Guide to an Aesthetic Feed on Instagram

MASHIYAT NAYEEM

There are three types of people, the ones who strive for perfection, the inbetweeners and the ones who don't care at all. If you fall in the latter category in Instagram and your feed is a brain dump, this is a good position to stop reading.

1. Identify your subjects

Are you passionate traveller whose exotic photos induce wanderlust? Are you an aspiring baker who never forgets to capture your newest delicacy? Are you an avid fashionista whose favourite hashtag is #ootd? No matter what you are, identify what kind of photos you mostly take and thus set your style rule. For me, it's a whole lot of greenery with a dash of architectural elements and a pinch of yours truly.

2. Taking the photos

Whether you're using a DSLR or good ol' Android, one rule of thumb for taking photos is to take them in natural light. This enhances details and ensures that your photo captures true colours. It also makes creating your preferred theme much easier. Experiment with various angles, backgrounds and arrangements for that one perfect shot. Don't forget, the crop tool is always there to fine-tune further.

3. Set the mood

To maintain a consistent look, a theme must be the dominant aspect of your feed. Consider whether you prefer bright and colourful, or dark and moody. This ultimately plays a huge role in deciding your subjects. If you want things to be light, your photos might feature white backgrounds and pastel colours. Similarly, a moody theme might include plant-based background and lots of black clothes.
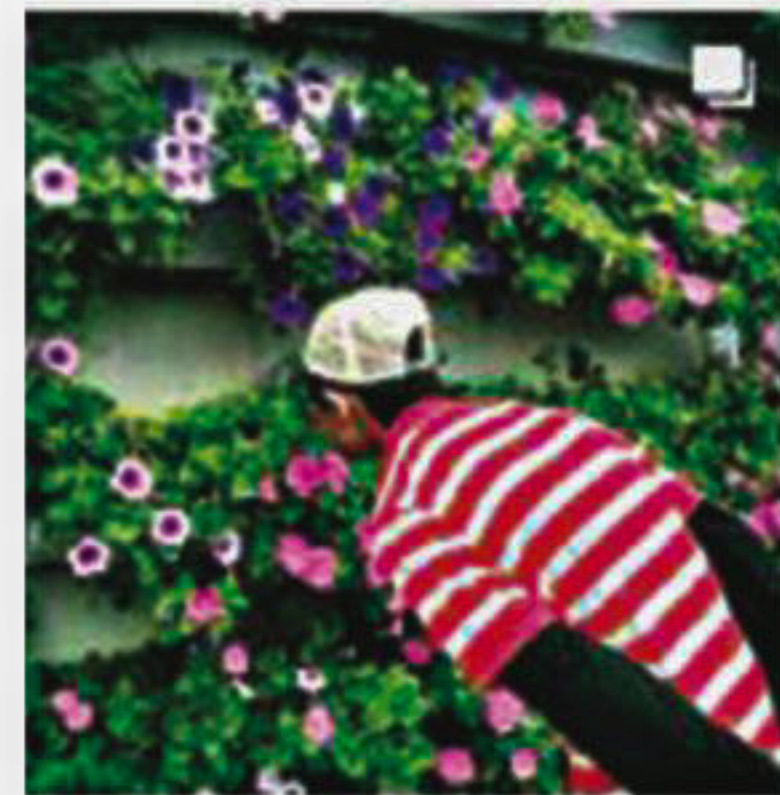
4. Get editing

The key to maintaining a theme is to have a favourite filter and a specific editing process. There are tons of editing apps to choose from. It's best to play around with a few before zeroing on the perfect one. Popular options include VSCO, A Colour Story, Preview and Snapseed.

Don't go too heavy on the edits, though. Find a few filters that match your aesthetic and make sure they can be applied to most of your photos, since the goal is to preserve the uniform look. However, a true editing process requires you to go back and forth among multiple apps for different purposes. Snapseed is great for brightening the whites and adjusting the perspective, but not very suitable for applying filters.

5. Plan the arrangement

Sometimes two photos might look amazing individually but may turn out to be an eye sore next to each other. Apps like Preview help you to craft your feed since it displays your photos in the same 3-in-a-row pattern like Instagram. It's best to pair a busy photo with one that has negative space to make it easy on the eye.

Avoid having warm and cool tones next to each other; edit them for an even tone.

When you're travelling, don't let the theme limit yourself from posting beautiful sceneries. If they blend into your feed: super. Otherwise, arrange your travel photos into grids of 9 or 12. This tip is also useful when you're looking to change up your theme.

Just like the word "groovy" in the '70s, and "wicked" in the '90s, it's safe to say the term "aesthetic" is *the* word of the mid 2010s. So be it.

Mashiyat Nayeem has a genuine phobia of onions and has mastered the art of scavenging for beresta in her biryani. Learn more at mashiyat.nayeem@gmail.com

DIY PHONE CASES

MAISHA MALIHA

Tired of the same old boring store-bought phone cases? Can't find the exact kind of case you want? Here are ways you can add some flair to your phone case, or better still, make one of your own.

Scratch-Off Phone Cases

Here are the materials you'll need: a transparent case that fits your phone, brightly colored highlighters, crayons or felt pens, paper, wide tape, a box cutter, a paint brush and matte (optional) black acrylic paint. Trace your phone cover with the part that holds in the phone facing upwards and cut it out. Using your colors paint it however you like; I prefer to draw splotches packed together so that the end product looks multi-colored. Carefully stick the wide tape over your artwork and cut out the excess. Paint the outside of your phone case with the black paint and make sure to cover the sides as well. Let it dry thoroughly. Place the colorful artwork in to the case and cut out the holes for the camera or the speakers, and pop the case back in to the phone. Using the back end of your paint brush scratch on anything you like. If you make mistakes you can simply paint over them with the black paint and start over.

Geometric phone cases

For this you need: a transparent case, black permanent marker, acrylic paints of your choice and some sponges. Draw on your geometric figures on the inside of the cover and then simply dab some paint all over the inside over your artwork to create a nice ombre effect. You could even stick on holographic papers or other quirky printouts over the artwork instead of painting over it. The possibilities are endless!

Washi tape phone cases

This one will take you 5 minutes to make at the max. Get some washi tapes, any kind you like, glittery, printed, tribal etc. and stick it on the phone however you like. You could create chevron patterns or even stick them diagonally for a minimalistic look. Pop on the cover and voila!

Polka dots or sparkles

For the polka dots effect, I found it best to use nail polish of various colors. You could only paint the sides or do it all over. The same technique goes for the sparkles; use some glue on the inside of the cover and stick on the sparkles anyway you like. You could even use glitter instead of sparkles. Sprinkle it all over where you used the glue and then dust off the excess.

Print-outs

For inspiration, you could Google quotes, speech bubbles, images of your favorite characters etc. resize them and print them out. Cut them out, stick some glue on the image and place it on the cover.

Sometimes, you end up finding the galaxy art phone case, or the perfect fur phone case in stores, but why shed tears over the highly expensive covers when you can make inexpensive ones yourself?

Maisha Maliha speaks what crosses her mind in the most positive way but is often misinterpreted and