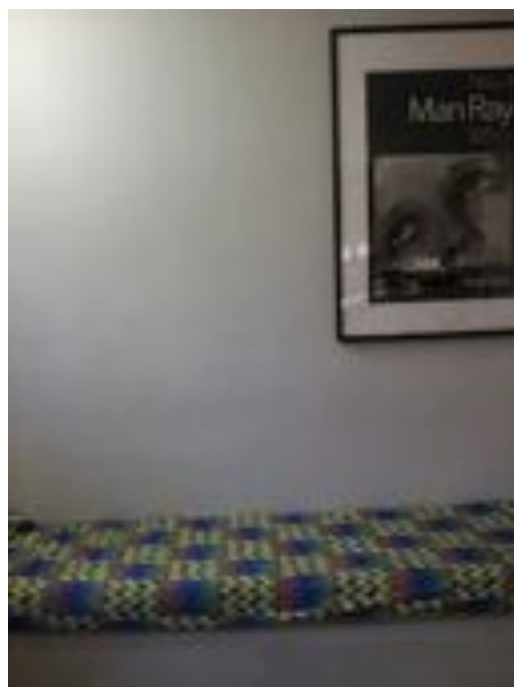
Monday, 20 February 2012

## Guest post

# a kitchen fabric makeover from La Petite Congolaise

Apologies firstly for the extended absence. Blogger robbed me of hundreds of images and I have been slowly trying to re-upload them. You will still see the odd gap (and a big old ugly question mark in the place of a photo). I'm working on it. But thought it was time to come back while I do with a post I had poised before going off-air a fortnight ago. Here you go...

In my kitchen I have a storage bench up against one wall. The seat cushion part is covered in some beautiful blue African fabric, a lovely gift from a good friend. I have a back-up cover too, in a different, more multi-coloured African fabric. The bench is lacking in cushions though, to make it more comfortable and to add to the colour in that corner of the room. This I want to change but found myself stuck for ideas...



There is the obvious plain fabric option (but which colour/s?); but there's something chilly about that end of the room, so ideally I'd like to maximise warmth with a clash of sunshine-y patterns. But that's where I got extra stuck. Not my comfort zone. Whichever cushions I choose probably ought to tie into the rest of the room too, which includes a pale, mustardy yellow and an Yves Klein blue, plus a dash of orange.



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Japanese Kihara Komon porcelain

I stumbled across these Japanese plates a few weeks ago and can't for the life of me remember how or where. But I bookmarked them becaus...



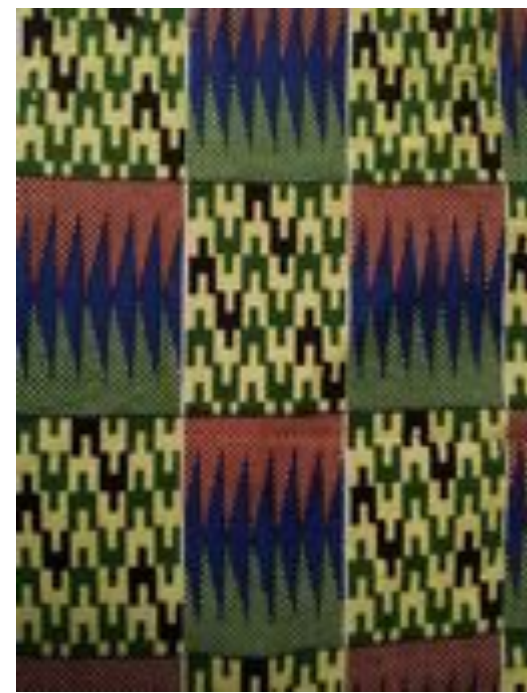
Object of the Day: Dutch

StoryTiles part II

I was excited, last year, to discover StoryTiles, a collection of hand-made tiles, some based on traditional Dutch 16th century



Bench cover one



Bench cover two

So I asked the lovely Laurence Kanza, of [La Petite Congolaise](#), an expert who I have [featured before](#) here, if she'd give my bench a virtual makeover with some of her beautiful cushions (ie, via the magic of Photoshop; and please excuse my dubious skills on that front). Here's just some of the lovely stuff Laurence sells:



Orange accents



'Instinctive'

Thank you Laurence – and over to you...

Colour is a quick and easy way to transform the mood of a home. The world of wax prints offers an added dimension with it's myriad designs and colour combinations. If you are new to wax prints or a little overwhelmed by the variety, I offer you three quick tips:

# 1 Relax – allow yourself to be taken in by the abundance of choice.

# 2 Trust your instincts – go for what you love, your heart will tell you if a print right your home or not.

# 3 Take your time and enjoy yourself – colour is the perfect winter pick-me-up!

**Bench cover one: blue bird print**

This is an old print design is known as "Hirondelle" (swallow) in the Congo. Although this print can be found in a variety of bright colours, here the cool, pared down combination of blue and white makes it a perfect backdrop for colour.

