Certified Interior Design Professional

Session #7
Design Fundamentals

DESIGN PRINCIPALS

Step back from details and view the job as a whole,
balanced, unified, and harmonious design.

Six main principles of interior design:

- Scale
- Proportion
- Balance
- Rhythm
- Contrast
- And Harmony

When beginning any interior design project you need to be able to step back from the elements and details and view the job as a whole so you achieve a balanced, unified and harmonious end result.

Elements should not be worked on in isolation but as integral parts of one whole in which each part serves to strengthen the totality of the design.

There are six main principles of interior design: **scale, proportion, balance, rhythm, emphasis and harmony**.
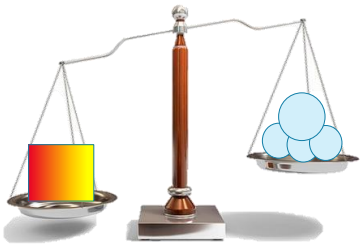

SCALE & PROPORTION

- Proportion is to do with the ratio of one design element to another or one element to the whole.

- Scale is to do with the size of one object compared to another.

Scale and Proportion
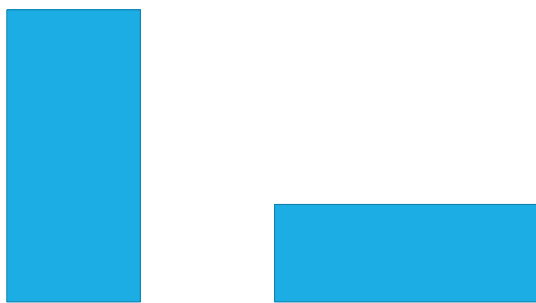- These go hand in hand as they both relate to size and shape.

SCALE & PROPORTION

Scale and Proportion

- Proportion is to do with the ratio of one design element to another or one element to the whole.

- Scale is to do with the size of one object compared to another.

SCALE & PROPORTION

- There is a mathematical formula which says that when taking two elements, the ratio of the smaller of the two to the larger should be the same as the ratio of the larger element to the whole (the combination of the two elements).

- This proportion is one which is subliminally pleasing to humans as it exists in nature and is used by architects and artists also.

SCALE & PROPORTION

- The scale and proportion of this mirror is much too small for this sofa.

- You can either add a grouping of multiple frames, or one larger piece to balance out the design.

SCALE & PROPORTION

Much more natural balance with a larger mirror.

SCALE & PROPORTION

- When things are out of balance, they rarely work and leave us feeling uneasy and unsure.

- We look for balance both literally and figuratively. This also applies to the spaces we live in.

BALANCE

- Leonardo Da Vinci's Vitruvian man saw the navel as the center of the human body and everything circulated from here. There is also the symmetry to each side of the body.

- People with perfectly symmetrical faces have been proven to appear more attractive.

- Understanding the principles of balance and the effect on people will help you to design spaces with aesthetics that are very pleasing to spend time and carry out activities in.

In interior design, balance refers to the equal distribution of visual weight in a room.

Balance in a room can be divided into three components: **symmetrical, asymmetrical and radial.**

BALANCE

- Symmetrical is like a mirror image.

- Asymmetrical is balanced with shape, distance, and visual weight.

- Radial is balanced around a center point.

*Some ways to create balance without these basic rules:

A dark object of unusual shape or texture feels visually heavier than a light or neutral colored, translucent object even though they may be of the same size.

