Evolution of "Color" Elements in Residential Interior Design

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Abstract
This paper delves into the evolution of color elements within the realm of urban residential interior design in China from 1970s. The research presented comprehensively reviews and synthesizes the various material categories, application contexts, and stylistic considerations associated with color tone in residential interiors. The examination uncovers how the application of wall, ceiling, and floor colors in Chinese urban residences has been shaped by socioeconomic progress, shifts in lifestyle, advancements in decorating technology, and the adoption of international design paradigms. Utilizing literature review and field research methods, this study delineates the evolution of color tones on interior surfaces into three distinct phases: the period of Transitional Dynamics, the era of style integration, and the trend of simplistic return, tracing these developments from the 1980s to the present. This exploration aims to elucidate the underlying principles and determinants of the evolution of light color tones, offering a novel perspective on the transformation of modern Chinese urban residential interior design that is often overlooked—the significance of color.

Keywords: Residential Spaces, Color Tones, Chinses Interior Design

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Introduction

The transformation of residential interior coloration serves as a mirror of societal evolution, cultural shifts, and innovations in material technology. The perception of interior spaces is intertwined with the perception of their surface treatments (Corbusier & Dunnett, 1987). As private sanctuaries that mirror individual lifestyles, residential spaces bear the imprint of personal identity and symbolism (Li, 1999). The collective influence of a room's wall, floor, and ceiling colors, textures, and patterns on spatial cognition is profound, shaping our perceptions of spatial relationships, awareness of room dimensions, scale, and proportion (Ching & Binggeli, 2012). Within the context of this study, the term "plane surface" encompasses the composite of walls, floors, and ceilings—key elements of interior design. Color, as the initial and most immediate point of human contact within interior spaces, plays a pivotal role. The historical adoption of lime as a foundational moisture-resistant finish heralded a shift from the earthy brown hues of earthen constructions to the dominance of white interiors (Whiton, 2013). This color evolution marks a significant milestone in the narrative of residential interior.

From a material perspective, interior surfaces can be categorized as "revealing" or "concealing" (Shi, 2006). The distinct attribute of a coating layer lies in its intangibility, functioning as both a covering and a non-material medium, thereby contrasting with substantial materials such as stone or wood. The intangible essence of coating materials offers the most immediate and abstract representation of lightness, which bathes interiors in a luminous and translucent quality. High-lightness colors, serving as the foundational hue of the space, provide a canvas for the introduction of furniture and decorative elements, assuming the role of "concealing" within this conceptual framework. Amidst the veneration and endorsement of whiteness by modernists, it emerged as a pivotal color, highlighting the purity of architectural form through its unique "invisible" qualities.

The 1980s represented a pivotal period in the history of the People's Republic of China, which was characterized by the gradual integration of the domestic market with the global economy. This era was also marked by swift urbanization, the expansion of material production sectors, and the gradual international exposure of Chinese societal aesthetics. Concurrently, the aesthetic preferences in Chinese urban domestic settings evolved, moving away from monochromatic white towards a broader spectrum of color options. Amidst this era of transformation, the influx of Western modernist design principles brought about a shift in the perception of white in interior decor, transitioning from a color associated with concealment to one that conveyed transparency and modernity. The application of white in the domain of interior design assumed a central position, expanding from achromatic white to an array of chromatic, light-toned alternatives, which contributed to the creation of varied and nuanced emotional responses within living spaces.

In the sphere of interior surface design within modern Chinese urban residences, the adoption of light tones became increasingly widespread. The favored attributes of lightness and reflectance inherent in these tones enhance the illumination within interiors, making them preferable to colorless white. The rise in popularity of chromatic light tones as compared to achromatic white in Chinese residences could be attributed to their ability to mirror the nuanced national character and the perpetuation of the traditional Chinese ethos of 'white space', a philosophical design approach valuing negative space, thereby standing in stark contrast to the more vibrant and high-saturation color schemes preferred in Western nations.

