

HOME FURNISHINGS

## Can luxury help China's young renters DIY their dream homes?

August 1, 2022



*Many Chinese tenants are transforming their living spaces into dream homes through DIY apartment renovations with a fashion-and-function consumer mindset. Image credit: Missoni*

By [Charlotte Cai](#)

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According to a [Ziru Research Institute report](#) published in 2021, as many as 90 percent of recent Chinese graduates in 10 of China's top cities are renting rather than purchasing their homes.

However, contrary to preceding generations who leaned utilitarian with a "function over fashion" approach many young tenants are seeking dream home environments, despite not owning their space. This sentiment has generated a wave of DIY interior design home makeovers.

The topic, "rented apartment renovation," has more than [438,000 posts and 469 million views](#) on lifestyle platform Xiaohongshu, while the phrase, "Finding happiness in a rented home," stands at 107 million-plus.

**The Jing Take:** Mainland China recently recorded [record-high levels of unemployment](#) among young city-dwellers. This, coupled with a housing crisis characterized by hesitant buyers and unaffordable prices, means the large percentage of young people choosing to rent should come as no surprise.

With increased investment in other lifestyle markers such as [hairstyle](#), [beauty](#), [pets](#) and even overall [wellness](#) it seems natural that the next step of "premiumization" should be in home decor.

In fact, increased purchasing power means even non-traditional furniture markets are flourishing, with the country's smart furniture market expected to exceed [\\$29.6 billion \(200 billion RMB\)](#) this year, and the local custom-made furniture industry reaching \$49.5 billion (334 billion RMB) by 2024, as reported by HKTDC Research.

Though the popularity of home decor here has been [rising steadily](#) in recent years, the expansion of "home living" practices to include "rental living" belies the increased prioritization of reflecting a unique personality and social status through living space.

Frank Chou, [founder and creative director of Frank Chou Design Studio](#) and the first Chinese designer to collaborate on Louis Vuitton's Objets Nomades, told *Jing Daily* that "homeware is significantly driven by consumers' self-awareness," and thus serves as a general marker of social material and qualitative change in the industry.

**Recent store openings** of Herms and Missoni in Wuhan and Chengdu, respectively, are evidence of luxury's continued investment in the homeware industries as well as consumer interest in the quality of such products: both shops heavily feature these lines as part of their in-store experience.

Perhaps investing and renovating temporary rental spaces not only reflects the lifestyle pursuits of young consumers, but also a mindset that aspires for self-realization and unique personality through product characteristics.

The popular online catchphrase that "the apartment may be rented, but life isn't" (""") has become a motto of these young DIY enthusiasts making it clear that the connection with and emotion for a product are really what count, whether it is luxury decor or other domestic commodities such as **fragrance**, **beauty devices** and homeware.

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