

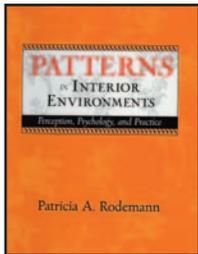
Book Review

By Kathy Barry
Home Life Interiors

“Patterns in Interior Environments”

by Patricia A. Rodemann

Many of us have a response to patterns we see around us, and whether our response is physical, emotional, or psychological, for some of us, that response is strong enough to make us avoid a room. “Patterns in Interior Environments,” by Patricia A. Rodemann explores not only which patterns and combinations of patterns affect people, but also why certain types of patterns are most likely to produce a negative response. For example, those with glasses, contact lenses, or other visual aids are quite likely to have a negative perception of designs that are tiny, regimented, closely spaced or directional because they create a perception of movement or trigger afterimages.



Some people are more prone to eye-strain, motion sickness and migraines. All of these conditions have been linked with a higher degree of pattern sensitivity, which can actually be a trigger factor for them. Neurologists have found that 82% of migraine sufferers will experience a migraine after looking at certain types of patterns, especially stripe gratings. Schizophrenics and Parkinsons patients have a greater sensitivity to vertical, wavy patterns or flickering lights. A ladybug pattern on the floor of a hospital playroom caused children to become nauseous when they played on it. A leaf pattern in a VA hospital caused some of the residents to have post-traumatic stress syndrome. In Rodemann’s study, even the acoustic dot pattern on a ceiling increased the feeling of weariness in a group of music students at a conservatory.

This book includes demographics to identify certain pattern preferences. For example, higher income households will rate more complex and diverse patterns higher in general, while lower income

households will rate them lower. Higher income households are also more apt to rate highly sophisticated, simple tone-on-tone renditions higher. In public spaces, sometimes we can put up with a noisy, distracting pattern whose purpose is to get us to move quickly through, such as in a public bathroom or fast-food restaurant, but in our homes we hope guests and family will linger and enjoy themselves. The patterns we choose should encourage and enhance the activities we enjoy, and the author gives examples of how to use patterns to accomplish this.

Rodemann says other factors which help to determine which patterns we choose include our age, ethnic background, gender, and regional differences (which implies a certain amount of peer pressure). The book includes examples of patterns and colors that appeal to different housing markets. We should also take into consideration our own personalities and temperaments. Some of us seem to embrace color, pattern and a diversity of styles in our wardrobe as well as in our home. Others are more comfortable in the background, and their home reflects this with textures, neutrals, and natural materials.

All in all, a fascinating book and very important to those making decisions when designing or marketing a home. **WMRR**

By Kathy Barry, Home Life Interiors

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