Despite the profound impact of color theory on the discipline of interior design, the scholarly examination of the progression and transformation of color elements within this field has been neglected. In the context of China, the theoretical exploration of the evolution of urban domestic interiors is scant, with the majority of research focusing on topics such as spatial configuration (Lv, 2002), construction techniques (Ding, 2016), and etc. Chinese academic literature predominantly showcases distinctive decoration techniques and color harmonies infused with Asian and specifically Chinese attributes, which are often presented through compilations of design works (Chen, 2021; Ding, 2016). Since the 1980s and 1990s, the importation of Western interior design portfolios (Miller, 1997; Poore & Roth, 2005; Paul & Mahdavi, 2021) has been instrumental in shaping Chinese interior design through the introduction of modern decorative styles, forms, and color harmonies. These design case studies are grounded in modern lifestyle contexts, including expansive living areas, open kitchens, and flooring predominantly covered with carpets. While their applicability to the Chinese context may have certain limitations, their influence on aesthetic standards has been profound. The influx of international design firms and practitioners into China has catalyzed the development of a unique local interior design style. However, the role of color in the urban residential interior remains an under-examined aspect, particularly during the early stage of China's reform and opening-up policy.

This paper aims to explore the reasons for the application of light-tone colors in Chinese urban residential interior surfaces. Although color tones exhibit permanence, their use is not merely an aesthetic trend. The evolution of the color uses in terms of methods, materials, and scenes reflects the comprehensive results of social, technological, cultural, and more factors behind the development of interior design. The study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay among aesthetic consciousness, technical development, and design levels under the overlooked perspective of "COLOR" in interior design.

Method

Evaluating the color of interior spaces is a complex and intriguing task due to its multifaceted nature. This research adopts a qualitative approach, employing image-based analysis of interior color scheme. The definition and evaluation system of interior color tones have been systematically developed. The Practical Color Coordinate System (PCCS) provides a clear delineation based on the Munsell Color System and ISCC-NBS hue division method, categorizing hues into 12 tones: vivid, soft, pale, light, bright, strong, deep, light greyish, greyish, dull, dark, and dark greyish (Figure 1). This system finds wide applications in fields such as color education and communication (Arnkil, 2021). Within this framework, the Pale tone represents the highest lightness and lowest saturation, while the Light tones exhibit increased saturation with a slight chromatic hue. In the context of this paper, Light tones encompass the high-lightness and slightly chromatic tones within the PCCS system, including pale tones, light tones and the white series.

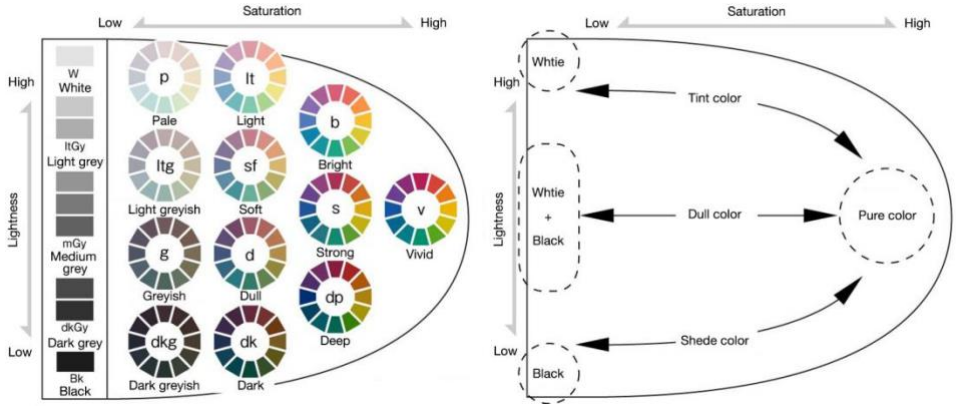

Figure 1: PCCS color tone illustration

The analytical approach also involves organizing and scrutinizing domestic historical literature, social platforms from 1978 to 2023 as the main data source. These literatures include professional and lifestyle publications, and also encompass interior design cases from design websites and social media platforms, along with photographs collected during field surveys conducted. The selected design projects and photographs were chosen because of their characteristic of major color schemes is light color tone. Those images will be examined using color extraction method. The results of the data will also be used to compare with several related concepts obtained from literature studies on industrial production documentations.

Sustaining Tradition and Embracing Modernity: Transitional Dynamics, 1970s-1980s

During the foundational years of the People's Republic of China from the 1970s, economic expansion was predominantly directed towards the growth of heavy industry. By the 1980s, the average residential construction area per capita in urban Chinese localities was confined to less than 15 square meters (Figure 2), starkly contrasting with Japan's per capita housing space of 40 square meters during the same period (Tiwari, 2000). Within these constrained indoor environments, the color white emerged as the predominant choice due to its spatial illusion of enlargement, a factor that facilitated its widespread adoption in the majority of domestic settings.

