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EC67-1190 Art Principles : Guide to Arranging Furnishing

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ART PRINCIPLES:

guide to arranging furnishings



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guide to arranging furnishings

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ART PRINCIPLES:

* your guide to arranging furnishings

BY MAGDALENE PFISTER
EXTENSION SPECIALIST IN
HOME FURNISHING

Art elements and art principles considered together help us achieve beauty and order in our surroundings.

The art elements -- line, form, color and texture -- are the tools or ingredients. These were discussed in E.C. 65-1186 - Art Elements Related to Home Furnishing.

Being aware of the ingredients is not enough -- they must be selected and arranged according to art principles.

These art principles -- balance, proportion, rhythm, emphasis and unity -- give a plan for using the elements effectively. Since they are guides rather than rules, they offer opportunity to express individuality and meet family needs whether it's placing furniture, arranging accessories or setting the table.

Some people have a natural sense of arrangement and use the art principles instinctively. Most of us, however, start with a study and application of principles. Gradually, through practice, we develop individual design abilities.

In an orderly arrangement, all pieces including furniture are part of the whole design. However, when many different colors, form, texture and lines are thrown together, chaos results.

What Are The Art Principles?

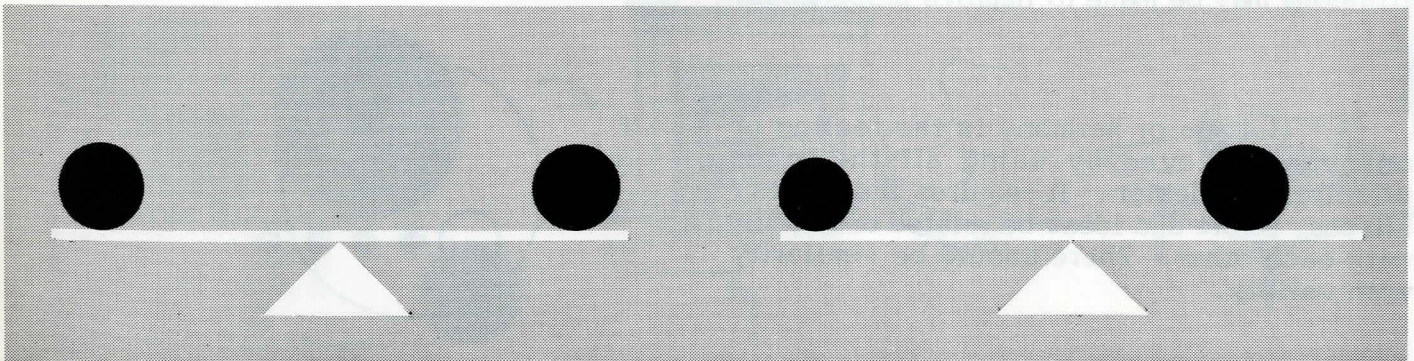
Art principles which help give a feeling of order and freedom in an interior are balance, emphasis, proportion, rhythm and unity.

1. Balance - produces a feeling of stability. It is gained by grouping form, color, and textures around a center in such a way that there are equal attractions on each side of the center.

In formal or symmetrical balance, similar weights or attractions are placed at equal distance on either side of a center. The effect is dignified but sometimes stiff and rigid.

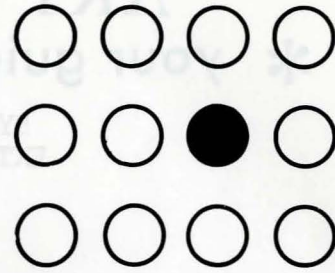
Informal balance, also known as asymmetrical or occult balance, uses unlike weights or attractions at different distances from a center. It creates a more casual and friendly effect. With informal balance you should consider:

- a. Size and number of forms on either side.
- b. Distance from the center or from front and back.
- c. The way dark and light, dull, bright, warm and cool colors are used.



