



**SATHYABAMA**

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

Accredited "A" Grade by NAAC | 12B Status by UGC | Approved by AICTE

[www.sathyabama.ac.in](http://www.sathyabama.ac.in)

**SCHOOL OF BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE**

## **Unit I - INDIAN TRADITIONAL DESIGNS – SDE 1105**

## I. INDIAN TRADITIONAL DESIGNS

**Contents - Traditional Styles of design & decorations of homes & accessories across the states in India including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh etc.**

India is well known for its rich and varied culture, heritage and history.

- Interior design played an integral role in the era of Royal Indian kings and the queens of the past.
- This can be clearly seen in the architectural marvels such as those of Sun Temple, Golden Temple, Taj Mahal and many more.
- In the present times too, the Indian interior design style remains diverse and clear even after getting influenced by the different dynasties across the country.

Indian style interior design is one of the most exotic and interesting styles to work with.

- Due to the **varied culture and history** across the country **Indian interior designs have a number of variants.**
- **Vibrant colours** The hallmark of Indian interiors is – **vibrant, bright and varied colours.** It's tempting to go crazy with such a varied palette
- **Solid wood** is one of the most important elements of Indian interiors.
- Traditional pieces with **curved arm rests and legs.**
- Use of **ornate centre pieces and complement them with other furniture.**
- **Traditional Indian cabinets** are a perfect blend of functionality and aesthetics. They are usually **brightly coloured and embellished with mirrors, ivory or mirrors to make them look exquisite.**
- **Informal spaces** are a part of Indian interiors – they are places to relax and interact. You can use low seating and relaxed cushions to create an informal feel.
- **Handspun fabrics** India is famous for beautifully made fabrics. Fabrics can be used in **curtains, window drapes, canopy** above the bed etc. They are a great way to introduce hierarchy in the furniture pieces.
- **Intricate patterns and motifs** Patterns are a vital part of Indian design. Many patterns usually have a deep **religious or cultural symbolism.**
- Paintings From **Rajasthani miniature paintings to gold leaf paintings**, there is a wonderful variety of artistic styles in the Indian culture.
- **Statues of elephants, horses and camels** are some of the other popular choices.



Figure 1 – Potteries from Indus valley civilization

## Traces of Indus Valley Civilization

### Home Décor and Designs – Traditional Designs

- There were a lot of scientific and technological advances made during Indus valley civilization.
- Indus valley people used some tools that were similar to the ones we use, like hammers, knives, needles, razors, and saws.
- These tools were made from stone.
- Cities like Mohenjo-Daro had many potters, jewelry makers, bronze workers, and bead makers.
- These artists lived in different parts of the lower town

## Cave Paintings in India

Cave paintings of India date back to the prehistoric times. The finest examples of these paintings comprise of the murals of Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh, Sittanavasal, etc, which reflect an emphasis on naturalism. Ancient cave paintings of India serve as a window to our ancestors, who used to inhabit these caves. In the following lines, we have provided more information on the ancient Indian rock paintings:

### Ajanta Paintings

Ajanta caves are located at a distance of approximately 100 km from the city of Aurangabad. Most of the paintings seen in the Ajanta Caves, date back to the period of the Mahayana sect of Buddhism. The themes of most of these paintings revolve around the life and teachings of Lord Buddha.



Figure 2 – Cave paintings in India

## Ellora Paintings

Ellora caves are nestled amidst the Chamadari Hills, lying approximately 18 miles to the northeast of Aurangabad city. Paintings can be found in five caves. However, all of them are today preserved only in the Kailasa temple. The rock paintings of Ellora were painted in two different series. The first series, which were done when the caves were carved, revolve around Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi. The second series, painted centuries later, illustrate procession of Shaiva holy men, Apsaras, etc.

## Bagh Paintings

Bagh caves, situated on the banks of the Bagh River, have been excavated on the rock face of a lofty hill. The wall paintings of these caves date back to period between 5th and 7th century. These paintings represent the most exquisite traditions of Indian art form.

## Sittanavasal Paintings

Sittanavasal is the site of an ancient Jain Monastery, located at a distance of around 58 km from Trichy. The monastery is known for housing some of the most exquisite frescoes in a rock cave.

## CHETTINAD TRADITION

At a distance of **90kms from Madurai**, in the **Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu**, **Chettinad** is home to the Nattukottai Chettiars (Nagarathar). An amalgamation of traditional Indian architecture and a touch of European influence resulted in **Chettinad house interiors**, which we are huge admirers of. However, the thought behind the design of 19th century interiors runs deeper than that.

Built to **ensure ventilation**, these exotic homes use a **variety of materials that guarantee durability**. The elaborate architecture promotes **natural sunlight and ventilation**, great for the health of its inhabitants. The decor infuses **culture and plenty of colour with brassware and Tanjore paintings**. Therefore, these homes are known for their single-storey palatial mansions with **spacious courtyards, Athangudi tiles, rooms embellished with marble and teak wood and traditional artefacts**.

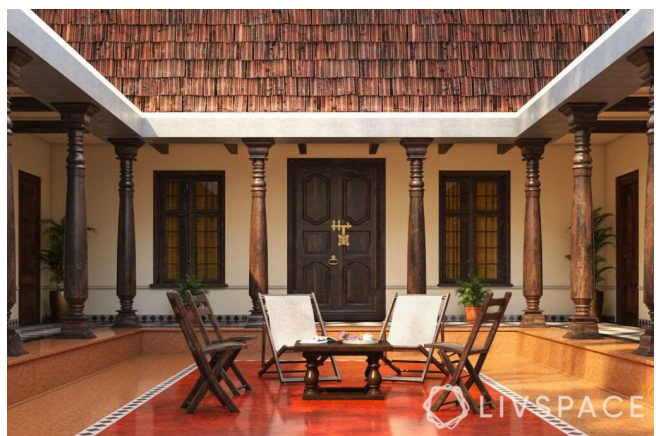


Figure 3 – Interiors of a typical Chettinad House

These mansions are characterised by their rectangular plots accompanied by a simple floor plan with wide spaces, well-ventilated courtyards or *thinnais* and spacious rooms. These open-air courtyards illuminate the home interiors with ample sunlight. During the day, these central spaces can heat up rapidly. Therefore, **red oxide** was a popular flooring option to keep the **floors cool**. **Finely ground mixture of powdered shell, lime and gallnut called *chunnam* was used to plaster the wall**. These two design elements **last a lifetime and reflect heat**.

Moreover, the double-roof system made of **baked clay tiles has an extension called *chajjas***. They act as sunlight breakers. Baluster railings added so that the lightest breeze can be caught. These courtyards make the **most of the sun and are used to dry a variety of condiments**. Furthermore, it brings people together in the evenings to discuss the **day's events and building camaraderie**.

Locally manufactured or sourced from all around the world, all materials ensure superior quality and durability. The foundation consists of a combination of mud, stone and mortar. The walls are made of baked bricks, bonded by fibre roots and coated with egg shells and egg whites. This gives it a silky smooth finish that's washable.

In addition, elements of a Chettinad house are characterised by beautifully carved Burmese teak, marble or granite pillars. A fine display of their status, these pillars use used in the main courtyard. Assigned to each room, this columns come in an array of designs.

The flooring steals the spotlight in this design. When they weren't using red oxide, local artisans stepped in to add a dramatic flair with the renowned Athangudi tiles.

These are handmade and locally manufactured by skilled artisans. They come in a wide variety of patterns and colours, the most popular design being the chessboard pattern. The most traditional designs are in yellow or red with typical floral and diamond borders. That dash of luxury comes from the materials sourced from all over the world, such as Burma teak, Italian marble, Belgian glass and so on.



