

The secret power of soft furnishings

BY SHABIBAH NAKIRIGYA

Soft furnishings such as cushions, curtains, rugs and throws have the ability to completely shift the mood and character of a room with minimal effort and maximum impact. Interior décor experts say textiles can instantly transform a space, adding warmth and personality while reflecting the unique taste of the people who live there.

Sarah Namugga, an interior designer, explains that soft furnishings refer to all decorative and functional fabric items in a home, including cushions, curtains, rugs, table covers, beddings and throws. Their power, she reveals, lies in flexibility.

"When carefully selected and arranged, these items can change the entire look of a room because textiles are among the easiest and most affordable ways to improve a home's décor. They can be changed frequently depending on style preferences or seasons," she says.

Namugga says many homes focus too heavily on hard furniture while overlooking smaller decorative details that truly make a space feel alive.

"Even the most expensive furniture can look dull in a room that lacks colour and texture. Adding cushions, curtains or rugs can immediately bring life to the space," she reveals.

The magic of cushions

One of the most accessible ways to unlock the secret power of soft furnishings is through decorative cushions. Versatile and instantly satisfying, cushions can be placed on sofas, chairs or beds to introduce both comfort and style.

"Soft furnishings allow homeowners to experiment with colours, textures and patterns



RUGS

Rugs are another textile heavyweight in the world of soft furnishings. They not only provide comfort underfoot but also possess the ability to define different areas within an open-plan room.

"For instance, a rug placed under a coffee table can anchor the seating arrangement in a living room, while a bedside rug adds warmth to a bedroom," Mukiibi explains.

Rugs are often used to introduce patterns and colours that may not appear elsewhere, acting as a unifying force.

"A well-chosen rug can tie together the entire décor of a room. It can connect the sofa, table and chairs in a visually pleasing way," he says.

without making permanent changes to the house," says Namugga.

Joshua Mukiibi, a dealer in decoration materials, recommends mixing cushions of different colours, shapes and fabrics to create visual interest. Patterned cushions can be paired with plain ones to achieve balance.

"Cushions are an easy way to introduce bold colours into a room. If your sofa is neutral, colourful cushions can instantly brighten the space," he explains.

Curtains

Curtains define the very mood of a room. Beyond providing privacy and controlling light, they add essential texture and elegance to windows.

"Light fabrics such as cotton or linen create an airy and relaxed feel, while heavier materials like velvet add a sense of luxury and warmth," Mukiibi says. "We advise homeowners to select curtain colours that complement the wall paint, furniture and other decorative elements."

Throws

Throws and blankets are gaining popularity as decorative finishing touches. These soft layers can be draped over sofas, chairs or beds to create a relaxed and inviting atmosphere.

"Apart from adding comfort during cold evenings, throws can be used as decorative accents that complement the overall theme of the room," says Namugga.

Throws are widely available from Shs35,000 upwards depending on quality and choice.

The golden rules

So what is the secret to wielding this power effectively? Namugga says it all comes down to balance. The key lies in balancing colours and textures. Too many patterns can create clutter, while combining plain fabrics with textured materials maintains harmony.

"Neutral colours such as beige, cream and grey are often used as a base, allowing brighter colours and patterns to stand out without overwhelming the room," she advises.

Another advantage of soft furnishings is their impermanence. Replacing cushion covers, curtains or rugs is far cheaper and simpler than purchasing new furniture or repainting walls.

They offer an opportunity to incorporate local craftsmanship into home décor. Handmade fabrics, woven rugs and embroidered cushions from local artisans can add uniqueness and cultural identity to a home.