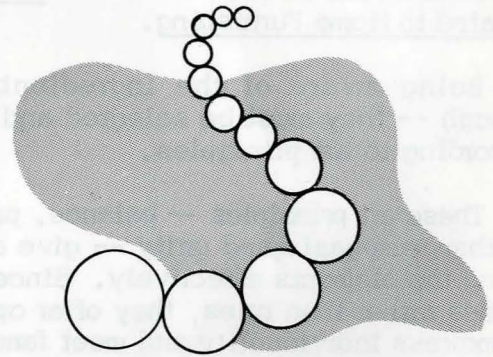
2. Emphasis - calls attention to the most important part and to related interests in the order of importance. We can achieve emphasis by:

- a. Placing or grouping.
- b. Contrast of lines, colors, light, textures or shapes.
- c. Having enough plain background space around objects.



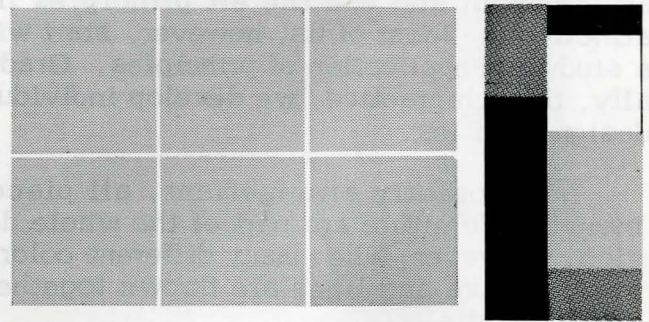
3. Rhythm - suggests connected movement. It makes an easy path along which the eye can travel. We can achieve rhythm by:

- a. Repetition of lines, shape, sizes, colors, texture or pattern.
- b. Progression of sizes.
- c. Radiation from a central point.
- d. Lines coming together or transitional lines.

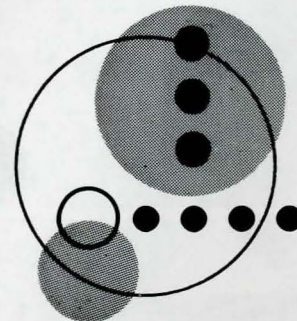


4. Proportion - deals with the relationships of space or parts so they are pleasingly related to each other and to the whole. The Greek oblong is a standard of proportion. In it the sides are in the ratio of two parts to three. Scale is the relationship between size within an object and size of other objects used with it.

Proportion relates to division of spaces, or amounts of color, texture, pattern. Equal parts or amounts are monotonous. Optical illusions may be made to improve proportions.



5. Unity - or harmony is the feeling of oneness achieved by using all the other principles of design. It requires that sizes, shapes, colors and ideas be related or friendly with each other. There should be similarity with variety.



HOW DO WE APPLY ART PRINCIPLES TO HOME FURNISHINGS?

The principles can serve as guides in helping you create a home that is pleasing to you and your family. The principles can be applied to a room as a whole or to the articles in it. As you become more aware of these you will be able to analyze and make improvements without losing a "personal" touch.

At first you may be conservative and you will feel "safe" in using these guides. You may already have imagination and courage to be adventuresome in arrangement.

Check the following principles as they apply to your home or arrangements.

Balance

Does the room or arrangement give a feeling of rest or repose? A well balanced wall for example will have the same amount of attraction on both sides of the center and the same amount of visual attraction on opposite walls. Upper and lower portions should appear stable.

Forms may appear heavy because of large size, bright, warm or dark color, coarse texture or bold patterns. Plan to use these visually "heavier" forms in smaller areas or close to the center or in the lower part of an arrangement.

