

ACCESSORIES

Accessories are a collection of precious or semi-precious artworks and lifetime collectibles reflecting our personalities creating a sense of belonging giving our homes individuality.

Throughout our lives we collect items that give us pleasure for their visual appeal, sentimentality or monetary value but whatever our passion and reasons, accessories should be selected on the basis of what makes us happy and not what is currently trendy as these items date in time and within a matter of years may be the subject of a collection of unwanted trash and the next garage sale.

EARLY CONSIDERATIONS

Following possession of a new home or reinstatement to a redesigned home, the ultimate stage is to arrange objet d'art to enhance interiors and gardens rather than detracting from them.

It is important accessories be selected for their artistic merit or inherent value irrespective of their worth and displayed accordingly rather than randomly placed objects occupying space.

Prior to accessorizing a room, a critical surveillance of interior and garden spaces in daylight and night light will be the first step in ascertaining if, where and how to accessories a home. Exhibition of accessories needs much consideration before purchase and placement.



Garden Pond with Statue and Lilies

In the above photograph, a garden pond is enhanced by the introduction of a delicate, carefully selected, well positioned statue reflecting, relating to, and enhancing the tranquility and beauty of the water garden.

Art galleries, major retailers, fashion and product suppliers worldwide employ the services of merchandise display specialists to accessorize their store exhibits enhancing visual appeal and product marketability. Imagine if we walked into a major department store or up market furniture shop devoid of colourful, cheery, well accessorized displays.

Each day we accessorize our clothing with jewelry such as scarves, earrings,

handbags, coordinating colours, textures and fabrics.

Accessories are an essential home decorating and design component and best when unified and well composed rather than simply placed to fill a space.

Accessorizing our homes is not about finding a spot and filling it with anything. Accessorizing a home is the careful composition and display of objects which have meaning and sometimes value and not necessarily value alone.

When composing artifacts or accessories there are design principles to be considered for successful display and they are as follows:-

- **Location** – appropriate to subject matter;
- **Size** – consider proportions of object being displayed to surrounding space;
- **Situation** - surrounding influences such as trees, children, heat etc.;
- **Illumination** – natural and artificial;
- **Dimensions** of display and proportion of item/s;
- **Materials** – do they harmonize with surroundings;
- **Cost**, and
- **Colour**.

Temporary arrangement may be advisable prior to permanent location allowing residents time to view each object and consider position throughout the day and night to ensure final locations do not conflict with traffic flow, communication, architectural detail and interior design fit-out.

Once final locations of all accessories including lamps, paintings, prints, ceramics, floral and photographs have been established permanent fixings may then be applied.

Fixings for two dimensional artworks must be strong enough to support the weight and suitable for the type of frame or support.

Wall type and finish will determine the type of fixing required.

Two dimensional wall mounted artworks are best installed by a professional. It may also be advisable to ensure that insurance policies are in place for semi-precious and precious artworks prior to delivery and installation.

ILLUMINATION

At night accessories need illumination for viewing and emphasis.

The type of light fitting, intensity and position of illumination should enhance the object being displayed and not detrimental to the architecture, interior design and furnishings.

Accessory illumination should be discreet, soft, subtle and enhancing. *(See Lighting Chapter 5)*

LAMPS

Interior lamps not only create pools of soft, warm, ambient light for emphasis of accessories, but also provide illumination of tasks areas such as reading, sewing and general conversation.

Lamp lighting, as with overhead lighting, is best when balanced around the room to avoid disparity with architectural elements and furniture arrangements.

The overall size of the lamp should be proportional to the volume of the room and lamp bases to shades as demonstrated below.



Undersized lamps



Correctly sized lamps

SELECTING LAMP COLOURS

When the room has a vista or focus and the objective is not to emphasize

the lamp, the shade colour is best harmonizing with the wall colour rather than contrasting. Contrasting colour lamp shades will attract the eye de-emphasizing the focus of the room.

However, if the room has no redeeming architectural feature or focus then the lamp may well be the focus. In this case, the colour and embellishment may be contrasting and complimenting.

Colour contrasting shades when illuminated can have an adverse effect on the overall colour scheme. The coloured shade in this case should compliment the colour scheme of the room. (See chapter Colour)

If shades are warm in colour, the coldest room can appear to be up to 15 degrees warmer so care should be exercised if the room is used mainly in hotter months. In this instance, the shades may be neutral or cool in colour imparting cooler illumination.