Figure 4 – Athangudi tiles

### **AGRAHARAM HOUSES**

The entire walls were originally painted with lime for its antiseptic properties

All houses were built with clay pan roof tiles.

Excellent seasoning, good quality timber, good workmanship and adequate maintenance has proved fruitful for the builders as no window or door has been replaced due to damage / deterioration

There is a small prismatic recess in the gable walls for keeping oil lamps through the night.





Figure 5 – Characteristics of Agraharam house – Double height roof, thulasi madam and courtyard

The Thanjavur is a very old town in Tamilnadu and has **heritage and historical buildings**.

**Tanjore Painting** is one of the most popular forms of classical South Indian painting. It is the native art form of Thanjavur (also known as Tanjore) city of Tamil Nadu.

The dense composition, surface richness and vibrant colors of Indian Thanjavur Paintings distinguish them from the other types of paintings.

Then, there are embellishments of semi-precious stones, pearls and glass pieces that further add to their appeal. The relief work gives them a three dimensional effect. Tanjore Painting of India originated during the 16th century, under the reign of the Cholas.

The vernacular style of rural tamilnadu has mud houses made of mud walls and floors with turmeric and cow dung plastering.



Figure 6 – Traditions of Thanjavur

The most distinctive features of Kerala houses would be the long, steep roofs in plain circular, square or rectangular shapes (built so to withstand the heavy monsoons), gable windows, tall pillars and airy courtyards.

The use of local materials such as stone, wood and clay is imperative to the structure as these materials strike a harmony with the nature and surroundings. A traditional Kerala house is integrated with *nalukkettus* (4-block structures), *ettukkettu* (8-block structures) or *pathinarukkettu* (16-block structures), depending on the size of the plot and the affluence of the owner.

### **KERALA'S TRADITION**

The most distinctive features of Kerala houses would be the long, steep roofs in plain circular, square or rectangular shapes (built so to withstand the heavy monsoons), gable windows, tall pillars and airy courtyards.

The use of local materials such as stone, wood and clay is imperative to the structure as these materials strike a harmony with the nature and surroundings. A traditional Kerala house is integrated with *nalukkettus* (4-block structures), *ettukkettu* (8-block structures) or *pathinarukkettu* (16-block structures), depending on the size of the plot and the affluence of the owner.



Figure 7 – Characteristics of a Typical house in Kerala

### **ANDHRA PRADESH’S TRADITION**

The ‘Chutillu’ (which translates to a ‘round house’) is built with mud using the cob wall technique – mixing of mud, water and sometimes straw to create a robust putty-like material. The critical aspect here is to get the right consistency.

The rafters, which hold the house together, is made from the Palmyra Palm commonly found in the coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh. The leaves of the same palm tree are dried and used to thatch the roof of the ‘Chutillu’ house.



Figure 8 – Characteristics of a Typical “Chutillu” house in Andhra Pradesh



## RAJASTHAN'S TRADITION



### The play of colour and decorations in the typical mud house in Rajasthan





## MAHARASHTRA'S TRADITION

The Warli culture is centered around the concept of **Mother Nature** and elements of nature are often focal points depicted in Warli painting. Farming is their main way of life and a large source of food for the tribe. They greatly respect nature and wildlife for the resources that they provide for life.

Warli paintings are believed to be one of the oldest form of art in history. It is a form of tribal art which owes its origin to the state of Maharashtra in India



Warli art to some extent makes us think of being environmentally conscious and finding joy in simple things of life. The Warli people lead **fairly simple lives**. Earlier, they **worshipped nature and depended on nature for food and everyday living**. They did not believe in disrupting nature or taking more than they needed. The Warli people believe in harmony between **nature and man**, and these beliefs are often reflected in **their paintings**.



Traditionally, this painting is done on a red ochre background with white paint and these are the only two colours used

## GUJARAT'S TRADITION

Bhungas are traditional houses unique to the Kutch region in Gujarat. The houses are circular walled with thatched roof. They are known for their structural stability in earthquakes and for being climate responsive. It also protects against sandstorms and cyclonic winds.

It is constructed using locally available materials like clay, bamboo, timber, etc. Structurally the roof is placed on two thick wooden posts placed across the circular walls.

The exterior walls are adorned with **colourful** paintings while the interiors are decorated with exquisite mud and mirror work.





## **BIHAR'S TRADITION**

Madhubani painting is one of the many famous Indian art forms. As it is practiced in the Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal, it is called Mithila or Madhubani art.

The colors used in Madhubani paintings are usually derived from plants and other natural sources. These colors are often bright and pigments like lampblack and ochre are used to create black and brown respectively. Instead of contemporary brushes, objects like twigs, matchsticks and even fingers are used to create the paintings.



The traditional base of plastered mud wall was soon replaced by handmade paper, cloth and canvas

The themes used in these paintings often revolve around Hindu deities like Krishna, Rama, Lakshmi, Shiva, Durga and Saraswati.

Also, heavenly bodies like the Sun and the Moon often form the centerpiece of Madhubani paintings.

The knowledge was passed down from generation to generation and the paintings began to adorn the houses of the region. The women of the village practiced these paintings on the walls of their respective home. Their paintings often illustrated their thoughts, hopes and dreams.

## **CHATTISGARH'S TRADITION**

Bastar Art Handicrafts from Chhattisgarh are One of the most famous and renowned tribal arts of India

A quiet and remote district in Chhattisgarh, Bastar is home to the most distinctive tribal communities of Gond, Maria, Bhatra and more. These ethnic groups comprise 70% of the district's population but stay hidden in the shadows of the dense forests and grasslands, far from the prying eyes of the modern civilization.

The ethnic tribes of Bastar are among the first people to develop expertise in working with metal, along with various other kinds of handicrafts.

The most common art forms found in this district are:

Terracotta works, Bell metal crafts or Dhokra, Bamboo crafts, Cotton Fabrics, Wood Craft





**SATHYABAMA**

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

Accredited "A" Grade by NAAC | 12B Status by UGC | Approved by AICTE  
[www.sathyabama.ac.in](http://www.sathyabama.ac.in)

**SCHOOL OF BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE**

**Unit II – NON EUROPEAN TRADITIONS – SDE 1105**



## II. Non European Traditions

**Contents – Interiors in China, Japan & the Islamic World–Influences of Pre-Columbian American art & culture, African influences in interiors, embedded values of culture in the interior environments**