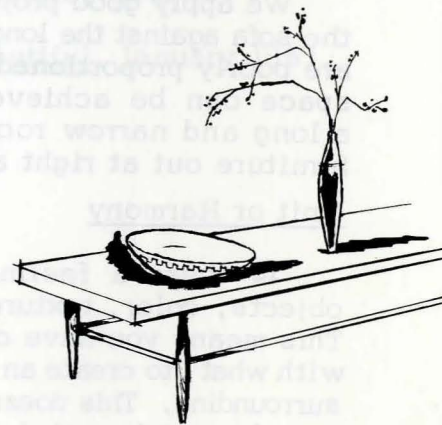
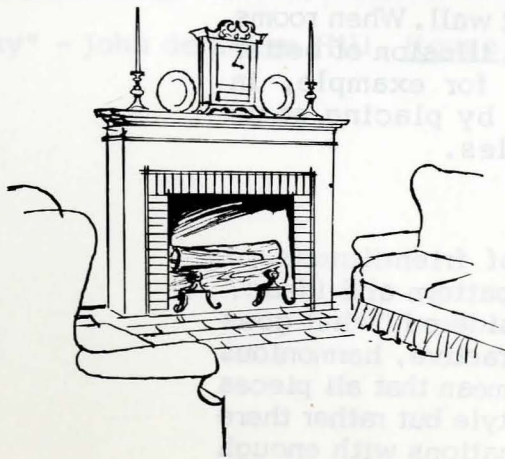
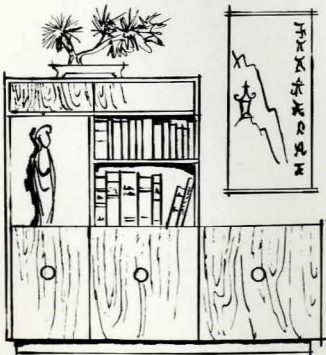
The type of balance you choose will partly depend on the feeling you wish to give. You

may use paired articles on either side of a center for formal balance producing a feeling of dignity and extreme order. Or you may wish to balance things unevenly by using a larger appearing item near the center and the smaller item a greater distance from the center. You will find this kind of balance more difficult to achieve but less tiresome and more casual than formal balance. It has been found that discussions take place better with an informal arrangement. Usually it's better to combine formal and informal balance, but have more of one type in furnishings.

Emphasis

Does your room or arrangement have a center of interest? Often the structure of the room determines what is to be emphasized. You may decide to focus attention on a view from a window, or a certain piece of furniture, or an interesting object. Is there charm and contrast? The contrast may be in color, textures of wood, weaves in fabric, lines of furniture, and arrangement of objects. Remember though, that too much contrast is confusing.

Simplicity is closely related to emphasis. If you have too many things around the focal point it is impossible to emphasize the one you value most. Allow enough space for gaining emphasis. Too many small objects in an arrangement distract from the unusual or important object.



Rhythm

Do your eyes follow easily around the room from the center of interest? Do you get a feeling of space or of clutter. Large pieces of furniture will follow the lines of the room rather than be set at angles.

Are light and heavy pieces, tall and low, "hard" and "soft" surfaces well distributed?

Colors and textures should be repeated to give this easy, graceful motion. Continuous lines may be found in the way furniture is arranged, by moldings or borders on the wall.

Often, accessories such as area rug, and light fixtures will have radiating lines. Furniture may show rhythm in progression of sizes (drawers or nest of tables).

Overlapping helps pull accessories in an arrangement together. Articles do not need to touch, but should be positioned closely enough to lead the eye.

Proportion

Look at the size of other pieces of furniture. Select large pieces for large rooms, small pieces for small rooms. In the same way notice, too, the scale or size of pattern in a carpet or fabric in drapery or upholstery in relation to the room and object for which it is to be used. Are lamps and tables in scale with the chair? Watch the size of small items such as vases and pictures in relation to the space and room you give them.

We apply good proportion when we place the sofa against the longest wall. When rooms are poorly proportioned an illusion of better space can be achieved, for example, in a long and narrow room, by placing some furniture out at right angles.

Unit or Harmony

Is there a feeling of friendliness of objects, color, texture, pattern and ideas? This means you have considered "what goes with what" to create an attractive, harmonious surrounding. This doesn't mean that all pieces are of a certain period or style but rather there is agreement in the combinations with enough variation for "spice."

Remember...

Although these principles were studied separately, they are inseparable and work together to give a pleasing single total impression.

Money doesn't guarantee a beautiful home.

Although home decorating fashions are variable, the governing art principles are constant.

Reduce clutter, ask the family to decide what can be discarded.

Don't try to please everyone or you'll please no one in home furnishing.

Change is important. Something that is arranged and looks pleasing becomes tiresome and dull if you have to look at it all year.

Unity with just enough variety is the key for beauty and order.

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