

# Minimalism & Color

DesignSource



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**COLLINS DESIGN**

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MINIMALISM & COLOR DESIGNSOURCE  
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First Edition published in 2009 by  
Collins Design  
*An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers*  
10 East 53rd Street  
New York, NY 10022  
Tel.: (212) 207-7000  
Fax: (212) 207-7654  
collinsdesign@harpercollins.com  
www.harpercollins.com

Distributed throughout the world by  
HarperCollinsPublishers  
10 East 53rd Street  
New York, NY 10022  
Fax: (212) 207-7654

Packaged by  
**LOFT Publications**  
Via Laietana 32, 4<sup>a</sup> Of. 92  
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Library of Congress Control Number: 2008937643  
ISBN: 978-0-06-154280-0

Printed in Spain

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Introduction  | 06  |
| Black & White:<br>Absence of Color and Color Addition | 12  |
| Lights and Transparencies                             | 104 |
| Two-Tone  | 130 |
| White and More  | 182 |
| Colorful  | 240 |
| Ethereal Spaces                                       | 354 |
| Just a Warm Touch                                     | 450 |
| Just a Cold Touch                                     | 530 |
| Directory   | 594 |

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## Introduction

The term "minimalism" was born supposedly to define art that aimed to not be identified either with painting or sculpture and which eventually ended up becoming a global concept. However, its application has prevailed particularly in the fields of architecture and interior design. Use of the word is attributed to British critic Richard Wollheim, who coined it in a 1965 article that attempted to define the reductionist trend in art. During this period, when the trend began to form its own identity, other expressions and formulas arose to refer to it but they fell into disuse or did not manage to catch on. To refer to this search for the essential which is aimed at the reduction of forms to their most elementary—an idea that had already begun with rationalism—various expressions were fielded, such as "ABC art," "rejective art" and "reductivism." The term "minimalism" therefore made a space for itself and went on to become incontrovertibly linked with a well-known phrase attributed to the architect and designer Mies van der Rohe, who also led the Bauhaus School. This phrase is, of course, "Less is more"—a definition that will go down in posterity as the best and most austere formula for defining a similarly austere aesthetic current.

Although minimalism appeared in the 1960s, it did not really take off until the 1970s. It was a clear reaction against previous art forms, including the unrestrained use of color and the features of pop art, as well as other trends of the time. This phenomenon has

been repeated throughout history. Artistic movements could be compared with the movement of a pendulum, which oscillates from one extreme to the other: from Gothic to Renaissance, Neo-Classicism to Romanticism and pop art to minimalism, with its eagerness to return to the essential; putting purity and the simplicity of lines above all else. Minimalism could therefore be defined as the art of stripping a thing of its surplus or unnecessary elements.

Within the minimalist current, the application and treatment of color becomes a fundamental and even determining element. In its most dogmatic version, minimalism should go hand-in-hand with absolute monochromie. Each space would involve a single color on the floors, ceilings and walls, and the contrast would be provided only from the furniture and accessories, which should never be overdone. The nuance of minimalism lies more in structures and forms than accessories. The austerity, purism, simplicity and dematerialization that define it should be matched with a particular use of color that emphasizes its character or plays only with subtly unbalancing its harmony. In any décor based on a minimalist style, the contrast between black and white is the best bet. The luminous nature of white, which is in essence the sum of all colors, stands in sharp contrast with the absence of color, i.e., what we call "black." The two are opposites, but their union results in a noticeable sobriety and aesthetic purity.

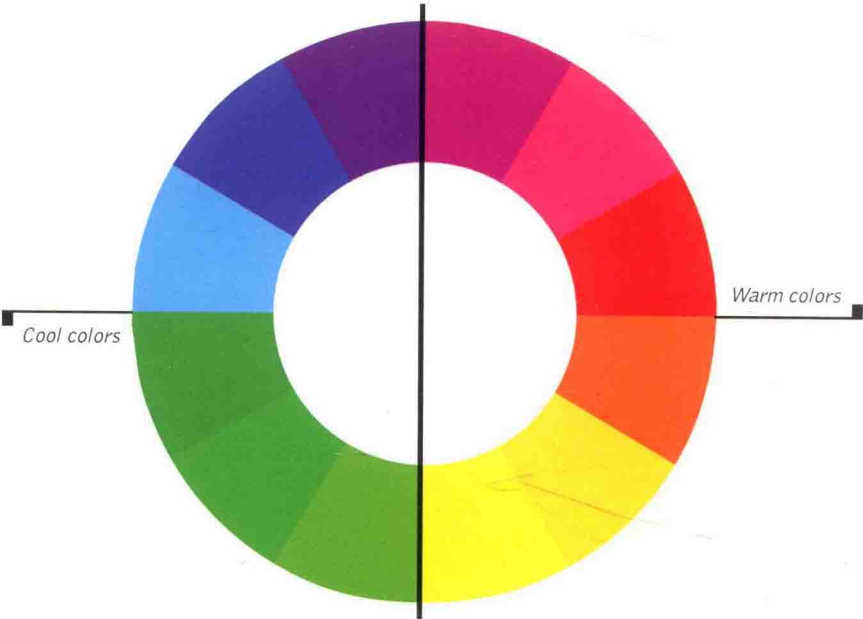
As well as this major pairing, which should be given prime importance, each color and type of combination can endow a

minimalist space with a distinct personality. They can convey serenity, excitement, harmony, strength and even balance. To better understand the effect of each color—which is awarded psychological factors that color psychology studies exhaustively—it is necessary to use a color wheel, which features the primary colors (red, yellow and blue) along with the secondary and intermediary colors and shows the complementary colors which, despite being situated at the opposite end of the chart, offer the most harmonious combinations.

All of this theory is indispensable when it comes to choosing the color range to decorate any space, as this selection and the combination of colors will determine the final result and the sensory perception of the space. When you use white in combination with another tone, it will be the latter that conveys the personality via the decoration. If it is red, for example, it will exude brightness, strength and vigor; if green or yellow, tranquility and concentration; while pale blues reflect serenity and relaxation. The combination of two colors other than black and white is more complicated: if it involves complementary colors the result may be a harmonious space, but otherwise it is possible it will be overwhelming and too elaborate. A large part of the weight also depends on the shades, as they will determine the perception of the environment. In short, color and its combinations can still be used to create spaces inspired by minimalism, which seek to maintain its essence and purest form.



# Color Wheel



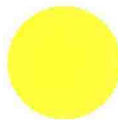
## Complementary Colors



*Orange ≠ Blue*



*Violet ≠ Yellow*



*Green ≠ Red*







## **Black & White: Absence of Color and Color Addition**

### **The chromatic essence of minimalism**

In décor based on a minimalist style and its theories, the combination and contrast between black and white is its most pure expression. The elegance and simplicity of the two colors reinforce the minimalist purity of structures, furniture and decorative elements. Black and white creates a play of antagonism, of contrasts, in any space, where elegance becomes the key ally.

Calm, tranquility and harmony are often associated with the color white. Its use in decoration has always been linked to these feelings, as its psychological effect is at all times positive; that is why it is commonly used in spaces earmarked for relaxing therapy or beauty treatments. It involves the sum or synthesis of all the colors and is the one that is most light-sensitive.

Black presents a symbolic duality. On the one hand it is related with the mysterious and even the impure or malign. However, it is also