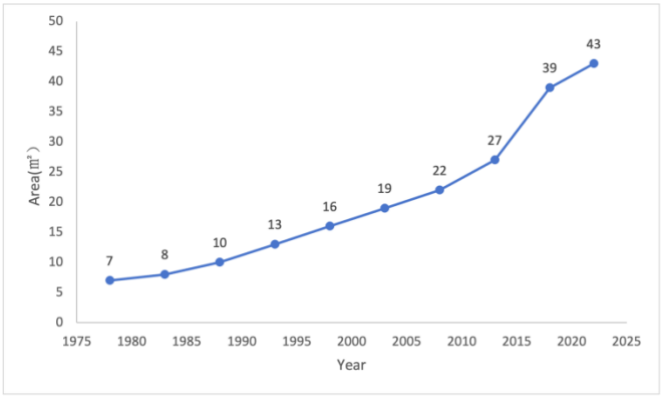

Figure 2: China's Urban Per Capita Housing Floor Area (1978-2023)

In the period implementing planned economic system, the construction guidelines emphasized the comprehensive study of theories and methods of urban planning adapted to the Soviet Union. The First National Urban Construction Symposium in 1952 introduced the architectural principle of "practicality, economy, and attention to aesthetics when possible." Under such guidance, the construction of welfare housing prioritized cost considerations, and interior space

decoration emphasized the practical "classic combination of white walls and cement floors." The methods for wall finishing were also guided by the principle of cost priority. At this time, interior coatings were rarely used in home decoration, and the most common method was "brushing with large amounts of white paste." In the context of self-constructed dwellings, decorative techniques frequently employed everyday substances such as wheat flour, table salt, and calcium carbonate lime, signifying a trend that aligns with everyday practices and distances from conventional professional construction methodologies.

Over an extended period, China's sluggish economic growth not only led to exceedingly low ownership rates of essential goods vital for sustaining life but also manifested as a considerable deficit in the provision of routine daily necessities, including fundamental domestic furniture. The concept of "home" was posited as an inflexible necessity, with individuals allocating their focus predominantly towards smaller-scale furniture during interior decor processes. Concurrent with the country's economic upswing, an increasing number of families embarked on modernized lifestyles, where the presence of modern commodities within the domestic sphere became an indicator of societal advancement.

Amidst the reforms and opening-up policy instigated in the 1980s, the escalation of socio-economic indices in China triggered an escalating populace desire for enhanced living environments. Residential design subsequently evolved towards larger, more intricate spatial configurations, spurring architects to investigate housing typologies from both theoretical and pragmatic standpoints. A shift was observed in spatial configurations, moving from "uncomplicated layouts with integrative functions" towards "complex layouts featuring distinct functions." Such transitions facilitated the delineation of diverse living scenarios, with individual preferences for color expression being realized through the decoration of diverse functional rooms.

Wall coloration, achieved through paint application, experienced a transformation from monochrome to multicolored, a testament to the progress in China's paint industry technology. During the 1980s, China imported over ten state-of-the-art paint production lines and associated technologies from international sources. Domestically, paint companies also adopted technologies for the production of latex paints and architectural coatings, emulating industry leaders such as "Sherwin-Williams" and "Glidden." The advancement of domestic paint technology in the 1980s was testified significant enhancement, expanding the array of texture and color options available to consumers.

Design practitioners offer insights into painting techniques and wall pattern styles tailored for Chinese residents within interior journals, such as "Housing Technology" and "Architecture Forum" (Figure 3). The selection of wall colors was largely limited to white, frequently complemented by light green or beige for the lower sections of the walls. The application of color palettes was meticulously designed to cater to the specific roles and orientations of individual rooms. For instance, living areas and sleeping quarters favored warm hues such as pink, orange, and yellow in an effort to foster a cozy atmosphere. In contrast, work-related environments including offices, studios, and study areas inclined towards lighter, somewhat grayish tones like emerald green, sage green, and sky blue, aiming to generate a tranquil and productive setting.

