



DESIGNED *for* BALANCE

An Interior Designer ON HOW PATTERNS AND COLORS AFFECT YOUR MOOD AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WELLBEING

By SARAH A. ABDALLAH, FOUNDER AND CEO OF FUNCTIONAL CREATIVE DESIGN

Humans are truly visual creatures, according to an MIT study on Brain Processing of Visual Information: "Because half of the human brain is devoted directly or indirectly to vision, understanding the process of vision provides clues to understanding fundamental operations in the brain," said Professor Miriganka Sur of MIT's Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences. An estimated 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual and 65% of humans are visual learners. That being said our physical surroundings, i.e., the design and visual of our interiors, has a significant impact on our psychological state and wellbeing. It is not so far off to say there is a true psychology behind how color and patterns affect your mood and emotions. We can't underestimate the importance of our built environments as we spend an astonishing average of 90% of our time indoors. While we are encroaching on 9 full months of being mostly indoors in the same location due to the pandemic, we are all searching for more ways to create mental, emotional and spiritual balance.

Choosing your colors wisely is important for so many reasons. Here are few pro tips on color psychology to keep in mind when selecting colors for different spaces within your home environment.

Bright colors that is, vibrant shades of green and blue, yellow, and orange - provide an expansive feeling. These are friendly, happy colors that encourage communication and are therefore especially welcome in the dining area and kitchen.

Dark colors, such as red, purple, blue, and dark shades of green, can have a constricting and gloomy effect. But when applied in the right place or as accent elements, they can help convey comfort and security.

Warm colors, orange and yellow hues, for example, raise the perceived temperature of a room. For that reason, they are best used in rooms that face north, because they inspire activity. Avoid them in rooms meant for relaxation, like the bedroom.

Cold colors, colors such as icy blues and greens have a calming effect, they are especially well-suited for bedrooms; they help you to go to bed relaxed in the evening and wake up refreshed the next morning.

Gray should be avoided for the dining area and kitchen - unless you want to dampen your appetite.

Red raises the energy level of a room, but it may also make people more irritable and hostile - so it's not a good choice for a child's room. Use it as an accent rather than a base room color.



Sarab at the Public hotel

PHOTO: CREDIT SUKMA AH ANHTAR



PHOTO: CLAIRE STARRIS



The Vinyl custom fabric by a company called F.Sbamacher

THE 2020/2021 COLOR OPTIONS AND PATTERNS TO KEEP IN MIND:

* This soft grey creates a sense of relaxation and tranquility – use in a home office, bedroom or bathroom.

* Blue is calming, and evokes the elements of nature that trigger a sense of tranquility. Ideal for a kitchen or bathroom. We suggest frequent high traffic areas.

* Yellow nurtures the feeling of optimism, happiness and cheerfulness. It's good for mental focus. Ideal in a space that has a lot of natural light.

* Pink is soothing - evoking compassion love and peacefulness and is related to nurturing and understanding.



Farrow and Ball Pavilion Gray 242

Farrow and Ball Hague Blue 30

Farrow and Ball Pink Ground

Farrow and Ball Pavilion Gray 242

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF PATTERNS FOUND IN NATURE

There has been extensive research documenting the benefits of viewing natural environments; being in nature has direct positive connection for humans – reduction of stress, improved mood, being more alert and feeling sharper cognitively. Visual patterns inspired by biological systems have direct correlations to improved mood and have been noted to reduce stress by a whopping 60%.

Organic Patterns and incorporating nature in architecture, design and art can truly sooth the psyche of an individual. This is also known as a Biophilic design approach. Using biophilic patterns found in nature to inform interior architecture and design or décor elements has a positive impact on one's well-being.

Natural themes in historical structures and locations around the globe tell us that biophilic design is not really new idea, it's really part of human conciseness. In Ancient Egypt for example we find lotus leaf, animal forms like the sphinx and other natural floral patterns along with traditional Islamic geometry, calligraphy and arabesque style - all considered biomorphic as they resemble natural forms that can be found throughout the region from Iran to Turkey throughout the UAE, and from Algeria all the way to Sudan. In more recent years it has been embraced as a formal approach to design and architecture.

Before delving deeper into some of the different types of patterns, I want to encourage you as I would my interior design clients: be mindful of the overuse of forms and patterns. It is necessary to avoid "visual toxicity" with too many patterns and forms in one space, which can cause anxiety and stress emotionally to a person, and they would likely not really know why they are feeling this way.

Floral: Typically, they have a lot of circles and/or curves – they are soothing because they are smooth with no angles, so their presence makes a person feel youthful, happy and carefree. When choosing how to incorporate floral patterns into your space, pick a size, color and type of flower that suits the feeling you want to capture. For a soothing feeling, try a medium-size floral in fresh and light tones. For spaces to inspire and have more energy have a look at some larger-scale floral inspiration in more bold and vibrant hues.