### CHINESE TRADITION:

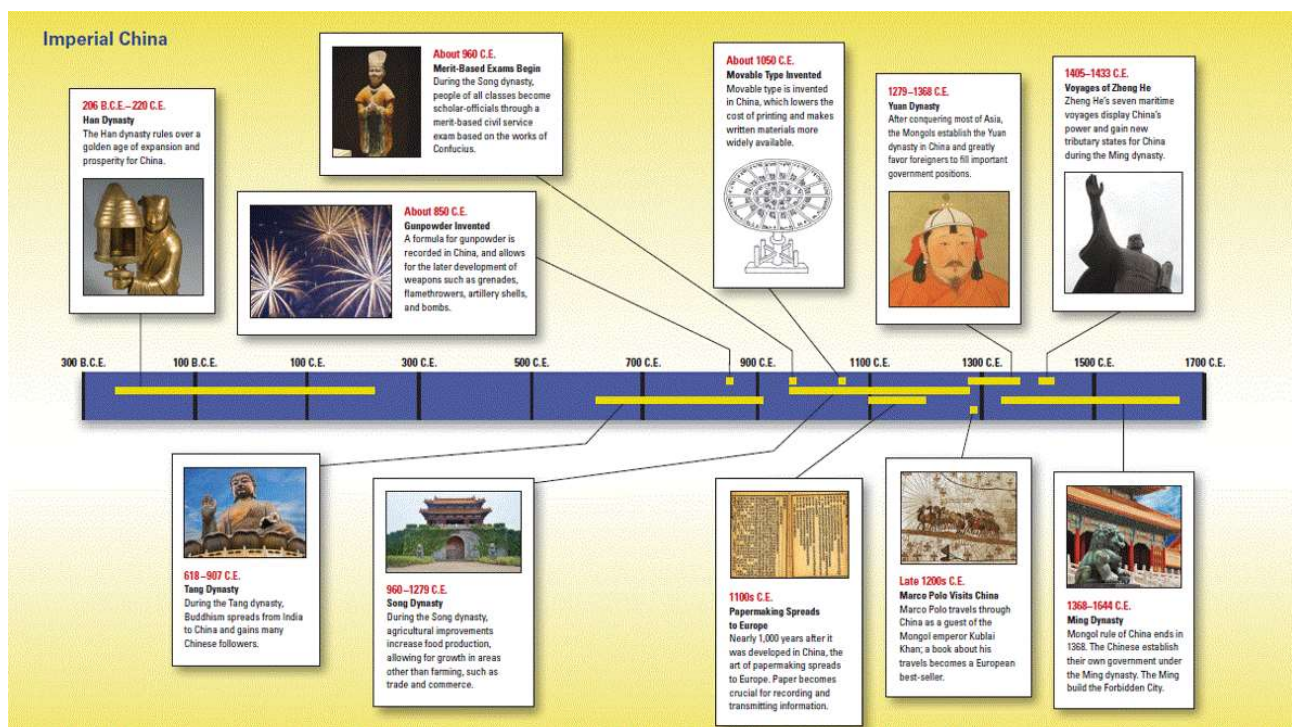


Figure 9 – Time line of China's history

The Chinese valued the site, pattern of the building, and tradition of the building itself. Architecture is governed by ordering systems such as axuality and hierarchy. Few stylistic changes occur over time. Traditional palace complexes, as centers of the government continually reflect historical design features that inspire through their monumental scale and beauty. Construction detailing, decoration, and color articulate a design language of beauty based on principles of Feng Shui. Color, form, and orientation may be symbolic. Social position and function determine the size, plan, and amount of embellishment.

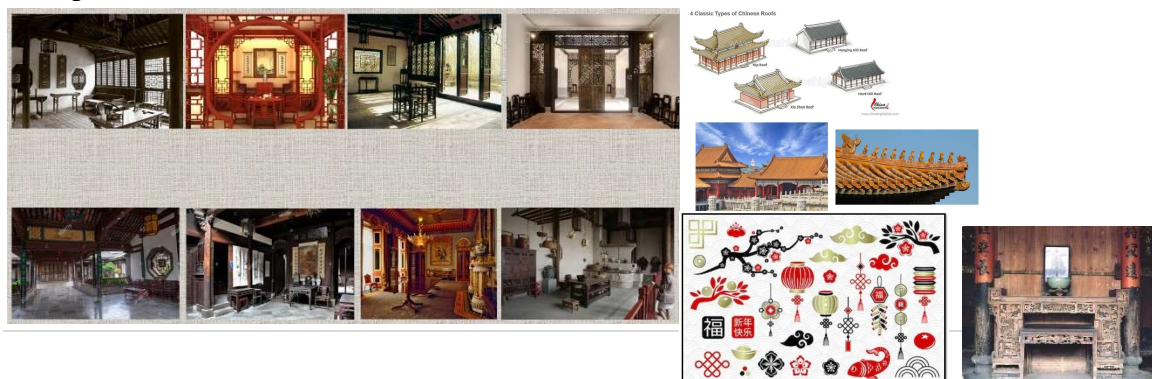


Figure 10 – Traditional interiors of China

### **Floor Plans**

Modular, consisting for rooms and courtyards, can be added or subtracted at will. Function and respect for traditional govern and placement of individual rooms. Public rooms are large, centrally located and placed on a processional axis. In palaces, axis develops through doors placed on a North-South orientation allowing royalty to walk from the main entry door through a vestibule to a large throne hall. Doors are located on the long side and not on the gabled end.

### **Materials**

Stand on foundations of earth with terraces of marble, brick, or stone. Wood or stone columns raise from stone bases. Columns may be round, square, octagonal, or animal shaped. Above, a bracketing system supports the roof which is tiled and curves upwards.

### **Facades**

Plain to elaborately embellished. Entries are important, usually feature decoration and color.

### **Roofs**

Usually upward facing to deter evil spirits. Single or double hipped, gabled on important buildings, and occasionally flat. Shed (pent) is common on taller buildings. Ceramic tiles in rust, yellow, green, or blue. Secured to the rafters by fasteners with decorative animal motifs (chi-shou). These motifs symbolize authority, protection from evil spirits, and blessings of the gods.

### **Windows**

Usually rectangular with wooden shutters or grilles.

### **Doors**

Rectangular, made of paneled wood, embellished with carving, painting, and gilding. Some have latticework or fretwork.



Figure 11 – Traditional lattice work of China

### **Chinese Interior Elevation**

Relationships Feature large windows and doors that open to exterior courtyards and gardens. Formality and symmetry govern shapes, arrangement of doors and windows, and furniture placement. Hierarchy is important for room and furniture placement.

## **Color**

Strong and bright (pigments are seldom mixed). red (Fire, Symbolizing happiness on doors or buildings), yellow (earth), gold, green (prosperity), and blue (heaven). Also used in decorations such as paintings and carving.

## **Lighting**

Large windows allow natural light, and Lamps give minimal artificial light.

## **Floors**

Dirt, wood, or masonry are common. Marble is used for important rooms in palaces. Felt, rugs, mats, and pile rugs are also used.

## **Walls**

Plain or partially embellished, natural wood.

## **Doors**

Feature fretwork or grilles to integrate interiors and exterior walls.

## **Ceilings**

Important rooms may feature repetitive geometric designs with traditional motifs. Beams that are elaborately carved and painted often divide ceilings into sections.

## **Textiles**

Silk, damasks, brocades, and embroideries.

## **Furnishings and Decorative Arts**

Furniture, like interiors, exhibits formality, regularity, symmetry, and straight lines. Generally relies on simplicity, structural honesty and refined proportions for beauty instead of applied ornament. Imperial pieces are often massive and/or embellished. Follow temples that reflect boxy form with limited diversity in visual images.

## **Types**

Stools, chairs, couches, beds, chests, cabinets, and tables.

## **Different furniture**

Distinctive Features Legs may be quadrangular with soft corners, circular, elliptical, or cabriole. The hoof foot with a slight inward curve is typical.

## **Relationships**

Lines against or at right angles to the wall. NEVER ANGLED!!! Place of honor is far from the door as possible, facing South and at hosts left. Arm chairs are seats of honor.

## **Materials**

Solid local woods such as: red sandalwood, rose-wood, chestnut, elm, oak, and imported ebony. southern pieces use bamboo. Lacquer, red lacquer (highly prized), made by hand.



## **Seating**

Stools have four legs or may be cylindrical drums, couches also used for sleeping are large with low backs and arms, the backs are solid and feature fretwork.

## **Tables**

Tall with stools support dining, writing, or form units with zow chairs. Generally are square or round. Rectangular side tables line the walls and are used for display, writing, and painting. some have four legs, others have trestle bases, stretchers, and are single or doubled.

## **Storage**

Chests and cabinets, small and large.

## **Beds**

Movable canopy bed is rectangular with low railings, four to six post embellished with latticework, fretwork, and draperies. Used for sitting or reclining in the day. Usually the short legs terminate in hoof feet.