This kind of balancing requires experience as well as talent and we'd recommend waiting until you've done some designing according to the principles described above before trying to be radical!
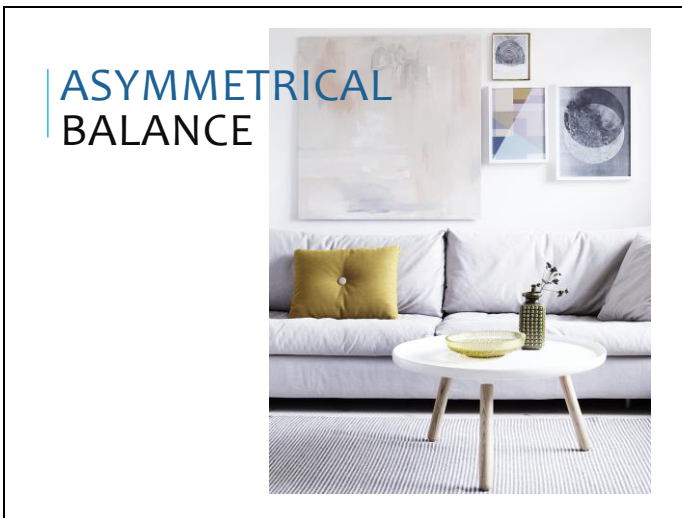
SYMMETRICAL BALANCE
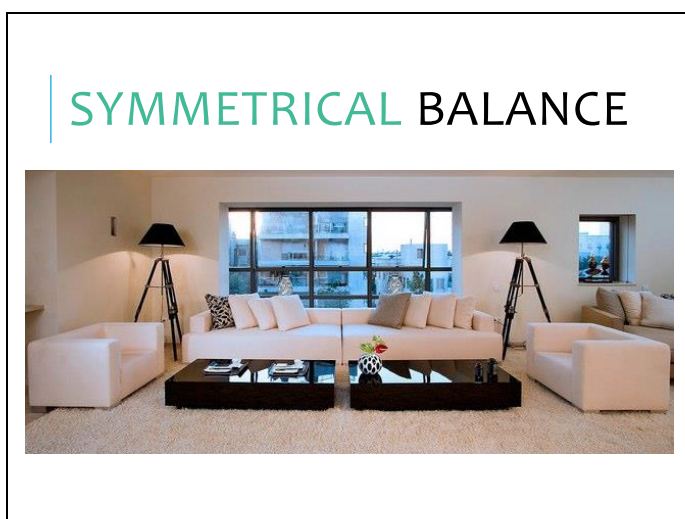
Symmetry always gives a calm, reassuring, orderly, structured feel. It has a formal feel.

- Predominantly present in classic and traditional interior styles.

- The same objects appear in the same positions on either side or a vertical axis.

- It's the easiest principle to use when looking for balance.
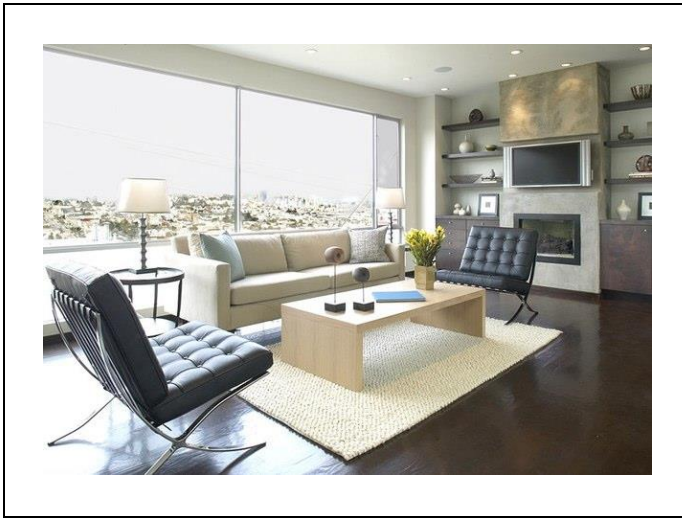
- It reflects the symmetry of the human body and resonates with this innate natural law.

- In a symmetrical room, anything that's out of balance stands out. It has a noticeable effect on people. Particularly sensitive individuals can feel very uncomfortable in a room without symmetry.

- On the other hand, it can feel boring to other people in which case you can add interest or liveliness with well-designed objects or pieces of art.


Asymmetrical balance is more common than symmetry in modern interior design and achieves balance by using different objects that carry equal visual weight or visual focus.

- It allows you more creative design freedom for expression and interest, and a more informal feel.

