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## Colorful Chandeliers: Fun Accents or Attention Hogs?

Ceiling fixtures with clear- or white-glass globes are feeling wan. Technicolor options add energy but—if you're not careful—can overwhelm a room



THE FLAIR UP THERE A handblown chandelier created by designer Emily Lemardeley blends into her Paris apartment. PHOTO: FRANCIS HAMMOND FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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By Allison Duncan

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**LIKE ANY OTHER** bold, not-easily-reversed decorating move, installing a colored chandelier requires confidence, said interior designer Rayman Boozer, principal designer of New York's Apartment 48. "It's not for everyone, but it is a refreshingly unique addition that will make your design stand out."

Seeking a point of difference, many designers are bypassing those numbingly familiar ceiling lights with clear- or white-glass globes and opting for disruptively non-neutral fixtures.

"I wouldn't hesitate to use a colored chandelier and would, in fact, 100% suggest it," said interior architect Martin Brudnizki, who planted tulip and iris-shaped Murano chandeliers of pink and sea-foam green on the ceiling and walls of the aptly named Flower and Rose rooms in London members' club Annabel's. "It creates a playful effect and doesn't necessarily mean the room will turn into a disco."

### 'I think there needs to be a cast of other colored elements in the room to support a colorful chandelier.'

Other designers demur, citing the expense (as high as five figures) and difficulty of swapping out a chandelier. "For me, pops of color should be reserved for [elements] that are easily changeable, such as pillows, so that you can easily swap them out when you tire of them," said Lauren Buxbaum Gordon, design director for Chicago's Nate Berkus Associates.

Mr. Brudnizki warns that colored lights tend to alter the hue of a room slightly. Accordingly, Portland, Ore., designer Jessica Helgerson refrains from tinted light in kitchens and closets. "I don't use colored chandeliers in spaces where the ability to perform tasks or differentiate color is really important," she said. To create "a soft light quality" in a recent project's bedroom, she hung a Douglas & Bec pendant with three balanced pairs of handblown pink glass orbs.



Decorating pros who do endorse colorful fixtures seem to fall into two camps: those who surround the pieces with self-effacing neutrals, and those who take color cues from them.








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From left: Modern Balloon Glass Chandelier, \$499, westelm.com ; Vistosi 1988 Colorful Murano Glass Discs Chandelier, \$5,170, pamono.com; Murano 1970s Multi-Color Triedri 107 Prism Chandelier, \$2,459, 1stdibs.com

In a London brownstone, Nashville designer Jonathan Savage—a member of the first camp—installed a chandelier of multicolored Murano glass disks like the one shown at lower right. The context: a black dining table and chairs, and walls and ceilings of white. “If I am going to use a bold chandelier it becomes like a piece of art,” he said, noting that it draws your eye up “adding height to any space.”

Chicago decorator Sasha Adler rejects that strategy, arguing that a brightly colored chandelier in a room with a neutral palette stands out like a sore thumb. “I think there needs to be a cast of other colored elements in the room to support it.”

In designer Emilie Lemardeley’s Paris apartment, a large-scale color-field painting and velvet curtains in a color called “honey and spice” pick up the brown, brick-red and light pinks of the handblown glass fixture she created and hung. “I don’t need to add too many objects in the room to give a warm atmosphere,” she said.

If you can’t find a kindred-spirit painting that echoes or otherwise speaks to your fixture’s colors, accents like rugs and pillows can also support a showy light chromatically, suggested Shelby Girard, head of design at online decorating site Havenly. It’s important that your color scheme’s pairings aren’t too overt, warned New York designer David Scott. “Never try to match.”

“I think you want to make sure the room and the palette still feel sophisticated and not too whimsical or juvenile, unless of course it is a kid’s room,” said Ms. Adler. “However, even there I try to strike a balance.”

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