Whatever the atmospheric penchant, well balanced soft pools of warm, romantic illumination evenly spaced around the room will enhance even the dreariest interior and the well-being of the occupants.

TWO DIMENSIONAL ARTWORK DISPLAY

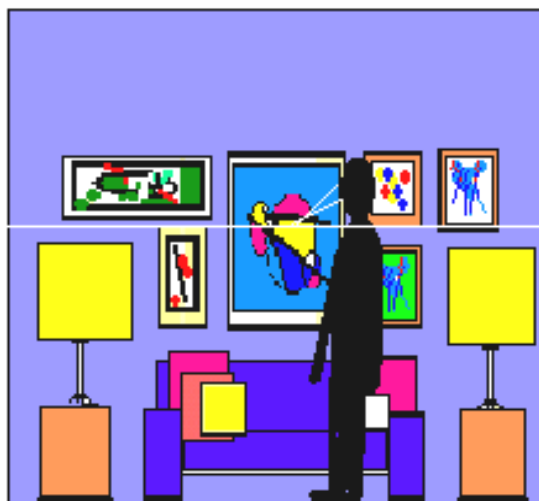
Artwork and accessories are generally subjects of personal expression and general discussion and are best when displayed in an orderly arrangement for unimpeded viewing.

If in doubt about the preferred positioning of artworks, a visit to a local art gallery will provide ideas and confidence for arrangement.

Large two dimensional accessories such as painting, prints and wall hangings can be difficult to position because of size and may require positioning prior to smaller works. If large works are not considered initially in the overall interior design scheme, this can result in disparity and disharmony with the architecture, interior design and other accessories.

Prior to positioning artifacts and accessories the following design principles may be helpful:-

1. When grouping two dimensional accessories the horizontal middle of the artwork should correspond with the viewer's eye level at approximately 1650mm above floor level;



**Eye Level at Approximately
1650 mm above Floor Level**

2. Position larger pieces first then balance the composition with smaller pieces formally or informally as required.



Positioning of Large Painting

3. Compositions of smaller paintings, prints or photographs may need prior arrangement on a table top or floor to determine the arrangement then subsequently transposed onto the wall as demonstrated below.



Arrangement of Small Paintings

Consider the integrity of the room's design character and architectural elements as incorrect location of

accessories may have devastating consequences on the balance, harmony and integrity of the architecture.

SUBJECT MATTER

What to display and how?

Selecting the correct artwork for display depends on the subject matter, the appropriateness of location and illumination.

For instance, a composition of baby photographs may be exciting to the parents being the hosts but perhaps a little tiresome for visitors when a still life of flowers or fruit may be more appropriate and stimulating for convivial conversation.

Photographs need protection from ultraviolet light. Passage ways and rooms with little full spectrum light are suitable for long term display and protection of precious portraits and cherished family memories.

Mass produced prints being relatively inexpensive to purchase, but highly vulnerable to sunlight and fading as a consequence of cheap inks, should not be displayed in brightly illuminated locations. Nor should we pay more than reasonable for the print and framing when purchasing.

Precious oils, gauche and alkyds are less vulnerable to ultraviolet rays but may need protection from unintentional physical damage away from family rooms and much used passageways.

Children's art is seldom considered as being worthy of display at the time of creation and often temporarily displayed on the refrigerator attached with a magnet or two.

Their work is wonderfully naïve and precious to family members and, of course, the artist now and in the future. Encourage the collection and framing of their work for display in bedrooms and family rooms.

This display of enthusiasm and appreciation for their work can instill a sense of pride far beyond anything else in their early years.

Children's work can be extremely colourful and abstract making excellent pieces for display when well framed.

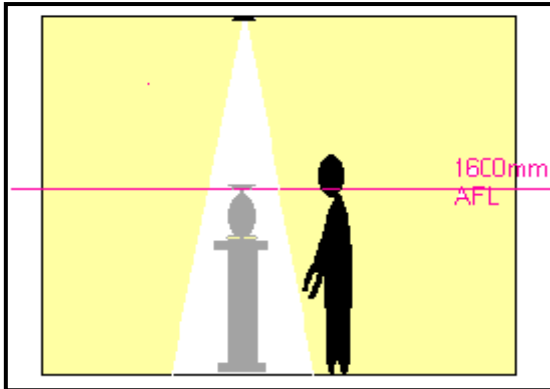
Artwork value can be subjective but pieces considered to be more expensive may be best housed in the formal living room for private viewing away from potential harm.