- You can introduce a much livelier theme and give a feeling of movement, experimentation and openness as opposed to the static feeling of a perfectly symmetric room.

- Asymmetrical balance feels less manipulated but can be more difficult to get right. You are working with a number of unique elements – lines, colors, textures and forms that are not duplicated in the space.

- You have to assess how much visual weight each carries and distribute them to achieve a balance that feels comfortable.

- The objects and elements must work together to create a harmonious relationship but it will end up being a much more dynamic interaction than with a symmetrical arrangement and will also be visually exciting.

- This is a more contemporary way of approaching interior design.

- Asymmetrical with layout, yet balanced with shapes and spatial relationships.

- The cabinet on the left is tall, heavy looking, and close to the TV stand. The silver vase on the right is farther away and shiny which visually adds more weight.
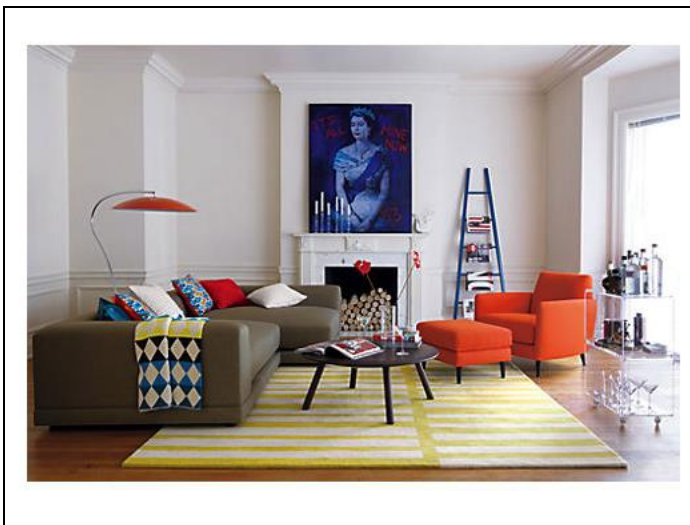

- Asymmetrically balanced using color.

- The sofa on the left is large, balanced with the bright orange chair on the right.

- They are both anchored with the large blue painting and the yellow rug.
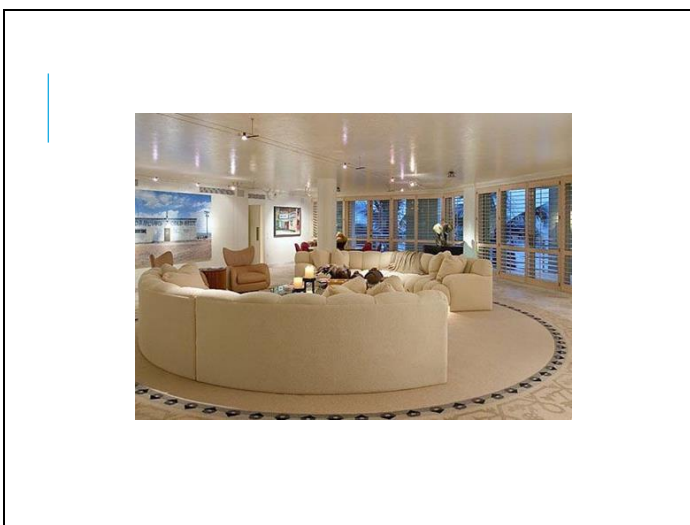
Radial symmetry is achieved by arranging elements of a design around a central focal point.

- An island in a kitchen or a dining table is example as is a centrally placed spiral staircase or a circular, dominant lighting fixture.

