



Kyra Mancine · Jun 22, 2021 · 4 min read



# TURNING LIVING SPACES INTO WORKS OF ART

Being creative with a passion for design is in Amie Freling's blood. For thirty years, she has been helping clients and organizations shine with style. "I came from a family of artists," she says. Influenced by her art teacher grandmother and woodworker grandfather, Freling named her studio after them. After studying Illustration at Syracuse University and working as an Art Director in Washington D.C., she relocated to her Rochester hometown. "I'm grounded by family – they come first, followed by work."



*As a Better Homes and Gardens Stylemaker and HGTV style set influencer, her services include interior design, color consulting and real estate staging. Clients include homeowners, restaurants, and businesses. She also has a line of decorative hardware and home accessories.*

## LET'S GET SOCIAL

Where Freling really bloomed has been on social media. When her teenage daughter wanted to go on Instagram seven years ago, mom gave permission – with a caveat – she was going to be monitoring it. Freling opened an account and started posting project pictures. Fast forward to 2021, and the @memehillstudio Instagram account has over 48,000 followers. She also has a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and a blog with over 11,000 followers. Covering interior design, home accessories and DIY, articles include "before and after" makeovers, home décor advice (how to infuse unconventional colors into your home) and pro tips (how to style a bookcase).

As her fan base grew, so did opportunities – and her first big national client. A self-described "Black Belt in Shopping," Freling started tagging products from Home Goods. They reached out and she has been a brand ambassador ever since.

## INSPIRATION/INFLUENCES (AND THAT TINY COTTAGE ON THE LAKE)

While being an influencer expanded her reach, her love for Rochester and the Finger Lakes is never far from her mind. A few years ago, Freling spent time painting murals in a Canandaigua lake house. This serene sight inspired the purchase of a 745 square foot 'fixer upper' cottage on Honeoye Lake. Over the next few years, Freling and her family turned this diamond in the rough into a relaxing retreat. It also contributed to her move away from painting murals towards more staging, style, and DIY makeover projects. One project included transforming a backyard shed into a bunkhouse. Completed with help from Home Depot, Freling won their "Orange Tank" competition (like 'Shark Tank' but for DIY pros). With that prize money and a lot of sweat equity with her family, this inviting summer haven includes nautical décor and space-efficient furniture and accessories.



## LOCAL DESIGN TRENDS

"Covid has had a big impact on the DIY space for my Rochester clients," Freling says. "People were itching to transform their homes and used money they couldn't spend on travel to do so." She kept busy with projects that included turning a closet into a study space or place for that Zoom call. "Going from an open floor plan to a semi-open floor plan that has a place to escape will likely continue," she says. Other recent design trends in the area include the use of mixed metal lighting, mixing grays and beiges, matte finishes for flooring, the use of black exterior windows, European oak/white oak flooring and the continued popularity of the modern farmhouse style, fire pits and outdoor kitchens.

## BRING ON THE COLOR

With Spring in full swing, Freling says it's time to say goodbye to gray. Refresh your yard, deck, or patio with accessories like a bright outdoor rug and umbrella. "There are affordable options at all price points. Head to the Public Market for Flower City Days (where you can get annuals, perennials, hanging baskets and garden accessories) as well as your town's greenhouse/nursery (for plants, patio cushions, pillows and garden stools)." Put up a trellis for privacy, string solar lights and add a ceramic planter for a pop of color. "You don't need a big space– this can be done on a balcony," she says. As for colors, Freling is a big fan of navy and blues in all hues. She assures clients that "it's ok to mix colors!"



## WHAT'S NEXT?

Freling's latest project is a "Garden House" for Pittsford's Alpine Ridge subdivision. This community space includes a house that looks like a greenhouse (with reclaimed hardwood, locally sourced furniture, and a raw pebble floor), walking paths, raised garden flower beds, and a communal vegetable garden.

Going forward, Freling plans to continue to share her talents with her clients. These collaborations may include a foray into shipping container design. "I'm obsessed with tiny living, and it's amazing to see what can be created in such a small amount of space." She also has some surprises, which she can't reveal just yet. Whatever the future holds, Freling remains inspired and grateful. "Rochester has been so good to me. It's a place I'm proud to call home. I've established a base with great clientele, followers and a network of dependable people I admire, love and trust." Check out her Instagram account or [memehill.com](https://www.memehill.com) for more home improvement inspiration and her latest designs.

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