Artworks can be extremely vulnerable to exposure to heat and smoke from winter fires, insects, excessive moisture and possible theft. Should a collection of accessories comprises valuables the aforementioned potential problems must be addressed for long term preservation and safekeeping.

THREE DIMENSIONAL ARTWORK DISPLAY

Three dimensional artworks need ambient illumination in a free standing positioning for rotational viewing.

Static forms, irrespective of size, are best viewed at eye level and may need to be mounted on pedestals for elevation and viewing if observed in the standing position or lower if viewed from a sitting position.



Display Height When Standing

Precious items are best exhibited under glass or acrylic or encased in specially designed cabinets providing protection from passing traffic, dust and continual cleaning.

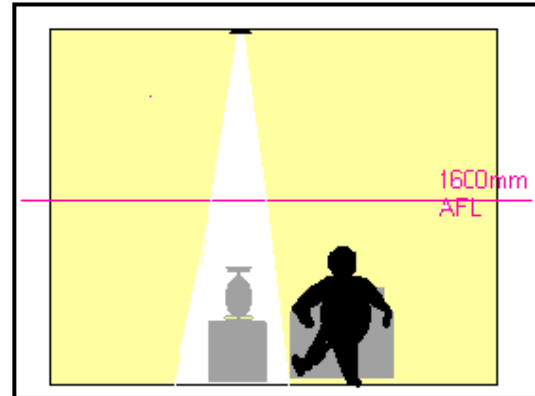
Pedestals must be proportional in size to the accessory and be harmonious in material and colour without detracting from the object being displayed

Again, a trip to the local art gallery may help determine your preference for free standing exhibits.

Larger dominant pieces can be positioned in prominent areas of the home and garden, with **smaller pieces** displayed on lower casual pedestals and coffee tables.

Accessories displayed in sitting rooms require low level positioning and

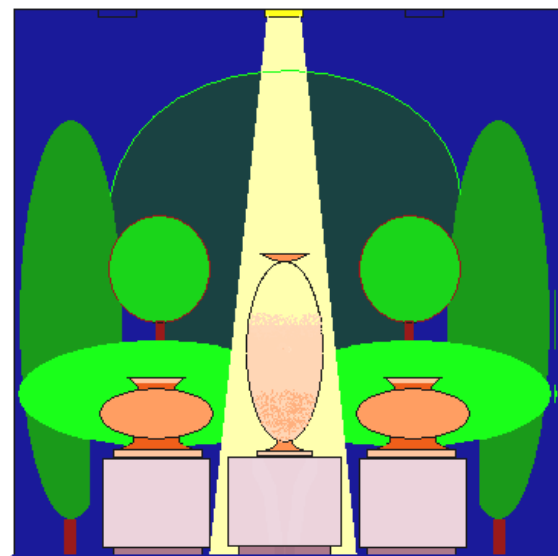
illumination on lamp tables and occasional tables.



Display Height When Sitting

Weatherproof artifacts and free standing sculptures are more obvious and spectacular when displayed in prominent garden spaces elevated on podiums adjoining formal public areas of the home. At night artificial illumination will be required for emphasis.

Artifacts displayed should be proportional to the volume of the exhibition space, other artifacts and wall space.



Three Dimensional Accessories in a Formal Garden Setting for Night Emphases

Suspended or unsteady forms may need additional support requiring the services of a specialist.

Galleries from which the artifacts were purchased will undoubtedly provide a delivery and installation service for a small fee.

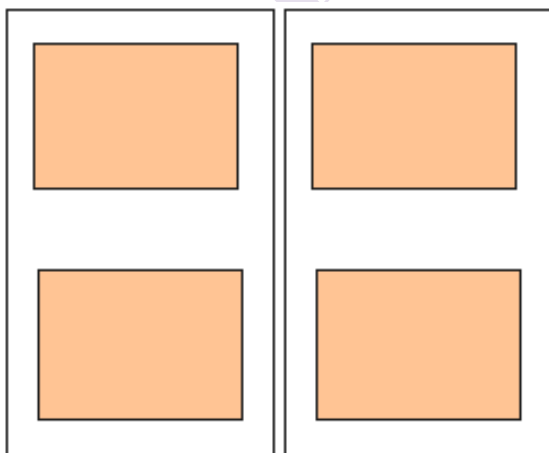
At all times, the integrity of the form is tantamount to the addition of unsightly clumsy supports.