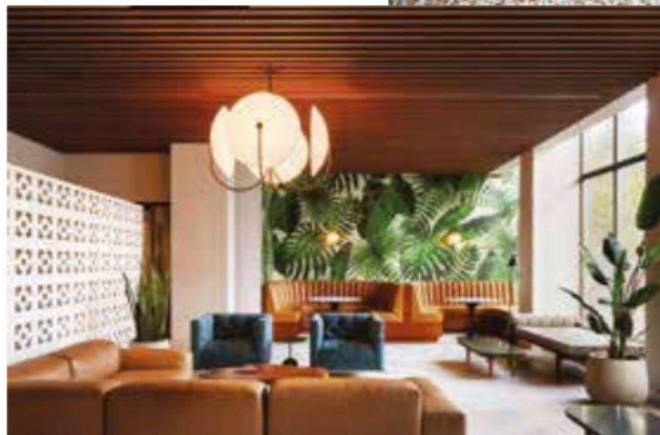
Tropical Psychedelic: The use of highly concentrated color and pattern combination in a way that is unimaginable really creates heightened emotions. Small dosages in your

interior can give a wow factor, but we would recommend using the effect sparingly.

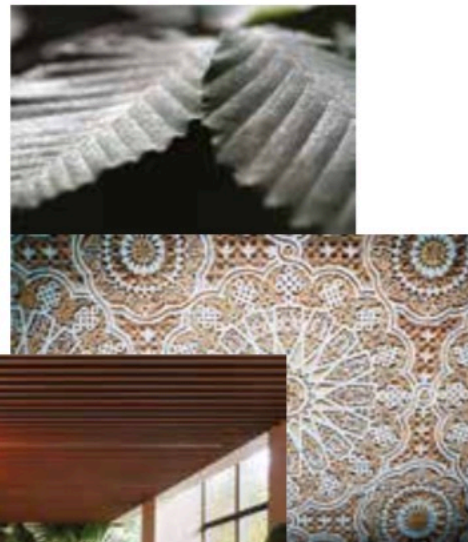
Stripes: Lines may be quite common, but they're also incredibly versatile as a visual aid. Different lines have differing effects on a person. A line that is vertical feels celestial as it points upward, and a diagonal line evokes a feeling of instability, whereas a line that is horizontal makes a person feel more grounded. A large modern interior can be enhanced with wide stripes and bright color – a strong contrast with bright color creates an energetic and cheerful space.

Geometric Patterns: Geometric patterns

"BE *mindful* OF THE OVERUSE OF FORMS AND PATTERNS. AVOID "*visual toxicity*" WITH TOO MANY PATTERNS AND FORMS IN ONE SPACE, WHICH CAN CAUSE *anxiety* AND STRESS"



historical design details in Turkey, Iran, North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Levantine to see how we can reimagine these forms in functional ways that will help inform our new design and architecture of 2021 and beyond. The truth is our ancestors have long been leaders of math, science and architecture. Let's continue to reclaim our innovation as global leaders that provide ways to truly link well-being through Biomorphic design and find solutions for today's new challenges with a 360 view of human life.



such as a polygon represent the strength and structural complexity of this shape, and also conveys a futuristic aura. It is perfect for the home office where the structure of the honeycomb shape resonates with persistence.

There is so much knowledge and input we can claim as a global community, both positive and negative, about staying indoors during the pandemic of 2020. Why don't we create habitats where new ideas seem to bounce freely and where we can nurture wisdom and growth.

We need to look at our history and

About Sarah A. Abdallah: Backed by more than a decade of professional experience in Interior Design and Architectural and Brand Development, Sarah has excelled as the Founder and Chief Executive officer of Functional Creative Design since 2014. Prior to this appointment, she worked with Rockwell Group for Tony Chi and Associates, and with Perkins + Eastman. Through Functional Creative Design, Sarah aims to not only create spaces that incorporate wellness methods but that also create environments where human touch points and interactions are created for better understanding of the other. LEED-certified, she is dedicated to minimizing the environmental impact by developing impactful spaces that have holistic and 360 years of sustainability. She has also embraced in-depth studies of Yoga, meditation and mindfulness, dance, nutrition, Reiki, Body Talk and more with an eye on integrating holistic healing elements into all her designs.

ISSUE 117 JANUARY 2021

ELLE

ARABIA

MIND, BODY & SOUL
BE THE BEST
YOU THIS YEAR

IN CONVERSATION
KAREN WAZEN
& MADIYAH AL SHARQI

UAE DHS 15



a FRESH START