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**Introduction**

Interior design, sometimes called interior beautification or decoration, is the art of creating indoor areas into spaces that are attractive, relaxing, and functional. Interior design involves the cautious selection of items to suit the objective and overall atmosphere of an area. Many items help create an interior design, including furniture, lighting, wall and floor coverings, and window treatments.

Many think of interior design in terms of beautifying the rooms of a home. However professional interior designers often plan and create an interior design for hotels, motels, libraries, offices and many other buildings. Interior design projects are also carried out on the interiors of planes, automobiles, ships and trains.

**Interior design feng shui**

Combining The Use Of Color and Crystals by Sharon Kasmira Most people are aware that clear crystal balls are used for specific purposes in feng shui. They stimulate chi energy and they also cause it to move in more than one direction. These are pure, powerful magnification of light, Chi and magnetism. They may be used anywhere, to empower any positive intention and are especially effective as protection from intense Sha Chi (negative energy).

Clear crystals should ALWAYS be hung with red ribbon or string cut into three inch increments. The qualities you wish in a certain feng shui area may be attracted through the use of these beautiful crystal balls.

Colored Crystal Balls for Feng Shui Purposes:

Green: The color for healing and the life force. (However DO NOT use around cancer patients because green is the color for growth). It’s a good color in kitchens (life force and nutrition), "wealth corners” (the color of money), or anywhere to stimulate money Chi. One client hung a huge 60 milimeter emerald green crystal at his new business location and has had steady increase in business since!

Peach: One of the healthiest colors in color therapy it represents general health, healing and well being (okay around cancer patients). Many of my clients hang these in their baths (especially effective hung beneath skylights).

Blue: Use it to enhance a spiritual connection, peace, and stimulate intuition. Good in meditation rooms to focus energy and in bedrooms (blue is the color said to help insomnia). Many massage therapists find it’s energies soothing above massage tables.

Pink: This is the color of love, happiness, and compassion. Good for "relationship corners" and in bedrooms, especially over the bed, hanging directly above the heart area, or from a center ceiling fixture. I always recommend a pink crystal ball in the center of a new baby’s nursery to radiate love and happiness.

Golden: This represents abundance! Also great for wisdom and intellectual stimulation. Good to use for activating "prosperity corners” (some are actually a champagne color to denote luxury), "wisdom/knowledge corners", over your desk, or anywhere you'd like the energy of gold. Also a good color to use for the career position.

Red: The color of fire. It’s considered very effective for lifting and balancing the energy from computers. These should hang between the monitor and you, at about arm's length above eye level. Also very good for Fame/Recognition (it’s the color associated with this position). Red crystals are also excellent for blessings, rainbows and joy in your car.

Aurora Borealis: These irredescent crystals are subtle, yet powerful, rainbow energy to activate Chi in any area. Especially good hung beneath skylights and excellent in workout areas. These beauties are breathtaking in the 40-50 millimeter sizes!

Violet: An excellent color to stimulate and inspire mystical, spiritual guidance and the upper Third Eye Chakra. Violet crystal energy helps develop insight, strengthen intuition, sense of contentment and peace in spirit. These also are popular in meditation areas, massage rooms and bedrooms. Colored crystals can be suspended with clear fish line, beaded string or any color ribbon or string. Using red, however, is the most auspicious color in feng shui and is believed to empower crystals even more! Enjoy!

**Discovering Your Interior Design Style**

Unless you’ve been lucky enough to build your house from the ground up, you will at some point be stuck with somebody else’s ideas of interior decoration. You may decide to live with the royal blue living room and daisy wallpaper in the kitchen, or you might feel a sudden urgent desire to paint the house magnolia. Neither solution is ideal, as in neither case are you permitting your own style preferences and creativity to find expression. But just how do you pinpoint your style?

One way is to turn yourself into a sponge. Absorb everything you come into contact with even if it doesn’t seem relevant at the time. I was once asked to design a bright, colourful and "fun" kitchen for a family with young children. I poured through design magazines, and visited countless shops for inspiration. But it wasn’t until I found myself watching a 1950s Tom & Jerry cartoon on television that the idea struck. The turquoises, blacks, yellows and pinks of the cartoon looked fresh and fun. A 1950s-style kitchen with all mod cons was the answer!

