



*Design Theory* **SHADOW WALLS**

Humans have always been attracted to darkness. Everytime we close our eyes to blink, its serene calm momentarily overtakes us. We crave darkness when we sleep and in the sky, as the glow above our cities threatens to obscure one of the last wonders our world has to offer: the stars.



This desire for shadows has been the fire fueling some of our most dramatic designs. We've worked to create a series of colorways that epitomize the comfort of night, whether it is a secret hideaway in your own home or the elegance of your favorite restaurant escape. For inspiration, we've turned to famed Japanese novelist Jun'ichiro Tanizaki and his final work "In Praise of Shadows," an essay detailing the writer's myriad of architectural and aesthetic tastes.





In “In Praise of Shadows” Tanizaki laments the beauty of darkness and its fading impression in our modern world. Fervently, Tanizaki describes shadows as an oasis of mystery and tranquility, “Whenever I see the alcove of a tastefully built Japanese room, I marvel at our comprehension of the secrets of shadows, our sensitive use of shadow and light...” and goes on to explain: “We find beauty not in the thing itself, but in the patterns of shadows, the light and the darkness, the one thing against another... Were it not for shadows, there would be no beauty.” Tanizaki understands that beauty necessitates balance that is striking, but proves that this is how one makes a statement.



Tanizaki’s philosophy rests its head on the ideals of order and tension. Every designer is familiar with this push and pull, it is what makes any piece of art exceptional. It is this struggle, when used correctly, that wrests the glory of darkness from its hiding place. Tanizaki polarizes darkness with the exquisiteness of gold, stating “Modern man, in his well-lit house, knows nothing of... its practical value; for gold, in these dim rooms, must have served the function of a reflector. Their use of gold leaf and gold dust was not mere extravagance. Its reflective properties were put to use as a source of illumination.”





And how illuminating it is! To experience gold in the way Tanizaki theorizes ancient man did, a dusting here and a fragment there. This brilliance trembles upon a delicate scale, where each element dances in and out of focus. The deep space where gold exists being seen in small parts until you realize that gold does not wish to be glorified, but instead respected for its unique and gentle glow. It is then that we realize we need darkness in order for anything to truly shine. This effect feels particularly striking in our Rainbow Eucalyptus wallpaper, where floral-like structures rise out of the darkness with angelic elegance. Dynamic shades of gold work together to create this radiant tension, the black of the background surrendering to its seductive, blazen allure.

Black is the most energetic of the neutral colors, it can be paired well with accent walls or bold decor. A soft shade of black grounds any color palette and lays a foundation that transforms any wall or ceiling into a powerful statement in your space. The soft elegance of our matte black, shadow-inspired wallcoverings welcome warmth into any room. The addition of metallic-gold elements add a celestial spark to any surface, bringing luxury that will amplify the ambience of your unique aesthetic.

Make a statement wall, flirt with drama, embrace maximalist design.  
Check out Manuka's own line of Shadow Walls [here](#).