## **Screens**

Interiors commonly feature screens, folding or set in a frame. Lacquered or painted in bright colors with symbols of health and happiness. Coromandel is a screen that is polychrome lacquer with inlays of Mother-of-Pearl and other materials.

## **Design Characteristics**

Emphasize taoist qualities such as asymmetrical components, empty space, infinity, parts of elements representing the whole, and nature.

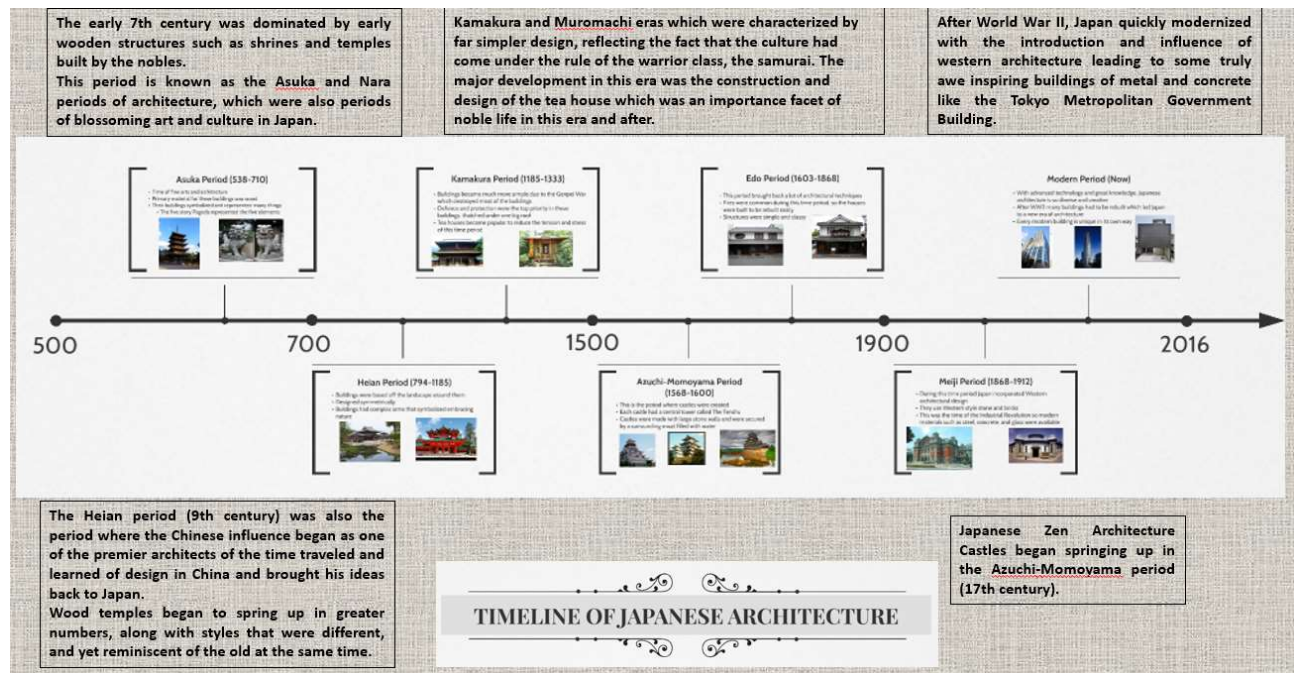
## **Motifs**

The Chinese employ numerous motifs, many symbolic, and can be used alone or in combinations. Common in architecture, interiors, furnishings, and decorative arts. Included are: Lions, dragons, the phoenix, fret, lotus (purity), clouds, fruits, chrysanthemums, the shou (long life), and calligraphy.

## **Others are:**

the bat (Happiness, five bats represent the five blessings — Longevity, wealth, serenity, virtue, and an easy death), pine or evergreens, stork and tortoise (longevity), The eight Immortals are: a tao symbol, flaming wheel, endless knot, and state umbrella are buddhist emblems. Animal motifs are: Lions of Buddha, tiger, dragon and phoenix.

## JAPANESE TRADITION:



Asian lacquerware, which may be called "true lacquer", are objects coated with the treated, dyed and dried sap of *Toxicodendron vernicifluum* or related trees, applied in several coats to a base that is usually wood. This dries to a very hard and smooth surface layer which is durable, waterproof, and attractive in feel and look. Asian lacquer is sometimes painted with pictures, inlaid with shell and other materials, or carved, as well as dusted with gold and given other further decorative treatments.



Figure 11 – Mother of Pearl and Lacquered finish

The concept of **ma**, or of **negative space**, and the simplicity inherent in the Zen belief system both shaped the way the Japanese approached interiors and indeed nearly every element of their lives. There is a tremendous amount of open space, or interval between objects in the room above.

**Psychologically and spiritually, this allows space for the imagination, for living, for an actuality that goes beyond simply a person in a space.** This attention to *ma* was, and to a great degree still is, **an integral part of life in Japan.** The long and large inset niche in the wall is meant simply to hold a **sumi** (a special Japanese black ink) **calligraphic scroll** or perhaps a painting on silk, **and a small seasonal ikebana floral arrangement.** This follows the Japanese idea of awareness and contemplation induced by certain objects.

This sensibility was also apparent in tendencies of Japanese religious **iconography**. The ordered hierarchical sacred cosmology of the Buddhist world generally inherited from China bore the features of China's earthly imperial court system. While some of those features were retained in Japanese adaptation, there was also a concurrent and irrepressible trend toward creating easily approachable deities. The inherent compassion of supreme deities was expressed through these **figures and their iconography**.

Japanese interiors were furnished with a type of woven straw **floor mat called *tatami***. These mats were finished on the edges and could be laid in different configurations to adapt to the shifting dimensions of the rooms which could be adjusted using sliding *shoji* screens. Then, as now, shoes were left outside before entering a home. In this way, the *tatami* mats remained clean for sitting and sleeping.



Figure 12 – Traditional interiors of Japan

The earliest examples of Japanese storage pieces show up in the 8th century in the form of wooden chests called *tansu*. These chests were often plain but could be covered with iron strapping or decorative iron work. Another common feature: handles on the sides so the piece could be moved out of the house quickly in case of fire (which unfortunately happened frequently with homes being made of wood and rice paper).

A variation of the *tansu* is the *mizuya*, or kitchen storage chest. This held any and all kitchen objects behind convenient sliding doors.

A very popular variation on the *tansu* is the *kaidan tansu* or step *tansu* which looks--and functions--like a staircase. It first appeared in the 1700s.



Figure 13 – Traditional Furniture pieces of Japan

## **ISLAMIC TRADITIONS:**

The stunning **Nasir al-Mulk Mosque** hides a gorgeous secret between the walls of its fairly traditional exterior—stepping inside is like walking into a kaleidoscope of colors. Every day, the rays of the early morning sun shine through its **colorful stained-glass windows**, transforming the halls into a dazzling wonderland of rich hues, patterns, and light that play on the floor of the mosque.

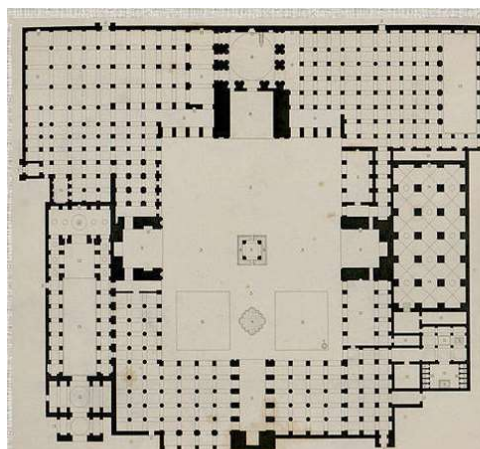


The usage of beautiful rose-colored tiles in the interior design earned the mosque the nickname **Pink Mosque** in popular culture. Nasir al-Mulk stands apart due to its use of **stained glass, which is not commonly part of mosque architecture**.

