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This long, narrow space in Rochester, NY, was carefully designed in order to remain functional and still achieve the sophisticated look the photographer wanted.



ROBIN MUTO

Considering re-designing your studio? Being a creative professional, chances are you already know what sensibility you want to project: perhaps a comfy, feminine-yet-professional vibe if you'll be meeting with engaged women all day, or an upscale-clublike atmosphere if you do portraits of CEOs. *PIX* talked to interior designer Robin Muto, of Robin Muto Interiors, who recently designed this space for a Rochester-based wedding photographer.

Her top design advice: "Respond to the space you have. Sit in it when it's empty and relax. Let the space speak to you, and you'll intuitively know how you want it to look." We asked Muto for a few more studio-design tips.

Balance tone and function. The photographer Muto worked with had a long, narrow loft-like space. She needed something functional, so Muto included a storage console (a second-hand chest, spray-painted white) with a flat-screen TV added later above for showing photographic samples

— but also feminine and pretty, since the majority of her clients are women. Remember, says Muto, "potential clients are hiring not just your skills, but who you are, which they can sense through your design choices."

Get the lighting right.

"If you'll be taking photographs in your space, you need complete control over your lighting," says Muto, who recommends a dual system: solar blinds that filter natural light for meeting with clients and a blackout shade you can draw while shooting. When it comes to artificial light, Muto likes high-quality fluorescents, which provide a soft, even wash of light without glare. Look for a CRI (color-rendering index) of at least 92 and a color temperature of 3000-3500K.

Think about paint.

Particularly if you'll be displaying your work, as in a gallery, you'll probably want to go with white walls. But as anyone who has faced a rack of color chips at the paint store knows, the number of white options is dizzying! Muto likes Benjamin Moore's White Dove and Sherwin Williams' Dove White. "These are not very stark," she says, "but also don't have too much yellow, pink or gray."

Find furniture.

Make sure your furniture choices match your overall ethos. For a sleek, contemporary look, Muto likes Design within Reach and Crate and Barrel. Room & Board is good for a more transitional look. And for that urban loft feel (or for an actual urban loft!) Restoration Hardware is a favorite.

To see more of Robin Muto's work visit www.robinmuto.com.

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