There is very little in modern design which is completely new. Most styles and changes in fashion are amalgamations, adjustments and improvements on previous designs and trends. Today’s stream-lined contemporary look harks back to 1930s modernism combined with a dash of 1960s spirit. And, yes, today’s turquoise, yellow and pink toasters, kettles and lemon squeezers have the 1950s to thank for their design. No one should blatantly copy the work of others as this is an empty exercise, but rather mulch together sights and sounds from your environment to create the style that suits you. Actively seek out inspiration from museums, stately homes, art galleries, show rooms, furniture catalogues, magazines, books, films, TV programmes and nature. Remember the colours, sounds and sights of your last holiday. Why did they make you feel happy? How can you use these elements to recreate that contented feeling in your own home?

Start a file in which you can put magazine cuttings. Take photos or buy postcards of places, buildings, furniture, beaches, sunsets… anything that inspires you. Carry a small notebook in which you can sketch ideas. Often the secret to why an architectural feature works is hidden in the proportion of one part to another. Photographing or sketching this accurately will be the only way of reproducing this later. The ancient Greeks were very keen on geometry and used it extensively in their buildings. Try to analyse why a particular room or building looks and feels right to you. What are the proportions? Is it symmetrical or asymmetrical? Are there a lot of decorative features, or is it very plain? By finding answers to these questions, you are finding your own style.

Once you have a store of inspiration, you are then ready to source materials, chose colours and buy furniture that fits your style. Perhaps you’ve been inspired by a holiday on the English seaside. You’ve taken photos of the flint houses with their maritime blue trim, the long stretches of sandy beach with its tufts of marsh grass, the colourful beachhouses lined up along the shore. Translate these images and feelings into your own environment by sourcing sofas and chairs in a relaxed design, upholstered in sandy neutrals; paint your walls with a creamy wash; let the sun stream into the room with modern voiles, linen blinds or plantation shutters; accent it all with those beautiful sea blues and greens. Keep your accessories natural - wood, stone, shells, flowers. If you stay true to those elements which gave you a sense of pleasure on your holiday, you will create a happy space in your home.

You may prefer a more formal environment. Perhaps you live in a Georgian house and want to highlight its elegant proportions. Visit stately homes of the period, walk through areas of your town where Georgian architecture exists. Visit Brighton with its light and airy Regency and Georgian buildings, or Edinburgh with its solid grey stone Georgian terraces. Consider combining elements of historic Georgian style with contemporary accents to add freshness and wit to the interior.

The more you explore and make a conscious note of the things that inspire you, the more confident you will become with your own style preferences. Always stay open to new influences. Keep your eyes and ears open. Your style is something which should grow as you grow. Your style is part of who you are. Why not make it part of your home environment?

Inspirational places to visit:

The Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The Sir John Soane Museum, London.

Brighton Pavillion, Brighton.

Your local stately home(s).

**The Use of Colour (Color) in Interior Design**

The biggest influence on the human state of mind with the possible exception of the weather is colour. We are surrounded by references: "a red rag to a bull", "blue with cold", "green with envy", "in the pink". The psychology of colour and how colour affects human behaviour is now a serious course of study at universities. Hospital rooms, classrooms, fast food restaurants and offices are painted in colours to influence the behaviour and mood of the people who use these spaces. Even the products on the shelves of your local supermarket have been packaged in colours carefully chosen to attract your attention and encourage you to buy. So why are people so hesitant to use colour in their home environments? Why is the neutral space currently the ideal? Why are we afraid of colour?

The first step to relinquishing fear in the use of colour is to understand the psychological effects it has on us. Red is known to stimulate the appetite - so it’s an excellent colour for dining rooms. Both blue and green are fresh and calming. They are the colours of nature and could be popular choices for bedrooms. Yellow and orange are energising like the sun, so are good choices in rooms where your energy may need boosting - the kitchen perhaps. Orange in its toned down terracotta form can be ideal in a home office; it has the energising effect of both red and orange but isn’t so bright that you won’t be able to stay at your desk!

