

RHYTHM

Rhythm is defined as continuous, recurrent, or organized movement. It is a principle that allows an underlying unity and evolving variety in design. There are four types of rhythm in design.

REPETITION

Rhythm through repetition can be as simple as repeated shapes, colors, textures, or patterns. It can also be achieved by an alternation of shapes, color, textures, or in continuous related movement, such as the natural textures and patterns of the earth.

GRADATION/PROGRESSION

Rhythm through gradation is completed by increasing or decreasing one or more qualities. It suggests an onward motion by successive changes toward a goal.

Gradation is easy to see in small things like patterns on china and in textiles or furniture. It may be seen in the ways a single pattern is used, or in a grouping of furniture or the sequence of spaces, shapes, or colors which gradually change within a room or throughout the interior. A good example is a set of canisters.

TRANSITION

Rhythm through transition is often subtle. It leads the eye in a gentle, continuous, uninterrupted visual flow from one area or object to another. Curved lines may help achieve a smooth transition. An arched doorway, curved sofa back, or the implied curve of a conversation circle are all ways to achieve this type of repetition.

CONTRAST/OPPOSITION

Rhythm through contrast is the direct placement of forms or colors to create opposition by an abrupt change. Some examples of this style are ornate objects placed in quiet backgrounds, old versus new object, round forms next to square ones, red next to green, or intersecting lines.

RADIATION

The rhythm referred to as radiation occurs when all parts of a composition are balanced and repeated around a center. Examples include the petals on a daisy, or chairs around a table. In homes it is usually found in circular objects such as plates, bowls, light fixtures, textile patterns, hanging plants and chandeliers. This type of balance is not used as frequently as other types.

The key to rhythm is continuity—the organized movement of recurring or developing patterns into a connected whole.