- While there is one main focal point there can also be less obvious points of attention in this kind of room.
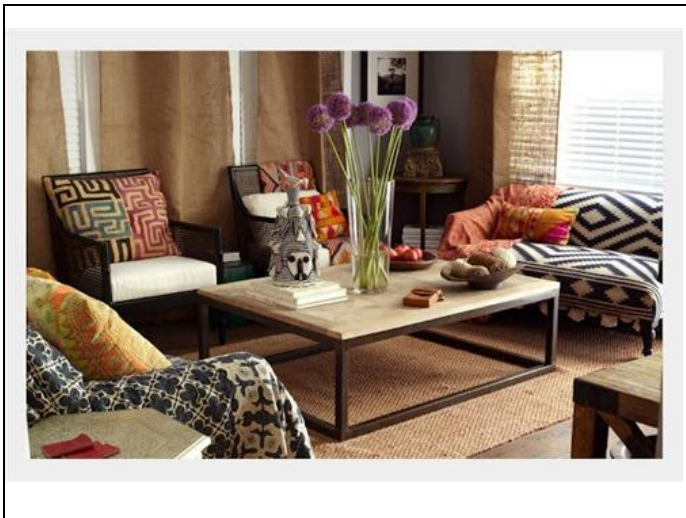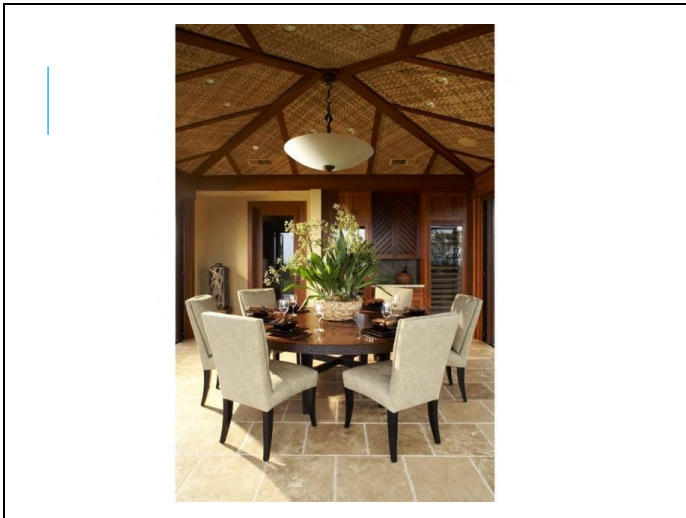
Not all interiors have been designed according to the rules of balance described above. The reason they can sometimes work well is because the designer was skilled enough to break the rules and still keep visual balance.

Equilibrium is achieved by distributing objects and accessories according to all the aspects that determine the visual weight - size, overall shape, texture and surface.
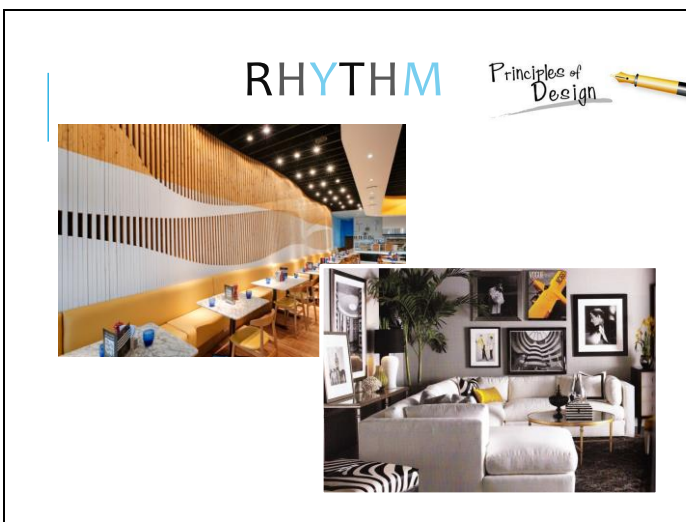
Rhythm

Rhythm isn't just for music i.e. the beat, the pulse, patterns of repetition and contrast. These give a sense of continuity, organization and order to all art forms.

Rhythm

These same principles apply to interior design. You need to integrate repetition and contrast and also progression and transition. You want to take the user of the space on a journey, visually leading him or her from one design element to another.

Repetition is taking one element and repeating it to create a harmonious and unified look, like color, texture, pattern or line.

