



BELOW: The coffee table appears to 'float' by using Lightstream linear shelf lights under it. A feature is made of the pillars with Low Heat Columini uplights set into a plinth either side of them. Products available from John Cullen Lighting.

illuminate me



Chrissie Joy is an Interior Designer for Beana Green London 0208 870 1224 www.beanagreen.co.uk

If you've ever trodden on an upturned electrical plug in bare feet, you'll know that lighting can be seriously painful. As one of the most technical areas of Interior Design, lighting is often something that my clients want to put off until the end of a project, and, whilst I don't recommend it, I can understand the "oh, we'll think about that later" phenomenon. Anything with switches or plugs attached is in danger of being very boring indeed, and generally pales in to insignificance in the stampede for that hallowed finishing line of all domestic decorating projects; the Farrow

and Ball paint chart. If you've experienced a department store changing room, you'll know that lighting has the innate and magical power to flatter or to highlight imperfections. With the flick of a switch, you can turn a bronzed beauty in Alberta Ferretti in to a pasty Cinderella sporting something she might use to dust with. This applies to your home too. If you've spent several thousand pounds on a beautiful item (in this case a stunning interior) it needs to be shown off to its best advantage. This month we're looking at lighting downstairs living space. So what do you need to know?

Best use of the room>>

Address your task lighting first, working out the amount of natural light, your layout and where and when you will need extra or focussed lighting (at a writing desk in the evening for example).

Decorative Lighting>>

Are there any particular features you would like to highlight? Pick one or two to give your room presence and gravitas. Detailed plaster mouldings, plants or even a simple vase can look stunning in strong directed light, casting dramatic shadows. Don't forget light can create a feature in itself.

Plan in advance>>

Integrating your lighting in to walls, ceilings and, increasingly, floors, requires forward planning. Lighting plans should be done in conjunction with your layout and electrical specification. It's an expensive job to change after the wiring has been fixed and the walls have been plastered.

Layer your lighting>>

Include several different types of lighting. A mixture of (dimmable) ceiling spots, wall lights and lamp based lighting will give you maximum flexibility and atmosphere.

Discrete Lighting>>

The dictum of most lighting designers is a pairing of discretion and integration; the emphasis is on the quality and effect of the light, with fittings kept as sleek, streamlined and hidden as possible. One industry lighting designer's idea of hell is sleek, recessed ceiling spotlights ruined by glitzy brass trim. If you're recessing lighting, make sure the fittings fade in to the background to retain a clean, crisp look.

Flamboyant Lighting>>

If you want to draw attention to your lighting, do so with freestanding types. Lamp based lighting can be your opportunity to showcase a bright colour or bold and individual shape. Treat your lampshades as fantastic pieces of millinery; unlike your more integrated fittings these can be changed as regularly as you change your outfit.

Next month>> Bedrooms and Bathrooms

RIGHT: Lamp based lighting can showcase a bold colour or individual shape - Staten tablelamp £60 John Lewis

MIDDLE LEFT: Vases are backlit with a simple under cupboard light used as an uplight

MIDDLE CENTRE: A Columini light is used to uplight this niche and highlight the vase

MIDDLE RIGHT: The versatile plug-in table top spot light is used here to highlight a sculpture

All middle row products are from John Cullen Lighting www.johncullenlighting.co.uk



ABOVE: This fibre optic 'starry sky' is created with 60 individual fibre optic strands supported by just one lamp. Used with lighting control and downlighters, this feature can be dimmed or brightened to change the scene and functionality of the room. Available from Light IQ