

The next big thing? It's the technical cleanse



JANE LOCKHART DESIGN CONFIDENTIAL

If most Canadians spend four hours a day watching content, whether it's online or on TV, it's amazing that most of us are doing so with multiple remotes, wires and plugs strewn all over our main living space.

Quick test: How many remotes do you own to operate your TV? A minimum of two? I don't doubt it. This is common along with cable boxes, wires, splitters and power bars wrapped around TV stands. The more technology advances, the messier it can get.

Recently I underwent a cleanse; a tech cleanse where

everything I didn't need, technically-speaking was removed and only the simplest of systems remained.

Now, you may be wondering, how is this possible? Can you still binge-watch Netflix on a Sunday afternoon (and all night) if you mess with the existing wire-heavy set up? The answer is, yes!

Everything works well and any tech that's still in use is hidden except for what I want to show-off.

Many clients are still using old set ups. They have no idea that they no longer require glass in the lower cabinets to

remotely access their cable box.

They simply can't imagine that home media is managed differently than it once was. We used to pick up a few cables from Best Buy, plugged a few things in and got a picture. Of course, TVs were dense and heavy behemoths, planted in deep entertainment cabinets along with a tangle of cables.

Today the TV screen is still at the centre of the living space (albeit a flatter, lighter version from before). It now feeds us content from cable, satellite and a variety of entertainment streaming from a computer.

The days of aiming the remote at an eye in the black box have passed. Today remotes operate on RF technology and don't need to "see" the box.

For that matter, the cable box (as well as the computer) can be located elsewhere in the room! Yes, this means the box does not have to be awkwardly placed below or beside the TV, it can be hidden in a cabinet in

another area leaving the TV to float cleanly without cables and boxes around it. Now, finally that expensive flat screen can look like art!

To simplify technology further, we have universal remotes available that "do it all". I recently acquired a Logitech Harmony Ultimate One remote that operates everything from cable, to DVD player, to apple TV. Yes, one remote does it all. (And yes, I still own DVDs).

I must confess understanding all this technology is way above my natural abilities. I hired our tech master from newthink inc. technology arts group in Toronto to help me.

They work with our clients to create clean, simple systems that make technology invisible and entirely user-friendly. Clients are always amazed how when the work is done, everything is cleaned up, simplified and easy to use.

My lack of understanding of how to truly integrate technology into my home was lim-



The more technology advances, the messier it can get, but with new advances in remote technology, at least you can hide the box.

ited. The patch jobs of one wire to the next over the years only resulted in more wires and a bigger, more confusing mess.

Some of you may have the skills to cleanse your tech mess on your own, but for me, it was money well spent to save myself the frustration. I will also save in the long run by getting rid of all those extra devices and services I no longer need.

My 'tech' cleanse is now complete and I can now watch TV in a more tranquil, wire-free space.

— Award-winning designer and TV personality Jane Lockhart is one of Canada's leading experts in the world of design. For more information, visit www.janelockhart.com.

Art exhibit showcases all that is wonderful about Canada



NATALIE DEANE DECOR AND MORE

A great piece of art can transform a room. It can be used as a focal point, add pops of colour and highlight different elements in your space. No matter what original artwork always adds sophistication to your home.

Celebrating its 10th year, the Artist Project is back in town from Feb. 23 to 26 at the Better Living Centre at Exhibition Place.

This is the place to connect directly with 250 Canadian and international artists directly. Artist Project is the perfect opportunity to peruse paintings, prints and sculptures or even connect directly with artists to order your own custom pieces.

For those of us who aren't sure about the basics of art buying there are free seminars by art experts, stylists, decorators and influential curators

that can help you with what to buy, how much to pay, current art world trends and more.

One of the trends at this year's event is Canadiana — art that portrays or represents all that is wonderful about Canada. Here is some more information about the top five must see Canadian artists that embody the Canadiana theme.

Richard Ahnert. This Toronto-based award winning artist explores the relationship between humans and animals, but adds a twist. His anthropomorphic (giving a non-human object human characteristics) paintings explore themes of emotion, metaphor, and understated humour. My favourite by far is the confrontation between the Hudson Bay striped polar bear and a man with his cell phone.

Michelle Winters. Michelle Winters is a writer, painter, and translator from Saint John, N.B. As a true storyteller her art illustrates a tale and raises your curiosity about the characters portrayed in her art. The black bear at the bar raises all sorts of questions.

Ryan Sobkovich. There is no doubt when you look at Ryan Sobkovich's work that he has a passion for nature. He paints natural wilderness scenes while hiking and kayaking around the great lakes and other areas of Canada. Ryan enjoys painting 'en plein air' and painting in large scale. Ryan's works are collected by private, corporate and public collectors nationally and internationally. His works are presently exhibited in Elminia University, Cairo, Egypt and in Ulster University, Belfast, Ireland.

Gordon Harrison. Growing up in the beauty of the Laurentians, it is no surprise that Gordon Harrison has become one of Canada's most respected landscape painters. In 2014 he won first prize at the National painting contest in Charlevoix, Que.

His work has also been featured in Canadian art magazines. The vibrant colours

and vision of Canadian nature makes Gordon Harrison artwork worth adding to your collection.

Maureen O'Connor. Maureen O'Connor is a fine art photographer living in Toronto and is a graduate of Ontario College of Art & Design. She recently has embarked on a new series exploring the idea of "Threshold". Introducing animals as representational figures or archetypes. Her large scale landscapes are dramatic showcasing beauty, fragility and encouraging dialogue. A traditionalist, O'Connor's work is processed film and chemistry based printing.

One of the most popular aspects of Artists Project is the Art Battle! on Friday, Feb. 24 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. where 16 artists take to their easels for 20 minute rounds of highly competitive painting.

This high intensity art show allows artists to show off their skill and creative genius. The audience then votes on and can purchase the masterpieces created.

Artist Project is a wonderful opportunity to get that special art piece that will add to the décor and design of your home. For more infor-



Award-winning artist Richard Ahnert's art depicts Canadiana with some satire.

mation visit www.theartistproject.com.

— Natalie Deane is a lifestyle

connoisseur who shares tips for everyday living through decor, entertaining and household trends.