



## Color Styling

Color is an important decorating tool. It's the first thing you notice about a room and its furnishings. Color can create illusions and seem to change the apparent shape and size of rooms, features and furnishings. Choices in the placement and characteristics of different colors can either emphasize certain architectural features and furnishings or help them to blend into the rest of room. Color makes an impact! This key to your decorating plan is exciting and fun to work with but for the best results advance planning is a must.

Let's start with some basics. Here are some suggestions to consider as you work with and evaluate your decorating plans and color schemes.

### Watch for These Problem Areas

Successful use of color in decorating depends on planning a total scheme in which all parts are viewed and planned together as a whole. Here are some common problems in using color.

- ☐ *No overall color plan.* Random, casual color decisions often result in an erratic scheme.
- ☐ *Too many or too varied colors.* A color scheme using many or all hues is difficult to plan and often fails. It can appear confused and disorganized. Use 3 to 4 colors within a room with one color clearly dominant, one as a secondary color and two colors in small accents.
- ☐ *Too bland, dull, uninteresting.* Contrasts add interest and appeal, but there must also be some common quality or bond between them. When using related hues, plan for more light-dark value contrasts. If using contrasting hues, keep the values and/or strengths similar. Neutral colors must have stimulating value contrasts! Texture and pattern contrasts become even more important in neutral color schemes, too.
- ☐ *Too intense color used in large areas.* This may work in spaces used only briefly; otherwise, intense colors often become tiring over a period of time.
- ☐ *Too much contrast in large color areas.* Nearly equal amounts of contrasting colors create tension in a room. It's best if one color is dominant in intensity or in the amount used. Brighter colors can be used in smaller areas for balance.
- ☐ *Too cold a feeling in the room.* Warm color schemes tend to require a small amount of cool colors for balance. Cool colors need some warm touches to keep a room from feeling too sterile and cold. A small amount of warm color can dominate large amounts of cool colors as illustrated in nature's example.

## Illusions in Volume, Size and Weight

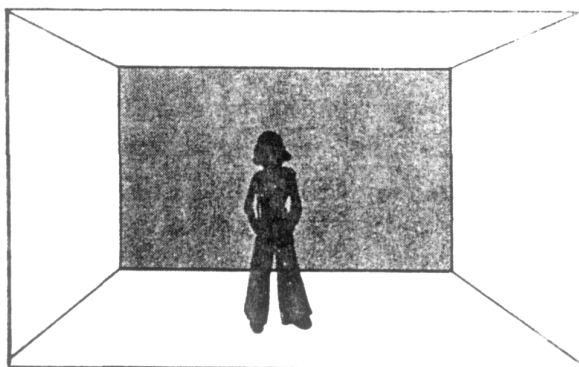
Colors have different characteristics that can be used to advantage in planning your room. Here are some design concepts to keep in mind as you think through your decorating plans.

Hue, Value, Strength	Properties	Results
Light Colors <hr/> Pale Colors (Tints) <hr/> Cool Colors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Receding</li> <li>■ Moves away from the viewer</li> <li>■ Restful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Spaces appear larger</li> <li>■ Spacious feeling</li> <li>■ Light, airy feeling</li> <li>■ Objects appear lighter</li> <li>■ Objects appear larger</li> <li>■ Objects appear further away</li> </ul>
Dark Colors <hr/> Intense Colors <hr/> Warm Colors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Advancing</li> <li>■ Moves toward the viewer</li> <li>■ More active</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cozy feeling</li> <li>■ Areas appear smaller</li> <li>■ Objects appear closer</li> <li>■ Objects appear heavier</li> <li>■ Objects appear smaller</li> </ul>

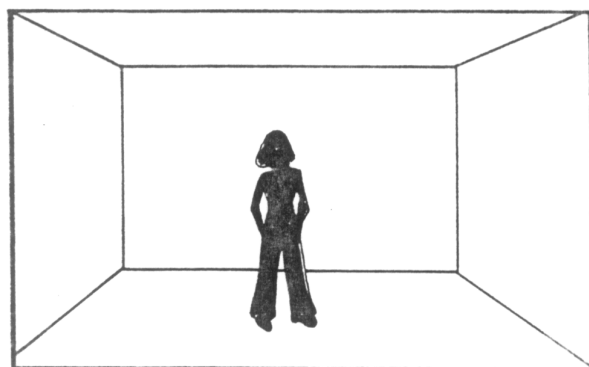
### Applying These Concepts:

Cool colors tend to recede and make objects appear to be shorter and smaller; warmer colors make items appear to be larger and closer to the viewer. Generally speaking, darker colored objects appear heavier and smaller. Lighter, less saturated or pastel colors make objects seem lighter in weight and larger. When using colors of the same values and intensity, the warmer hues appear heavier.

Smaller rooms look more spacious when decorated in a single light color, with stronger color used as accents. Since dark or saturated or intense hues advance, they decrease the apparent size of rooms and objects appear larger and heavier. Generally, warm hues also have this effect.



Dark values and warm colors advance.



Light values and cool colors recede.

Applying these concepts, a high ceiling can be painted a darker and warmer color to make it appear lower due to apparent heaviness and advancing color. Low ceilings painted with lighter or cooler colors will look higher. (See illustrations at right.)