Located in Shiraz, Iran, this mosque was built from 1876 to 1888 by the order of one of the Qajar Dynasty lords. The beautiful structure was designed by Muhammad Hasan-e-Memar and Muhammad Reza Kashi Paz-e-Shirazi.



**Iran's Stunning 'Pink Mosque' Is Illuminated with a Kaleidoscope of Colors**



**Shah Mosque, Isfahan**

The mosque's core structure dates primarily from the 11th century when the Seljuk Turks established Isfahan as their capital. Additions and alterations were made during Il-Khanid, Timurid, Safavid, and Qajar rule. An earlier mosque with a single inner courtyard already existed on the current location.



Under the reign of Malik Shah I (ruled 1072-1092) and his immediate successors, the mosque grew to its current four-iwan design. Indeed, the Great Mosque of Isfahan is considered the prototype for future four-iwan mosques (an iwan is a vaulted space that opens on one side to a courtyard).



**Qavam House, Shiraz**

Qavam House was constructed between 1879-1886, and contains a spectacular display of mirrors and reflective mosaics.

## **MESOAMERICAN ART AND CULTURE:**

Mesoamerica refers to the diverse civilizations that shared similar cultural characteristics in the geographic areas comprising the modern-day countries of **Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica**. Some of the shared cultural traits among Mesoamerican peoples included a complex pantheon of deities, architectural features, a ballgame, the 260-day calendar, trade, food (**especially a reliance on maize, beans, and squash**), dress, and accoutrements (additional items that are worn or used by a person, such as earspools).



Some of the most well-known Mesoamerican cultures are the Olmec, Maya, Zapotec, Teotihuacan, Mixtec, and [Mexico \(or Aztec\)](#). The geography of Mesoamerica is incredibly diverse—it includes humid tropical areas, dry deserts, high mountainous terrain, and low coastal plains.

An anthropologist named Paul Kirchhoff first used the term “Mesoamerica” (meso is Greek for “middle” or “intermediate”) in 1943 to designate these geographical areas as having shared cultural traits prior to the invasion of Europeans, and the term has remained.

Typically when we discuss Mesoamerican art we are referring to art made by peoples in Mexico and much of Central America. When people mention Native North American art, they are usually referring to indigenous peoples in the U.S. and Canada, even though these countries are technically all part of North America. More recently, archaeologists and art historians have considered connections between the Southwestern and Southeastern U.S. and Mesoamerica, an area sometimes called either the Greater Southwest or Greater Mesoamerica. Focusing on these connections demonstrates how people were in contact with one another through trade, shared beliefs, migration, or conflict. Ball courts, for instance, are found in Arizona sites such as the Pueblo Grande of the Hohokam. It is important to remember that modern-day geographic terms—like Mesoamerica or the Southwestern U.S.—are recent designations.

This essay generalizes about Mesoamerican cultures, but each possessed unique qualities and cultural differences. Mesoamerica was not homogenous.


### Mesoamerican Art and Culture

Period	Dates	Cultures
Archaic Period	c. 3500—1500 B.C.E.	
Pre-Classic Period (or Formative Period)	c. 1800 B.C.E.—250 C.E.	Olmec, Teotihuacan, Tlatalco, Maya, Zapotec
Classic Period	c. 150—650 C.E.	Teotihuacan, Maya
Epiclassic Period	c. 650—900 C.E.	Maya, Toltec
Postclassic Period	c. 900—1519 C.E.	Toltec, Aztec (Mexico), Mixtec, Maya


Art historians and archaeologists divide Mesoamerican history into distinct periods and some of these periods are then further divided into the sub-periods—early, middle, and late.

Mesoamerican writing systems vary by culture. Rebus writing (writing with images) was common among many groups, like the Nahua and Mixtec. Imagine drawing an eye, a heart, and an apple. Many visual writing systems in Mesoamerica functioned similarly—although the previous example was simplified for the sake of clarity. The phrases “writing without words” or “writing with signs” used to describe many writing systems in Mesoamerica. It is also called pictographic, ideographic, or picture writing.


Only the Maya used a writing system like ours, where signs like letters designate sounds and syllables, and combined together to create words. Maya hieroglyphic writing is logographic, which means it uses a sign (think of a picture, symbol, or a letter) to communicate a syllable or a word.




Ball Court Model, Mexico, Nayarit, c. 200 B.C.E.—500 C.E., ceramic with slip and other pigments, 15.24 x 21.59 x 34.29 cm (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)



Cylindrical vessel with ball game scene, c. 682-701 C.E., Late Classic, Maya, ceramic, 20.48 cm high (Dallas Museum of Art)



15th century, f. 1 (World Museum, Liverpool)



I-shaped ballcourt, Codex Borgia, c. 1500, f. 42 (Vatican Library)



**SATHYABAMA**

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

Accredited "A" Grade by NAAC | 12B Status by UGC | Approved by AICTE  
[www.sathyabama.ac.in](http://www.sathyabama.ac.in)

**SCHOOL OF BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE**

## **Unit III – NORDIC TRADITIONS – SDE 1105**

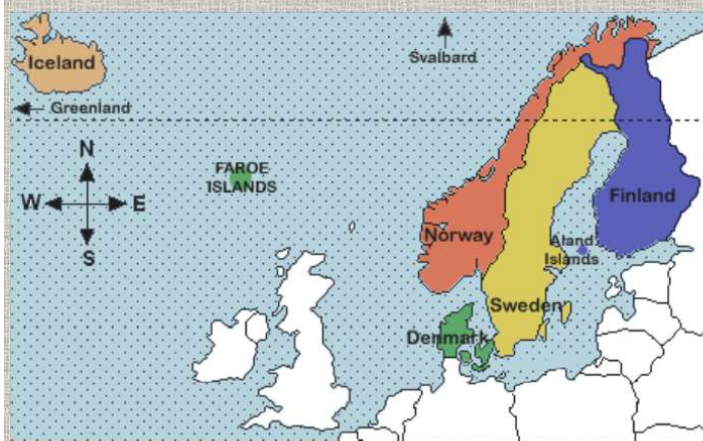


### III. Nordic Traditions

#### Contents – Principles of Interior Design in Sweden, Finland, Norway works of Aalvar Alto, Gunar Asplund, Eero Saarinen etc, Scandinavian minimalism

**The Nordic nations** - Finland , Norway and Sweden, Denmark

- Have a collective, and individual, architectural identities.
- Scandinavian design is a design movement characterized by simplicity, minimalism and functionality
- It emerged in the early 20th century, and subsequently flourished in the 1950s throughout the five Nordic countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland.



The major aspects of Medieval Scandinavian architecture are boathouses, religious buildings (before and after Christians arrived in the area), and general buildings (both in cities and outside of them).



The Scandinavian Buildings through different periods



**Construction in Nordic Countries** has always been characterized by the need to shelter

- people, animals, and property from harsh weather, including predictably

- cold winters and frost, heavy precipitation in certain areas, wind and storms; and to make the most of scarce building resources.

Until modern times, transportation infrastructure was also primitive, and builders largely had to rely on locally available materials.

**Scandinavian design** represents a design philosophy that's characterized by functionality, simplicity, and clean lines.

- According to its design principles, one should be in harmony with his/her environment, and things should be made to last rather than be replaced.
- To complement the art of living well, the design philosophy promotes a simple home environment that enhances an unencumbered lifestyle.