FORMAL BALANCE AND COMPOSITION

Symmetry

Balance is the relation of parts that creates a sense of equilibrium in a room or garden space, that is, a visual and physical harmony of visual weight of objects either formally or informally balanced.

Formal balance (*symmetry*) is created when architectural elements and furnishings are symmetrically placed on plan and elevation as demonstrated below.



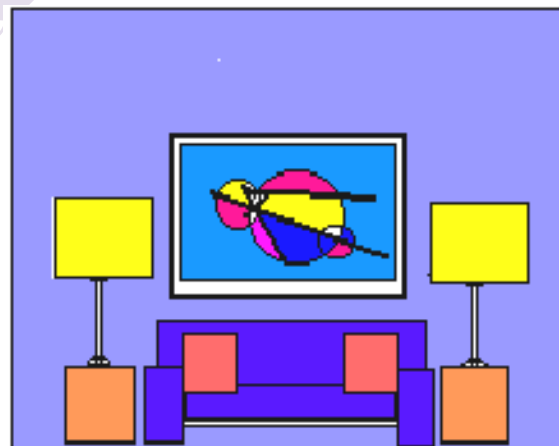
Formal Balance of Equal Parts = Symmetry

In formally balanced rooms, accessories are best arranged symmetrically to suit the formality of the architecture and furniture arrangement.

Formal balance suggests order, permanence, power and dignity but can be rigid, intense, static, restricting and demanding. A slightly askew cushion or piece of furniture cannot be overlooked and prompts immediate attention to avoid irritation.

Formal interior design is generally preferred for living and dining rooms creating a sense of classism, order and elegance.

Formal architecture can be noble and regal, symbolizing strength and power and is generally preferred for Government buildings, banks and Court Houses.

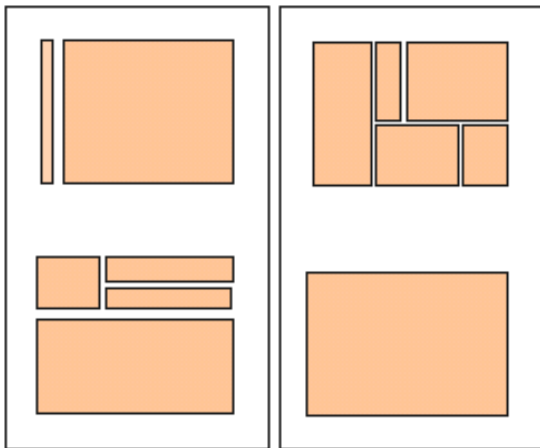


Formal Arrangement of Furniture and Accessories

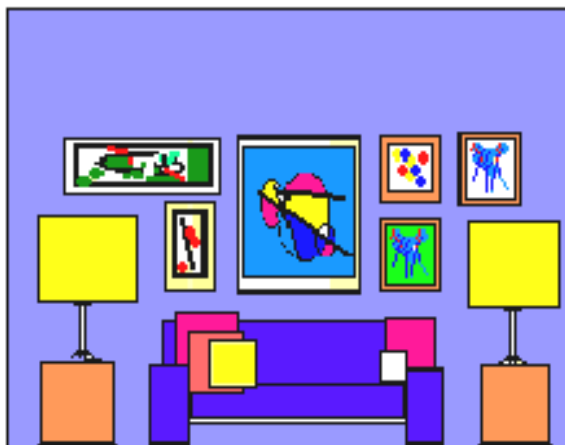
INFORMAL BALANCE – Asymmetry

Informal balance is less orderly giving a sense of casualness and is generally used for less formal rooms such as family and activity rooms.

Informal architecture and interior design suggests spontaneity and is less rigid and demanding. Occupants are less likely to jump to attention when a cushion is dislodged.



Informal balance of unequal parts - Asymmetry



Informal arrangement of furniture and accessories

Informal balance of interior furnishings, accessories and all parts of the architecture and interior design is appropriate when the occupants are younger, more active and outgoing with less demand being placed on the occupiers to keep the interior orderly.

