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Screen Plays

Decorative screens are rarely used for their original purpose: privacy, but that hasn't decreased their popularity. Today, these flexible furnishings are utilized in a number of ways. To cozy up a corner back a chair or chaise with a decorative screen. By adding a small table and lamp, you can create an intimate and appealing reading retreat. You can also use a decorative screen to divide a single, large space. The result will be two new areas that flow beautifully from one area to the other.

When living space needs to be divided into functional zones, nothing accomplishes this task better than use of folding screens. Folding screens enhance your home with their incredible versatility, mobility, adjustability, and aesthetic value. Best of all, folding screens do not require any installation and can easily be folded and moved any time you want. Decorative folding screens can be absolutely beautiful and satisfy any style preferences and decorating taste.

Decorative screens are also great ways to section off a part of your home for storage. Because of their height, they can hide stacked boxes of items such as winter clothing or seasonal decorations. If you don't have a closet for your cleaning supplies, hide your vacuum, broom, and mop behind a tall screen.

However you use them, these decorative elements can add color, pattern, and dimension to an otherwise lackluster room. With the right screen play, you can be assured of a happy ending.

Here are a few additional tidbits about using decorative screens:

- Screens hide things that you don't want people to see, while adding beauty to your room.
- Use screens to divide rooms. In 18th century England, people were taxed for the number of rooms they had. They often used screens to divide rooms and therefore, paid less taxes.
- Black lacquered screens make beautiful accents to a room. They are painted with many layers of paint, lacquered, and then carved to reveal the underlying colors. Use this type of screen as a headboard or in a corner that's difficult to decorate.

- Take the hinges off larger screens and use the pieces separately.
- Old iron pieces can be used as fireplace screens. Place a plant behind it for a touch of color and texture.
- Hand painted French screens add a lot of color to a room. They add a splash of color to a living room or use in a bedroom to provide a private dressing area.
- Contemporary, solid-colored screens make a sophisticated backdrop for a piece of sculpture.
- Combine a screened section in a bedroom to provide a private dressing area.

History 101

The history of folding screens began in China, where they appeared in the 7th century. These sophisticated pieces of furniture were made in many sizes, from extremely large, oversized folding screens that were used in spacious palaces, to miniature decorative screens that could comfortably fit on a tabletop. Folding screens used as room dividers were constructed from several panels attached to each other.

In the 7th century folding screens were also introduced in Japan. Due to Japanese customs and architecture, folding screens remained a very important decorative interior addition. Traditionally, in Japanese homes people sat on the floor while eating, entertaining, and during official ceremonies. Accordingly, the hand-painted design was concentrated to the bottom part of a screen. This allowed for the most detailed part of a screen design to be visible at eye level.

Some believe that folding screens were introduced to Europe by Marco Polo. Marco Polo was credited as the man who brought screen to Italy from his expedition to China. Decorative screens instantly gained popularity because of their size and beauty. Moreover, skilled artisans could easily reproduce the uncomplicated construction of the folding screens.