### **Scandinavian Design History**

The minimalist style of Scandinavian design emerged during the 1930s within the five Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

- The term "**Scandinavian design**" originated from a **design show with the same name that traveled through the United States and Canada between 1954 and 1957.**
- It promoted simplistic ways of living and showcased various works by Nordic designers.

The minimalist philosophy emphasized **clean lines and simple designs** that were inspired by **nature and climate** to create the Nordic design.

- It promoted beautiful **designs and quality, sustainable products that were affordable and easily accessible to people in all walks of life.**
- Exhibitions showcasing Scandinavian design during the **1950s played an important role in the influence of these design principles in Europe and North America.**

### **Design Principles and Designers**

The main purpose of Scandinavian design is to **improve daily life.**

- To accomplish that, designers focused on interior design style with **furniture, lighting, textiles, accessories, and everyday utilitarian items like dishes, silverware, cooking utensils and linens.**
- In Scandinavian interiors, there's always a strong relationship between **design elements and nature.**
- It's often seen in the **stark contrast** between **abstract and natural shapes**, as well as **hard and soft surfaces and materials.**
- Natural materials like **stone, wood, leather and hemp** are used sparingly in most home interiors.
- Within the golden age of Scandinavian design from the **1930s to the 1970s**, there were a number of prominent furniture designers that had a **huge impact on design philosophy and style.**
- Known as the founders of **Scandinavian philosophy and style**, their influence on modern design is still evident today in areas like San Francisco and San Mateo.

- The brilliant Scandinavian designers who rewrote history with their innovative designs include **Alvar Aalto; Poul Henningsen; Arne Jacobsen; Verner Panton; Hans J. Wegner; and Maija Isola ; Borge Mogensen;**
- The Grandfathers of the universal Nordic style—including the likes of **Peter Celsing, Gunnar Asplund, Sigurd Lewerentz, Alvar Aalto, and Eero Saarinen**— provided a foundation upon which architects and designers since have both thrived on and been confined by.

### **SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN TRENDS:**

**FLOORS** – Wall to wall carpets never became popular in Scandinavian countries. Interiors typically have **wooden floors, in light wood tones, in all rooms except the bathrooms.** If rugs are used, **they are usually limited to area rugs.**

**INTERIOR SURFACES** –Warm woods are often used on walls, ceilings, cabinetry, and furniture. **Warm tones found in teak and oak** are preferred. If pine is used, it's often **grayed down with a special oil that reduces the yellow wood tones**

**ECO-FRIENDLY MATERIALS** – Scandinavian design principles promote ecofriendly homes with **organic, sustainable building materials for flooring, walls, siding and roofing.**

**COLORS** – **White walls and cool blue and gray textiles** are common. In some homes, brighter pops of color **like yellow and orange** are found in **Marimekko fabrics and rugs.**

**ACCESSORIES** – This minimalist style promotes the design philosophy **“less is more.”** Accessories are usually scaled back to **create less clutter and fewer visual distractions.**

**FIREPLACES** – Scandinavian **winters are harsh, so most homes have large fireplaces** to provide adequate heat. Fireplace designs are usually **simple, but often embellished with beautiful tiles.**

**Less clutter, more function.**

Nordic design invites homemakers to let nature in through the **rays of the sun, the timber, and the airiness of the space.** The light colors invoke a **pleasant mood indoors;** the **wood's fine lines signify simple but meaningful poetry.** Paired with furniture to **last all seasons,** families can indulge in **modern comforts which are grounded and aesthetically pleasant.**



Figure 14 – Nordic furniture and concept of interiors



Scandinavian design is **minimal**, so the few pieces in the room have got to make it count, which is why so much emphasis is put on items like the **humble chair**. Craftsmanship and timeless design are likely to be found in any item in a Scandinavian room.

### Scandinavian Graphic Design

**Bold and graphic**, Scandinavian graphic design remains clean while using **simple, stripped back imagery** to make its point in posters, typography, and marketing, as well as art.

**Clean lines, restrained color palettes, and uncluttered visuals** are all prominent in Scandinavian graphic design. Often, a few lines are used to create a suggestion of an idea, and the visual language relies on the use of dead space.



**Arne Jacobsen Egg Chair**



**Aalto Vase by Alvar Aalto**



**Oiva Toikka's glass dove**  
**Finnish glass design**

**Alvar Aalto (1898-1976)** is a **Finnish architect and designer**, clearly engaged in **Scandinavian design modernism movement**. If his revolutionary furniture and other decorative art objects experiencing great success internationally, many forget that this is primarily as an architect that Alvar Aalto became known.

- He was **greatly opposed to the use of contemporary and industrial materials** such as steel and glass in its construction and design.
- In **1930**, he developed an **innovative process** for obtaining a **curve of more than 90° in wood**, with a technique of **glued laminated timber**.

- This process became the basis of many of its **design tables, chairs, armchairs and other furniture**, such as the **Paimio chair**, made in **1932** for the Paimio Sanatorium, the mythical **60 stool**, designed in **1933** or the **table 80**, designed in **1935**.



Figure 15 – Alvar Aalto's furniture designs

- Alvar Aalto's Scandinavian design concepts were **organic and used the human form**.
- His buildings and chairs were first prompted by the user. **The seats and handles** were molded to the human form.
- Of all architectural furniture, his is the **closest to humanity**.
- He put together an **experimental plywood workshop in Turku in 1929** with Otto Korhonen, and in 1935 formed a furniture company called **Artek**.
- This company had a collection of furniture including the **Paimio Armchair 1929, the Viipuri Collection 1933-1935, the Aalto Serving Cart 1936, the Cantilevered Armchair 1946**
- Also in 1935 the company patented a cantilevered chair support made from timber.
- He also collaborated with the company Riihimäki (1933) and Iittala (1936) to produce decorative glass objects, including his famous Savoy vase (Wave Finnish) whose organic shape recalls the flowing movements of the sea.
- The creations of Alvar Aalto have greatly influenced the Scandinavian design postwar and this architect-designer is often regarded as the **founding father of organic design**.
- The Royal Institute of British Architects awarded him a gold medal in 1957.

**Gunnar Asplund** was a Swedish architect, mostly known as a representative of Swedish neo-classical architecture of the 1920s, and during the last decade of his life as a major proponent of the modernist style which got its breakthrough in Sweden at the Stockholm International Exhibition (1930).

- Asplund was professor of architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology from 1931.
- Asplund's major work is probably the Stockholm Public Library, constructed between 1924 and 1928, which stands as the prototypical example of the smoothly Nordic Neoclassical Swedish Grace movement.
- Another important work is the extension of the Gothenburg City Hall building which Asplund started on 1917 and finished 1937 - it shows his transformation from neo-classical to functionalist architect, a transformation in parallel with other European modernists like Erich Mendelsohn.

- Asplund was also known for his collaborations with Sigurd Lewerentz: the Skogskyrkogården, a cemetery which is a UNESCO world heritage site. Skogskyrkogården was created between 1914 and 1940, and serving as the main architects for the Stockholm International Exhibition (1930).
- The modernist, **exposed-glass-and-steel-frame Entry Pavilion** at the world's fair was internationally influential, although temporary.