Balance the amount repetition with the interest of surprise.

Progression can be achieved by taking an element and repeating it in a way that either increases its visual impact or decreases it.

Size is a good example of this in action, like placing different sized similar objects in a room. It can also be done by using a monochromatic color scheme – like choosing cushions of varying tones of the same color.

Transition could also be called flow. It's like the effect of a curved path drawing your eye along its line. You want to lead the user's eye naturally from one spot to another.
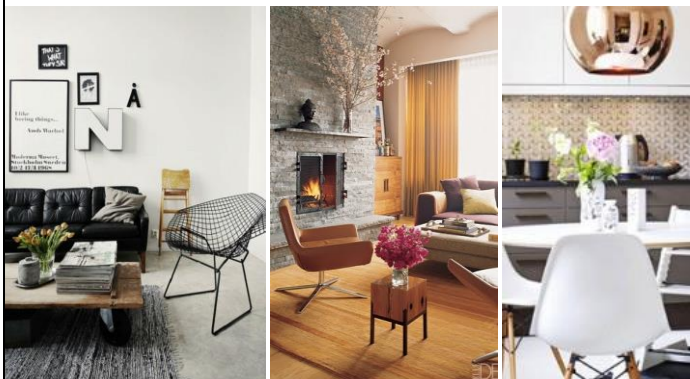

Transitions can be literal such as a bookcase, a half wall, or a floor change.

Contrast is to place two elements which are in opposition to each other, like black and white or circles and squares. Contrast is naturally more startling than repetition so use it cautiously and sparingly. Don't let it upset the balance of the space you've already created.

FOCAL POINT

FOCAL POINT

HARMONY *Principles of Design*

Emphasis or focal point

- If everything in a room holds equal importance, there will be no focus of attention and it will seem either boring or scattered.

- A well designed room will have at least one focal point. A large room can have a few. Each focal point must be strong enough to draw attention and hold it.

- Architectural features often provide a natural focal point, like a fireplace or a bow window. You can choose to enhance the inherent feature by arranging furniture and objects around it.

- Some focal points might be less obvious.

- If the room doesn't have a natural focal point you can create one by grouping furniture, say around a TV, by introducing an unusual piece of furniture or by introducing a contrasting color in one area.

- Be sure to integrate each focal point with the surrounding décor, style, color or theme and don't let it be too dominant.
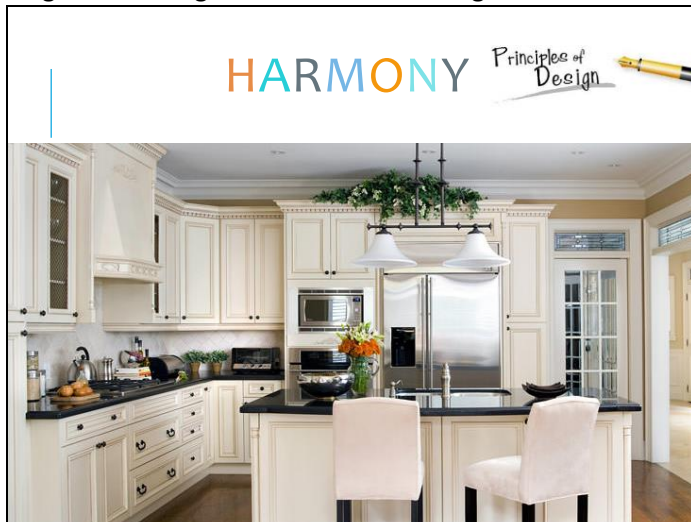
Harmony

Harmony is created when all elements in an interior project work together to give a unified impression.

Just as rhythm creates interest and excitement, harmony creates a sense of peace and restfulness.

Harmony can be very effectively **achieved with color**. Choose three or four basic colors for your palette and use them in varying tones and hues throughout a house.

A common **theme, mood or style** creates harmony.

A well designed space feels unified as one harmonious and unified whole.