The volume of the area also influences color. A color shown on a paint chip will not show the same characteristics when used in larger amounts. Colors appear stronger in both intensity and darker in value when covering larger areas. The walls and ceilings will darken and the hue will brighten its effect by about 50 percent in a large room. Therefore, select a lighter, duller color to give the effect you are trying to achieve.

### Color Near Color

The hues we think we see are affected by many things. Contrasts accentuate differences. A color appears lighter when surrounded by darker colors.

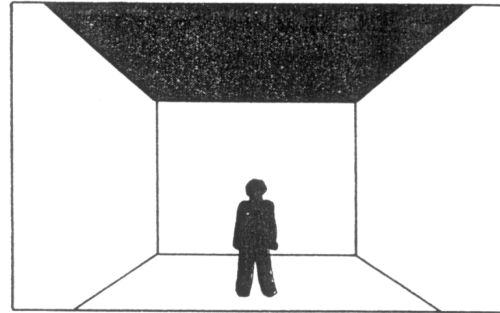
When small areas of color are placed next to each other, they may lose their own separate hue by blending and appearing to be a different hue from a distance. Impressionist period painters often experimented with interesting color contrasts and lighting. A close-up inspection of paintings, particularly those showing a technique called pointillism, shows how strokes of paint on the canvas blend together when viewed at a distance.

The same color placed against two different color backgrounds may appear to change hue. Also, a very muted color may seem to be absolutely neutral. However, placed against another contrasting, muted color, both appear to come alive and be stronger colors.

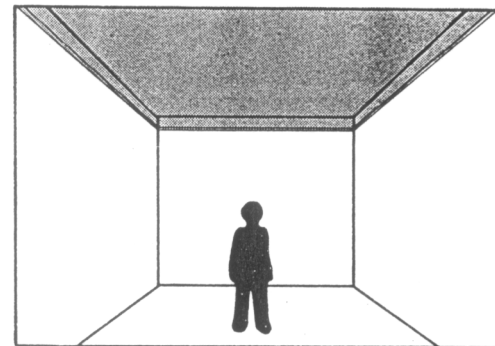
Complementary colors placed next to each other create vivid contrast, and each hue is brightened or intensified by the other. Colors appear less intense if placed near a related color. Simultaneous contrast (afterimage) occurs when one color projects its complement onto the color next to it.

Whites can be a particular problem in matching and blending. As with other colors, white can be cool or warm or have a hint of color in it. Evaluate swatches closely to be sure that all whites harmonize with one another. When using a neutral such as white or off-white with colors, the whites will be more harmonious if they are tinted with the same color. For example, sheer curtains with a slight yellow tint can be more closely matched with white paints if yellow is present in the white paint. A white ceiling will “fit” with a pink room more easily if a bit of pink is added to the white paint.

#### To lower a ceiling

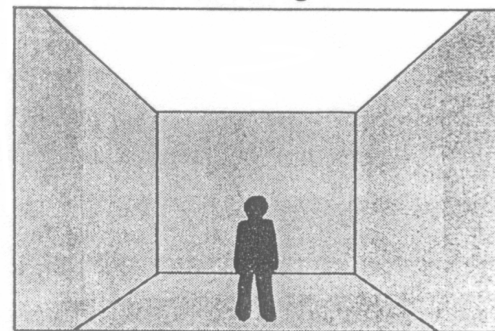


Paint it a dark color (the darker the color, the lower the ceiling).



Use a border along the top section of the wall.

#### To raise a low ceiling



Paint it white.

## Emphasis and Camouflage

A variety of visual effects can be considered as a part of the total design of the interior. They can create a focus point within a room and emphasize or camouflage particular features or furnishings. Contrasting colors will call for attention and emphasize features and furnishings. Related or similar colors will blend in and make less desirable features seem to disappear. For example, large pieces of furniture can be blended in by using the same or a similar wall color behind them. White woodwork becomes a focal point if used in a room with dark blue walls! Think about the effect you want and plan color styling accordingly.

Decide whether your color scheme will emphasize the background or the furnishings. Play one up and the other down so that they don't seem to compete for attention. If furnishings and accessories are the most interesting feature in the room, then draw attention to them by using the same light, subtle color on the background walls and floors. A striking room can be designed by keeping all backgrounds and furnishings in a light neutral, such as off-white or light beige, and using distinctive accessories such as paintings, cushions and lamps for bright spots of color, variety and interest.

If the furnishings are sparse and uninteresting, then use a dramatic color scheme on walls and floor. If you have beautiful floor coverings or wall coverings, draw attention to them by using neutral or subtle colors on furnishings.

Another example is in the selection of window treatments. The color used in a window treatment may make the window(s) the most conspicuous element in the room. To blend the window areas with the walls, choose a fabric that is the same hue, value and intensity as the wall. For emphasis, select colors that contrast with the background in hue, value or intensity, but relate to the other colors throughout the room.

A seemingly discordant color used in a room will add emphasis, surprise and adventure to a boring room that has too much sameness. Just be sure that the color is drawing attention to the right thing at the right time!

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