Many contemporary television programmes have made a virtue of the use of bold colours in wild combinations: violet and lime green; turquoise and red-orange; orange and fuchsia. But be careful about casually throwing colours together. Violet and lime green will work because they are complementary colours - they are opposite each other on the Colour Wheel. Likewise turquoise and red-orange. You would think that orange and fuchsia would clash, but because they sit next to each other on the Colour Wheel, they are a colour harmony. It is worth investing in a Colour Wheel (available from most good art shops) to help you see how colours sit with each other before you splash out on several gallons of grapefruit yellow and olive green paint for the bedroom. And really consider carefully whether a violet and lime green living room is something you can live with.

This does not mean to say that dramatic colours do not have their place. Far too many houses are decorated in various shades of beige (I think "taupe" is the current fashionable term although this is being challenged by "string"), and the standard neutral colour for new dwellings is still the veritable magnolia. Subtle, muted wall colours (like off white and taupe) are fine, and very easy to live with. But contrast and enliven them with bright highlights in your accessories and upholstery. Consider a multi-coloured rug, some coloured ceramics or glassware, vivid prints or paintings, or squashy cushions in jewel tones. The overall effect will be airy and soothing yet the flashes of colour can bring in your personality and be your signature touches.

Strong colours are best confined to the rooms that have less usage. Hallways and cloakrooms are ideal spaces in which to experiment. No one spends much time in these rooms, so you can afford to be bold. Just because these spaces may be small or narrow, don’t be afraid of using vivid colour. Sometimes a tiny cloakroom is just a tiny cloakroom, and no amount of white paint is going to change that. Why not emphasis its bijou proportions by painting the space dark burgundy or navy and use lots of white (in the sanitaryware and towels) as the accent colour? A touch of aqua might be the finishing touch. Be like a chef - a dollop of coral, with a swish of aquamarine and a pinch of jade may be exactly the right recipe for your room. The important thing is to consider the quantities. Decide on your main colour and then add carefully selected accents.

Consider the texture of your colours. A bright red dining room can be toned down by the application of various glazes so that its vibrancy is turned to a rich burnish. Bright yellows can be colourwashed over a white base to wash them out. In both cases the original character of the colour is maintained and only its brightness is muted. Colours can be layered for unusual effects. A piece of inexpensive pine furniture can be transformed by distressing it - painting an undercoat of blue, an overcoat of white and then sanding off the white paint on its corners and around its handles to make it look like its an antique.

If you’re stuck for ideas when trying to decide what colour scheme to choose for a room, look at the furniture and objects you want to use. You may have a painting or a rug that can act as your inspiration. Many interior designers build up complex colour schemes from just one item. Look around you - even an old purple vase or the faded red covers of a collection of books can be the starting point of a whole room scheme.

Have fun with colour. Be brave! Be bold!

**Space Planning: The Step Beyond Interior Decoration**

Everybody is familiar with the dramatic change that can come about from simply changing the colour on your walls. But how many people have actually considered changing the shape of the space itself? Sometimes we’re presented with problematic spaces that demand solutions. A very narrow room with a high ceiling looks out of proportion - maybe installing a false ceiling with recessed downlighters is the answer. A bathroom next to a WC practically instructs you to remove the dividing wall. Try applying this principle to an ordinary space as well, one which doesn’t have particular problems of size or proportion, but which might benefit from a re-think of the space and how it is to be used.

The past shows us examples of space dividing which may or may not be desirable solutions for the way we live today. The 1960s and 1970s gave us plastic and metal shelving units, open on both sides and jutting out across our living rooms. The style has moved on but the principle is still useable, except today we would use fabric panels, glass bricks, chrome retail shelving, or folding bamboo screens to achieve the same result.

Straightforward square spaces can be given added interest and the illusion of greater length by incorporating a pair of screens that mirror each other across the room. These needn’t be large, they needn’t jut out into the room too far. Their mere presence is enough to create a space-changing illusion. If the room is high enough, you might consider building a platform over one end - for sleeping, reading, watching television. This is an especially effective way of increasing living space in a small studio or one-bedroom flat.

False ceilings needn’t be permanent. Swathes of fabric can create snug areas in an otherwise large and clinical room. Or, you might consider altering your space by changing the floor level. The character of a large dining/living room can be made intimate and distinct by raising the level of the dining room. This also offers the opportunity of using the newly created underfloor space for storage - even as a wine cellar. One clever architect recently tucked a full-sized bathtub under the bedroom floor in a tiny flat!