Harmony

It goes without saying that details matter in interiors. As much as you need harmony, you need the interest of detail.
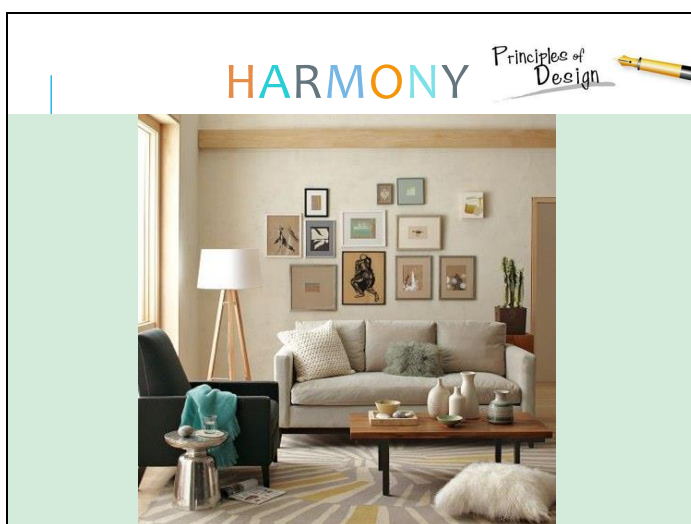
Pay attention to the smallest of details from handles on furniture to trimmings on cushions.

Details shouldn't take on a life of their own but work to integrate into the design theme, to add to it rather than distract from it.
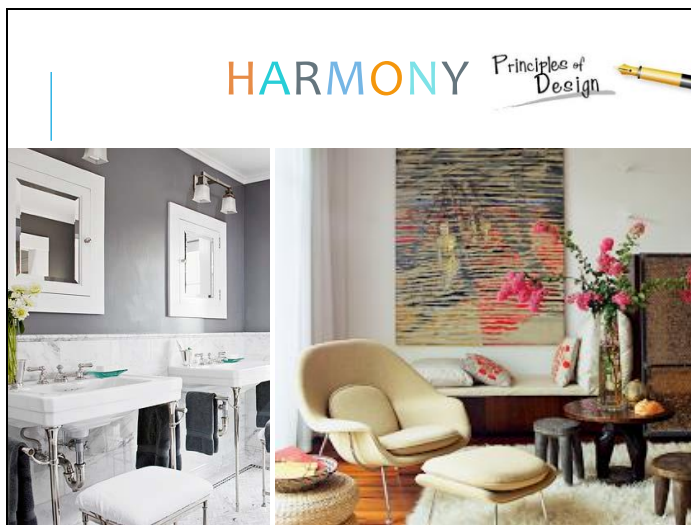
Details Matter

I always add fresh flowers to my finished designs. It adds life to your design.

All aspects of your design can be used to create harmony.

Pay attention to EVERYTHING, and squint if you need to.

Top 10 Design Rules of Thumb:

1. Your main goal of any design is balance and harmony.
2. Don't get stuck in a design rut.
3. Start with a theme, color palette, or style.
4. Decide on your focal points.
5. If everything is spectacular, then NOTHING is spectacular.
6. Select your largest, must have furniture pieces.
7. Create balance with your side furniture.
8. Create interest with juxtaposition. Soft/hard, shiny/matte, bright/muted…
9. Tie everything together with your details.
10. Always add fresh flowers and live plants to your finished design.

✓ Start looking through magazines and Pinterest to find rooms that feel harmonious.

✓ See if you can find rooms the "just don't feel right", and see if you can find a design element that is out of place or wrong.

✓ Start to create a binder with your favorite rooms. Separate them by function/style/details.

Homework for Session #7

- Begin to create an organization system for your design inspiration.

- Either a digital format or actual pictures.

- Separate each section into room functions such as kitchen, living room, master bedroom.

- Then have a section for different design styles that are popular in your area.

- A separate file for details that you'd like to incorporate into your own designs such as a farm sink, brass accents, mixed color kitchen cabinets etc.