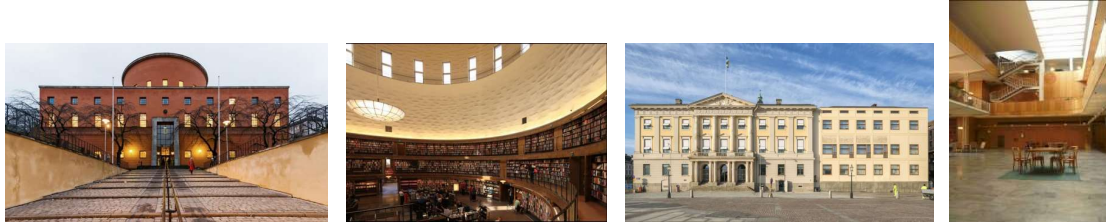


Figure 16 – Works of Gunnar Asplund

- **Eero Saarinen** wanted to become a sculptor, Eliel convinced his son to study architecture, referring to it as art that “**encompasses a total environment**” – landscapes, buildings, furniture and décor.
- He then enrolled at Yale University’s School of Architecture in 1930, graduating in 1934, and taking a two year fellowship in Europe. He then returned to the US and worked alongside his father at his architecture firm, as well as lecturing/instructing at Cranbrook

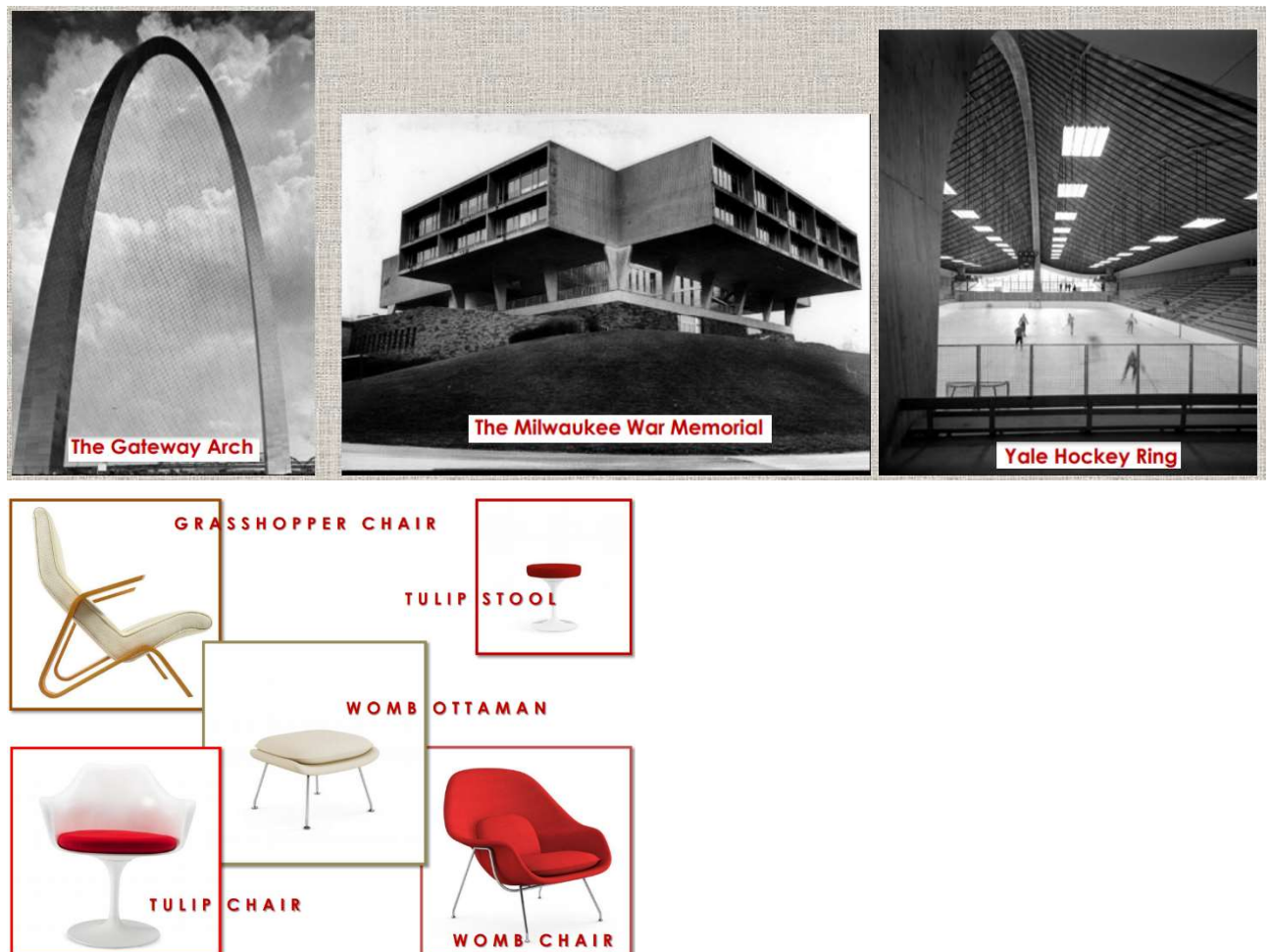


Figure 17 – Works of Eero Saarinen



## MINIMALISM:

- Maximum style with minimum display, this is what Scandinavian interior design is all about.
- Simplicity and function are the guiding principles that have shaped the midcentury Europe design sensibilities in this part of the continent, resulting in spaces suffused with light, airiness, serenity and a feeling of oneness with nature.
- A mélange of trends from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, Scandinavian interior design principles play up natural elements, favor neutral color palettes, by keeping lines simple and squeezing optimal function out of every part of the décor.

**SUBDUED COLOURS** Black and white are often seen as staples of Scandinavian interiors. While it's true that Scandinavians are not afraid to make a feature of white space, it's not true that there's an absence of colour. But those colours tend to be subdued rather than bold. The underlying principles are light, bright and airy, with neutral and pastel shades dominating. When it's time to add a bit more colour, icy blues and pale pinks are popular choices.



- Simplicity really is the mantra of modern Scandinavian design.
- The key principle of the Scandinavian architecture is prioritizing function without sacrificing aesthetics.
- Natural light is amplified by any means necessary.
- The windows of the Scandinavian living room are generously proportioned. Mirrors, an important element of the Scandinavian decor, are placed strategically to visually expand the space and reflect any available ambient light.
- Serene, muted neutrals – with bright white being the star – dominate the Scandinavian design.

Scandinavians believe in celebrating nature even when inside their homes. That's why natural wood is a predominant feature of Scandinavian interiors characteristics. Wood is the preferred choice not only for the Nordic furniture but also of flooring. Pine, beech, and ash are by far the favorites of the Scandinavian architect

A space designed in the Scandinavian home design style isn't visually weighed down by a lot of heavy fabric. Textile accessories are used sparingly in the Nordic-inspired interiors, but for maximum impact

Carpet has never been a popular thing in Scandinavian style. Instead, wood flooring is often used throughout homes and is sometimes softened with rugs or sheepskins.

Traditionally, many Scandinavian homes were very small and didn't allow for excessive amounts of stuff. While homes are being built larger now and there's more room for things, the idea of keeping a space free of clutter and mess has remained an important aspect of Scandinavian design.

Related to keeping a space clutter free is the idea of owning less to begin with. Decor is kept to a minimum in Scandinavian design. Bare walls and empty spaces are not shield away from.

Scandinavian minimalism is all about simplicity, purity and calm. About buying less and buying better. To let the objects do the talking whilst staying functional and comfortable

All these principles of Nordic decor and design work together to achieve the Scandinavian ideal of —lagom, a Swedish word meaning just the right amount – not too little, not too much. They create spaces that are simple, uncluttered and efficient, yet warm and welcoming, typical features of any Scandinavian style home.



**SATHYABAMA**

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

Accredited "A" Grade by NAAC | 12B Status by UGC | Approved by AICTE

[www.sathyabama.ac.in](http://www.sathyabama.ac.in)

**SCHOOL OF BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE**

## **Unit IV – RECENT DIRECTIONS – SDE 1105**



## IV. RECENT DIRECTIONS

### Contents – Design movements such as Late Modernism, High Technology, Post Modernism, and De-Constructivism and Minimalism

Design movement is a “movement” is a style or prevailing inclination in art or design that upholds a specific philosophy or ideal and is followed and promoted by a group of artists for a defined period of time.