All of these changes (except for the bathtub under the floor) have been made without changing your structural walls and are usually limited to one room. Redesigning an entire floor (or whole house) is an altogether larger project. Cramped and muddled rooms on a single floor can often be rearranged to create the feeling of more space.

The basic principles of this can be seen in good garden design. A diagonal line of vision across a square space makes the space feel bigger. If re-siting a door or incorporating an archway achieves a diagonal line of sight through two or more rooms, the effect will be the same. Gardens also use vistas, looking through and beyond the space you inhabit to an object or space beyond. Creating an enfilade - a progression of rooms linked together by a succession of doorways or archways in perfect alignment - was one of the ways the architects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries achieved this vista effect in their design of stately homes and palaces. You might consider borrowing this idea for your own home.

Don’t forget about mirrors and glass. The early 19th century architect Sir John Soane adored mirrors and the space-expanding effect they had on his interiors. His house in London was been preserved, complete with all its architectural quirks, mirrored ceilings and walls, and interior porthole windows. Large Victorian mirrors, bereft of the huge mantles and sideboards over which they used to hang, create an elegant illusion of doubled space simply by being propped up against an empty wall.

Sand-blasted glass panels, glass bricks, and etched glass are all being used in creative new ways to help increase light and a sense of space and airiness in today’s homes. Today’s glass designers can create everything from glass staircases to glass fireplaces. And this glass isn’t fragile! It’s tough, strong and beautiful.

If you have a garden next to your room, try to incorporate that space both visually and aesthetically. Install French or sliding doors to bring the garden into your home. Increase that effect by using the same floorcovering inside and outside - sandstone, terracotta tiles or slate would work well and look great. Even if you can’t install French doors to make the room flow into the garden, a simple expedient of sympathetically planted window boxes will help make the garden flow into the room, especially if the boxes are planted in colours which co-ordinate with your room’s decor.

Be brave! Make your living space work for you.

**Modern interior designers at work**

The client's brief was to refurbish the entire interior to a luxury modern standard. An essentially open plan feel was obtained by the wide arches leading from lounge to dining area and from dining room to kitchen. In the lounge a modern "hole-in-the-wall" fireplace was installed fronted by slate-topped storage. This was topped with a streamlined cantilevered shelf.

In the dining room a warm and welcoming wall colour sets off the contemporary design of the bespoke radiator covers. An air of simple elegance is maintained by the simple lines of the dining furniture.

The bespoke kitchen continues the American walnut theme set in the lounge. A glass splashback ensures easy cleaning while the modern design emphasis is maintained by the stainless steel extractor, stainless steel venetian blinds and 20th Century design classic bar stools.

The family bathroom again uses bespoke joinery and cabinetry but is softened by the use of solid oak and caramel coloured mosaic wall tiles.

The en-suite bathroom is a different story. Luxuriously finished in limestone tiles this room is a pure indulgence. The large frameless shower maximises the visual impact of the floor-to-ceiling tiles. The relentlessly modern design sees the dual wash basins sunk into black granite. American black walnut reappears here to underline the luxury of the finish. The jacuzzi bath is faced with limestone tiles, thus giving the room a weighty solidity. The waterfall tap adds a touch of classic luxury. The bespoke joinery is continued into the master bedroom where the headboard, again in American black walnut, provides personalised storage options.

**Conclusion**

Interior design is closely related to other existing interior features, such as any special part of a construction, and the style that has been built into an indoor area. For example, an attractive bay window, archway, or fireplace may be part of an area's existing interior design. If some feature does not suit the planned interior design, new furnishings may assist to draw attention away from it. On the other hand, the interior design plan may be used to attract attention to a particular feature. Before developing an interior design consideration should be given to what the area is to be used for, the life style of those who will frequent it, and the available budget for the interior design. Conducting thorough research of interior design sites is time consuming. However it is imperative that sufficient research is conducted before arriving at a final decision. We trust that the sites on interior design that have been made available for you to go to below will suit your needs

**Literature**

1. "The Sovereign", May 2006. Adrienne Chinn.

2. "The Sovereign", March 2006. Adrienne Chinn.

3. "The Sovereign", April 2006. Adrienne Chinn.