**Makeover # one 'Repeat After Me'**

Combination to try: [Juno](#) x 3





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#### How this combination works

- Some prints naturally lend themselves to repetition, in this case, the circular theme becomes a fun visual indulgence
- Restricting the palette to a few shades allows the designs to be seen at their best

**Style tip** Add plain navy blue cushions creates a “pause” among the circles

#### Makeover # two 'Bold Geometrics'

Combination to try: [Juno](#) + [Gilles](#)





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#### Labels Cloud

- #cheaphometricks
- #cheaptricks
- 100% Design



#### How this combination works

- The uplifting combination of yellow and blue make for a quirky, yet harmonious contrast of old and new
- Although not an immediately obvious pairing, Gilles injects an unexpected degree of individuality and character

**Style tip** A continuity of colour will enhance the warm and welcoming mood within the most social part of the home.

#### Bench cover two Kente print

This is a wax print interpretation of strip weaving (Kente), one of West Africa's oldest art forms. The beauty of Kente designs is the variety of patterns found in one cloth; however the key to working successfully with Kente designs, is balance – the Kente print is the star of the show at all times.

If you are interested to know how traditional strip weaving (Kente) is made, check out these clips on YouTube ([one](#) and [two](#)). The skill involved is awe inspiring.

#### Makeover # one 'Understated Bench Fellows'

Combination to try: [Marc](#) + [Jean](#)



- 1950s
- 1960s
- 1960s illustration
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990s
- 2 and 6
- 55 Max
- A Brooks Art
- a little bit of art
- A Merry Mishap
- A Place Called Home
- a rum fellow
- A Space of My Own
- a two pipe problem
- abc rugs
- Aberdaron Cottage
- abi
- abi zakarian
- abigail ahern
- abigail brown
- about me
- accessories
- adam hills
- advent calendar
- aesop
- affordable art
- affordable art fair
- african fabric
- air bnb
- airbnb
- Airside
- album covers
- alessi
- alex garnett
- alexander girard
- alexander henry fabrics
- alexandre jacques
- alice mara
- alice melvin
- alison jackson
- all the small things
- alphonso mucha
- alternative flooring
- alvar aalto
- amanda pollard
- amara interior blog awards
- American pressed ceiling tiles
- Anachroquarianism
- Anaglypta
- andrew martin
- andrew pothecary
- andy luekett
- andy warhol
- Anil Mistry
- animals
- ann nystrom
- anna chilton
- anna wiscombe
- Anna Wooster
- anne hubert
- Annie Sloan
- another studio
- anova
- anthony burrill
- anthropologie
- antiques
- antoni and alison
- antony nobilo



#### How this combination works

- By staying within a predominantly green palette, the yellow and red of the print are emphasised without overwhelming the space
- The geometric pattern in Marc subtly mirrors sections of the kente without competing for attention

**Style tip** Take your cue from your particular Kente colour scheme and work within its parameters – think complement rather than clash

#### Makeover # two 'A Mixed Affair'

Combination to try: **Marc + Jean + Marie-Jeanne**

- Anya Adores
- apartment therapy
- appliances
- apron
- aram
- aram gallery
- aram store
- architecture
- arno maasdorp
- aromatherapy associates
- Around the British Isles in 228 Facts
- art
- art deco
- art nouveau
- Art Republic
- artists
- artists open house
- artwork
- Astley Castle
- at home with...
- athena
- atlanta bartlett
- aubrey beardsley
- austin kleon
- Australia
- Australia's style
- aw14
- babystylefile
- bad christmas presents
- baking
- BandQ
- baqrnb designs
- barbara hepworth
- barbican
- barefoot welder
- bark decor
- barrio central
- barrio north
- bars
- bathrooms
- bauhaus
- BBC2
- beach
- beach studios
- becky nolan
- bedrooms
- beds
- before and after
- belle and videre
- below the river
- berlin
- bert & may
- bespoke
- Best Shots
- bestival
- bethan gray
- betty draper
- betty jackson
- bhs
- bhs skandi collection
- bicycle
- bike
- bike storage
- bikes
- binary box
- birds
- bisque
- bitossi
- bits and bobs



#### How this combination works

- Adding Marie-Jeanne balances out the red of the Kente print
- Juxtaposing geometrics brings visual interest, yet still allows the Kente to maintain centre stage

**Style tip** The extra pop of red creates a sense of warmth to the cold corner of the room

\*\*\*\*\*

Wow, thank you Laurence, that was so interesting and helpful. I've learnt lots about how to grapple with lots of pattern and got over my fear of being bold with these colourful textiles. (By the way, there are some more tips from Laurence [here](#) in case you're interested).

Now all I have to do is make a decision... Which would you go for?