- Responding to the major society shifts, aftermaths of wars, and technological innovations, 20th century design movements were defined by upheavals.
- Art, design, theater and performances were all affected by the changes happening in the world. Painters, sculptors, and designers used their skills to document such events and to implement new aesthetic ideas and styles which began to treat form, material, and technology in a completely new way

As recorders of time, 20th century design movements responded to the machine age of the 1920s society and started to produce design pieces influenced by the invention of mass-produced materials.

- After the wars, the need for a more humanist approach to the world influenced the embrace of natural materials and handmade objects.
- It became visible, very early on, that design was not only beautiful pieces decorating the homes but an important archive for the understanding of the time and its changes.

Among the various Design Movements some of the famous ones are:

♣ Art Deco ♣ Bauhaus ♣ Constructivism ♣ De-Constructivism ♣ Cubism ♣ De Stijl ♣ Expressionism ♣ Futurism ♣ Minimalism ♣ Neo-Expressionism ♣ Late Modernism ♣ Post Modernism

#### ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT

- Quality craftsmanship led by William Morris
- Inspired by nature, often very decorative
- Quality materials were used
- Only really available for the wealthy



#### ART NOUVEAU

- Early part of century
- Popular in Europe
- Based on the flowing lines found in nature
- Charles Rennie Mackintosh is famous for working in this style.
- The lamps of Louis Comfort Tiffany are often used as fine examples of this period.



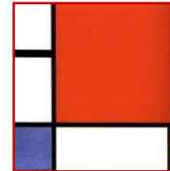
## ART DECO

- Began with an exhibition of products in Paris in 1925
- Typically involved the use of geometric shapes and the influences from the Egyptian tomb of Tutankhamen.
- Often regarded as a very glamorous period of design.
- Ceramicist Claris Cliff is a famous designer from that period



## DE STIJL (THE STYLE)

- In Holland in the mid 1920s "The Style" movement was taking geometric design to an extreme. The use of basic rectangles and primary colours became the inspiration for looking at furniture and architecture in a totally new way.
- The painter Piet Mondrian was typical of this style and Gerrit Rietveld's Red and blue chair is certainly a design classic.



Late Modernism encompasses the overall production of the most recent Architecture after WORLD WAR II. This is during the early years of 21st Century.

- Late Modernism is also known as High Tech Architecture or Structural Expressionism, an Architectural style that emerged in the late 80's which became the bridge between modernism and post modernism.
- Architecture in which the images, ideas, and motifs of the Modern Movement were taken to extremes, structure, technology, and services being grossly over stated at a time when Modernism was being questioned.
- In the year 1980s the high tech architecture started to look different from the post modern architecture.
- Modern architecture is primarily driven by technological and engineering developments, and it is true that the availability of new building materials such as iron, steel, and glass drove the invention of new building techniques as part of the Industrial Revolution.

## LATE MODERN - INTERIOR DESIGN



The furniture industry realized technological advancements in manufacturing techniques. Other changes included an increase in availability of new materials such as **aluminum and plastics, as well, designers discovered new ways to bond wood together.**



## LATE MODERN ARCHITECTURE- CHARACTERISTICS



- Horizontally oriented
- Ribbon windows, belt course
- Hooded or deep set windows
- Large areas without windows
- Use of industrial materials like concrete
- Dramatic sculptural conception of building's volumes
- No ornament
- Walls eaveless or with boxed or cantilevered eaves
- Decorative use of functional features
- Flat and shed roofs

• The word 'modern' often makes us think about the present or recent years, but sometimes it actually refers to the past.

• Many artists of the time believed that the previous styles were outdated and didn't meet the needs of the industrialized world, so the goal of modernism was to define a new aesthetic for the modern world. It touched all forms of art and design, including furniture.

• Modernist furniture became known for its sober character and undecorated elegance. Comfort and functionality were often the priority and ornaments were considered unnecessary. Also, the furniture pieces were conceived to be affordable and easily mass-produced.

• Modernist furniture actually dates from decades ago and after almost 100 years, many of those designs still have that up-to-date look, as if they had just been designed yesterday.

• Many pieces of modernist furniture continue to be produced and sold today. Their elegant and modern look make them a frequent choice for the decoration of houses, offices and even film sets

High-tech architecture, also known as Structural Expressionism, is a type of Late Modern architectural style that emerged in the 1970s, incorporating elements of high-tech industry and technology into building design.



- High-tech architecture grew from the modernist style, utilizing new advances in technology and building materials.
- It emphasizes transparency in design and construction, seeking to communicate the underlying structure and function of a building throughout its interior and exterior.
- High-tech architecture makes extensive use of steel, glass, and concrete, as these materials were becoming more advanced and available in a wider variety of forms at the time the style was developing.

High-tech architecture focuses on creating adaptable buildings through choice of materials, internal structural elements, and programmatic design.

- Common elements include hanging or overhanging floors, a lack of internal load bearing walls, and reconfigurable spaces.
- Some buildings incorporate prominent, bright colors in an attempt to evoke the sense of a drawing or diagram.
- Early high-tech buildings were referred to by historian Reyner Banham as "serviced sheds" due to their exposure of mechanical services in addition to the structure.
- Most of these early examples used exposed structural steel as their material of choice.
- As hollow structural sections had only become widely available in the early 1970s, high-tech architecture saw much experimentation with this material.
- High-tech utilizes a focus on factory aesthetics and a large central space serviced by many smaller maintenance areas to evoke a feeling of openness, honesty, and transparency.
- High style is commissioned by large organizations, and construction is often not a local effort. High quality materials are used without the community context in mind.

- De-constructivism is a Postmodern architectural style characterized by the idea of fragmentation and the manipulation of a structure's surface.

- Buildings adopting the style are often formed of components that have been disassembled and reassembled in a new and unorthodox way, giving the impression of a chaotic design devoid of precise logic.
- It attempts to move away from the conventions of modernism that can be viewed as 'constricting rules', such as the notions that „form follows function“, „purity of form“, and „truth to materials“.
- Deconstructivism in architecture was influenced by the deconstructivist theories of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who said that 'architecture is nothing but one of many ways of communication'. It was also influenced by early-20th century constructivist architecture developed in Soviet Russia.

De-constructivism developed out of the postmodern style and first gained widespread attention in 1988 with an exhibition entitled 'Deconstructivist Architecture' in New York's Museum of Modern Art. The rise in prominence of computer-aided design (CAD) in contemporary architecture was a

key factor in the development of deconstructivism, as three-dimensional modeling enabled the intricate design of complicated and unorthodox shapes and spaces Famous Architects:

- Frank Gehry • Rem Koolhaas • Zaha Hadid • Peter Eisenman • Daniel Libeskind.

Deconstructivism deviates from the postmodernist style in its rejection of ornament as decoration.

- Minimalist architecture, sometimes referred to as 'minimalism', involves the use of simple design elements, without ornamentation or decoration. Proponents of minimalism believe that condensing the content and form of a design to its bare essentials, reveals the true 'essence of architecture'.

- Minimalist architecture emerged from the Cubist-inspired movements of De Stijl and Bauhaus in the 1920s.

- Architects such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, theorised that minimalism gave maximum power to architectural space.

- Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) adopted the motto "Less is more" to describe his aesthetic tactic of arranging the necessary components of a building to create an impression of extreme simplicity. He enlisted every element and detail to serve multiple visual and functional purposes;

- Minimalistic design has been highly influenced by Japanese traditional design and architecture.

- De Stijl expanded the ideas of expression by meticulously organizing basic elements such as lines and planes.