ACCESSORY COMPOSITION

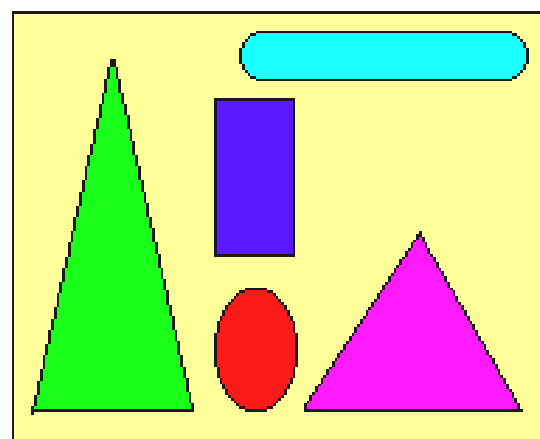
To compose an arrangement of artifacts or accessories well is to arrange items to achieve order, visual stimulation and focus.

Accessory compositions may be formally or informally balanced corresponding with room design, furniture layout and architectural elements.

Successful accessory display is achieved by focusing and holding the viewer's attention thus increasing interest by:-

- attracting the eye with light;
- leading the eye using line and rhythm to the objet d'art or focus;
- retaining the attention of the viewer using visual stimulation such as form, colour, line, light and textural variety.

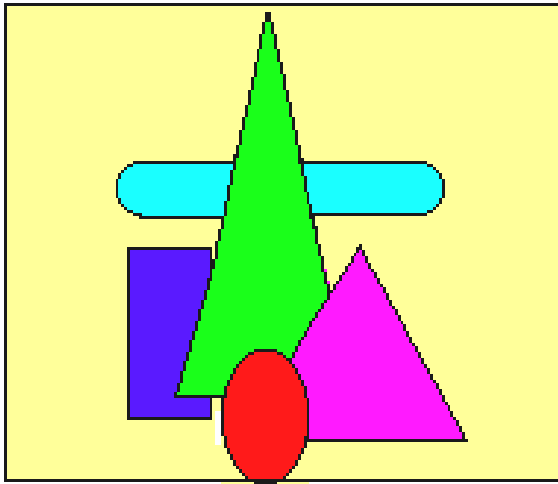
In the following example, the objects are disjointed and static.



Disjointed and static

The eye flounders without focusing on any particular part of the composition

and is regarded as uninteresting without visual stimulation.

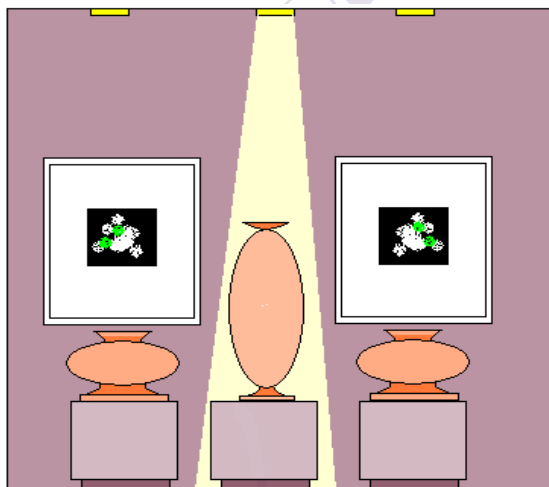


Overlapping and stimulating

Grouping the items creates a focus and interest by the juxtaposing and overlapping of contrasting shapes, form, size, line and colour.

Following are illustrations demonstrating displays of two and three dimensional artifacts.

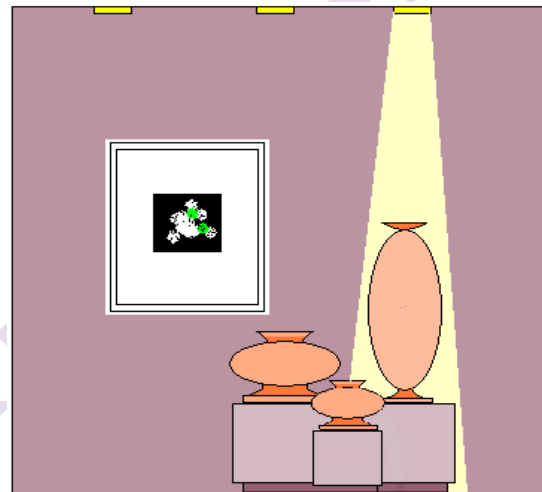
The first arrangement would be regarded as classical, formal or religious if the focus was a dedication to a God or religious figure.



The above ensemble is formal and orderly having a central focus.

The following illustration demonstrates informal balance as more casual and less rigid used mainly for informal situations such as family rooms.

It is unfair to inflict a formally arranged room on children. It can be tedious and boring and is best used for specific contemplation of artworks or elegant rooms for entertaining and impression.



