

Color Theory

2 hour CEU

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Beverly Vosko's
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Color Theory .2 CEU Handouts

Welcome to our seminar!

Color is a reflection of light: when light passes through a glass prism, it is broken up into a rainbow of all the visible colors which can be seen with red at one end and blue at the other

When the entire color spectrum is combined and seen at one time– humans see white light

An object absorbs all the colors of light except the color of the object, which is the color that we see; so for example a red object is actually one that absorbs all colors but red and reflects back only red light

A primary color is a color that cannot be produced through mixing

The 3 primary colors are red, yellow and blue.

The 3 secondary colors are orange, green and violet

The color wheel was invented by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1810 and the band of colors Red, Orange, Yellow, Green Blue and Violet are arranged in a circle so that the end meets the beginning

There are various color systems. The color system used by the Interior Design world, is the Munsell Color System created by Albert Henry Munsell which describes color in terms of hue, value and chroma:

Hue simply means the name we give to a color such as red.

Value is the lightness or darkness of a color... adding white, lightens a color without changing its hue and adding black, darkens a color without changing its hue... Munsell measures value by means of a scale of tones from 1-10 from dark to light , with 1 being black the darkest and 10 being white

Light values from 6-9 are called tints Dark values from 1-4 are called shades

Chroma is the intensity or purity of a color

Complementary colors are opposite each other in the color wheel: red is across from green, orange is across from blue and yellow is across from violet

Red, orange and yellow are warm colors

Green, blue and violet are cool colors

People's attitudes and experiences as well as the context they are viewing the color in influence how they feel about a particular color

Color has a psychological impact on how people feel:

Red makes people feel excitement, action danger, and passion

Orange makes people feel optimistic

Yellow makes people feel happy

Green makes people feel reborn, rested and natural

Blue makes people feel peaceful and calm

Violet makes people feel royal

Pink makes people feel feminine

Brown makes people feel comfortable

White makes people feel pure

Black makes people feel powerful

Different cultures feel differently about various colors and if you are working with people of diverse cultures or in a different country than the U.S. you need to know how they feel about the colors you are using

Color schemes can create color harmony:

Monotone color schemes use a single color of low chroma such as greys, tans or tinted whites

Monochromatic color schemes use a wider range of chroma and value in single hue

Analogous color schemes use a color and the 2 colors adjacent to it on the color wheel

Complementary color schemes use contrasting hues from opposite sides of the color wheel – best to use large areas of 1 low chroma color mixed with small amounts of a stronger version of its complementary color used as an accent color

Triad Schemes use 3 hues equidistant from one another on the color wheel

Tetrad Schemes use 4 hues and are very hard to do successfully

Glossy finishes, textured surfaces, various large and small scale patterns and metallic finishes all can alter the appearance of a particular color.

Color also changes when viewed in relationship to adjacent colors surrounding it

Warm colors are said to advance ie appear closer than they really are...

while cool colors recede, ie appear farther away than they really are

Light colors make objects look larger and lighter than they really are

And dark colors make them look smaller and heavier than they really are

Since color is a reflection of light, you must look at all the colors you are planning on using in the light of the actual built space of your project and with the ambient or general light that you are planning on using in that space

3 Approaches to help your client if they can't choose what color to use:

-Natural Color Scheme – which only uses materials in their natural color resulting from its growth or manufacture and most of these natural colors are warm neutral colors

All Neutral Color Scheme is similar to the all natural color scheme but the choice of neutrals is arrived at without concern for using naturally colored materials

Neutrals Plus Color Schemes are neutral color schemes accented with punches of a strong color and are very popular today

Functional Color Schemes want every color to be purposeful in some way and have functional intentions such as to warm up a room with a northern orientation or make a space larger or smaller and more cozy

Care must be taken to choose color for specialized interiors such as offices and schools that fit with those spaces and don't look too institutional looking

Offices should be decorated in soft warm tones..too much white can lead to brightness and glare and drab tones can be boring

Schools should not be decorated in drab tones and strong primary colors can be too cliché

Restaurants can be decorated with colors in keeping with their cuisine and price level

Stores and Showrooms should use colors that highlight the goods on display and reflect the price level and quality of the merchandise being sold

Medical and Healthcare Facilities should project a restful, calming optimistic ambience that promotes recovery and good health for the patrons of those facilities... fenestration and visual contact with the outdoors makes people feel good and soft cool colors are calming. Avoid stark white or institutional green and avoid strong colors that can be either depressing or too stimulating

Hotel and Motel lobbies and rooms need to use colors that exude whatever image that venue wishes to project, be it luxury, relaxation or fun.

Assisted Living Facilities should have stronger brighter colors than might seem normal for other venues, so that elderly individuals with dimming eyesight will see those colors and be able to enjoy them.

Industrial settings can use colors that signify safety to avoid accidents

Creating a beautiful color scheme:

Select all the major items intended to be utilized in a space prior to purchasing anything for that space to insure that it all looks well together,

Procure swatches of everything you intend to use and view those swatches in the actual space you are decorating and view those swatches in both daylight and ambient light to insure that it looks good both during the daytime and at night.

Decide if you are using Incandescent, fluorescent, or LED lighting and view all those swatches under the exact light you intend to use in that space – because since color is a reflection of light, it will change with different lighting.

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Biography

Beverly Vosko, Allied Member ASID, RID, UDCP (Universal Design Certified Professional), CAPS, L.E.E.D Green Associate, CGP (is a full service, Registered Interior Designer in Texas #6333. She is President and founder of both Beverly Vosko Interiors and InteriorDesign-ED; both DBA's for C. V. Design Inc. For over 25 years, she has been designing homes across the United States and Europe, specializing in creating custom residential and commercial environments, be they traditional, transitional, contemporary or eclectic, that match her design clients' every need, through her design firm, Beverly Vosko Interiors. For nearly 20 years, she has taught Interior Design: first at Rice University, then at the University of Houston, and for the last 10 years nationally, with her Continuing Education company, InteriorDesign-ED. Specifically, she has taught Interior Design, Aging in Place, Green/Sustainable Design, Lighting and Antiques. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude from the University of Pennsylvania, studied Art History at Harvard University, received her MBA in Marketing from NYU Stern Graduate Business School, and completed Design and Antiques training from Sotheby's, the world-renowned Inchbald School of Design and Houston Community College. Please view her websites, www.vosko.com and www.InteriorDesign-ED.com