Less formal and casual

FLOOR RUGS

The importance of floor rugs has until recently been ignored as a major component and decorative contributor to interior decorating and design.

Floor rugs not only provide warmth underfoot and softness on hard, cold floors, they also unite furniture, architectural spaces, building elements and décor. In fact, rugs “pull” the interior together creating unity and harmony.

When selecting floor rugs it is advisable to consult a rug specialist who will provide critical information on

the type of rug, the composition, colour and size required.

Floor rugs vary greatly in price, composition and decorative contribution. They can be extremely high quality originals, specifically designed for the interior, signed by the creator or inexpensive mass produced throw rugs.

Criterion regarding the selection of floor rugs is as follows:-

Composition – like carpets, rugs are available in a variety of fibres and fibre compositions and can be hand woven or machine woven.

Pure wool rugs are suitable for domestic situations depending on the quality of the wool.

The addition of silk provides a luxurious look and softness but may add substantially to the price.

Less expensive rugs are also available in man made fibres using synthetic dyes.

It is unthinkable to have inexpensive man made rugs overlay quality floor finishes for obvious reasons and with respect, it is recommended that quality rugs only be used on quality floor finishes.

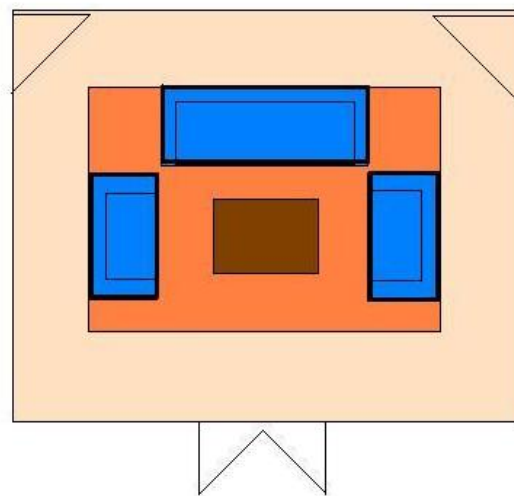
Size - floor rugs are best when dimensions relate to the arrangement of the furniture ensemble or proportional to the surrounding space of non-habitable rooms such as formal entries.

If the room is large, it is advisable to get two smaller rugs relating in colour.

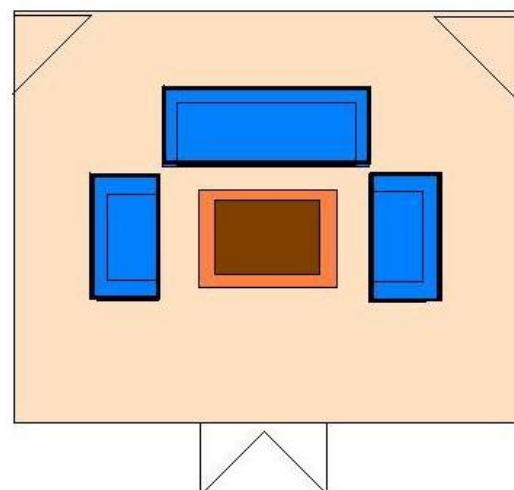
Large floor rugs have their disadvantages such as weight, maneuverability and cost.

Large rugs connecting furniture items visually enhance the proportion of the room giving a sense of luxury and opulence.

Following are two room layouts using different size rugs for comparison:-



Large Floor Rug Uniting Furniture



Smaller Rug Looks Scant, Mean Spirited

Small rugs detached from furniture arrangements look disjointed, unrelated

and mean spirited and can visually decrease the size of the room.

Hand woven quality rugs may be expensive depending on their origin and structure. However hand woven rugs are one-off art pieces that will appreciate in value and appearance with time.

Always be guided by a reputable rug specialist for quality assurance and insist on provenance verification in writing for original hand woven rugs as this will guarantee the quality, origin and quality for future reference.

COLOUR

It is advisable to select colour matching rugs for adjoining rooms.

As mentioned previously, quality rugs are originals so rarely, if ever, are two rugs identical. A variety of pattern selection is often more interesting and complimentary.

CONCLUSION

The best examples of well designed homes are those that serve their purpose both physically and emotionally. They are inviting and welcoming, safe and healthy, cost and energy efficient, comfortable, subtle stimulating and aesthetically modest, providing a sense of well being and contentment for every member of the home now and in the future.

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