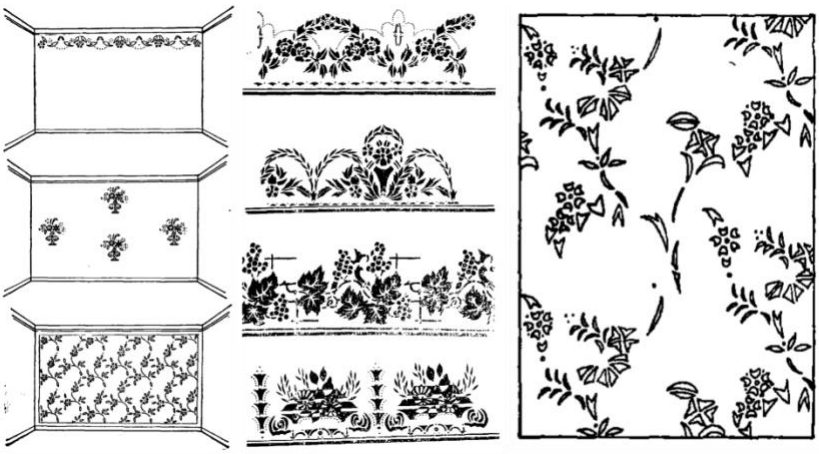

Figure 3: Wall pattern styles tailored for Chinese residents by design practitioners within interior journals.

In the realm of interior design, individuals have adopted the practice of employing patterns and a diverse array of hues to ornament their walls. This innovative approach signifies a departure from the traditional and static aesthetic characterized by the monotonous "four whites hitting the ground" motif. The shift towards incorporating vibrant colors reflects a growing enthusiasm for a more dynamic and visually appealing environment. Additionally, the transition of spatial segregation within housing typologies has precipitated a divergence in the application of materials. Living areas such as parlors underwent painting treatments, whereas utility spaces including kitchens and bathing facilities adopted glazed tiles as predominant materials (Figure 4).

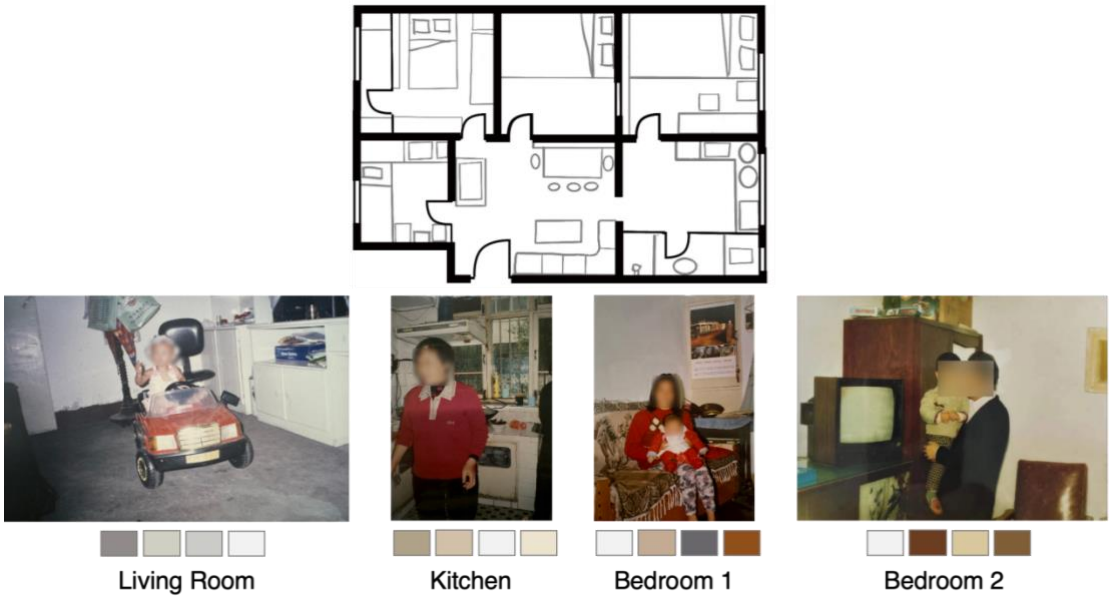

Figure 4: A divergence materials and color used in urban housing in China during the 1980s.

In 1978, the “Shiwan” Chemical Ceramic Factory in Guangdong introduced contemporary technology and production lines for manufacturing-colored glazed tiles. These tiles facilitated a more streamlined process for construction and upkeep, featuring surfaces that were smooth and neat, thereby enhancing the ease of cleaning in kitchen and bathroom environments and contributing to an organized aesthetic. There was a prevalent trend of integrating glazed tiles with walls coated in paint for countertops, cabinets, and walls. Such a practice allowed for the

differentiation of interior materials to cater to the varying functional requirements of different spaces. The widespread adoption of white as a dominant color choice continued the visual heritage of traditional surface characteristics while concurrently reflecting the modern progression of material applications.

Integration of Decorative Color palettes: Chinese and Western Styles, 1990s-2000s

During the 1990s, the abolition of the state-sponsored welfare housing allocation system marked a significant shift, which transformed residential property into a burgeoning consumer market. This development propelled housing to emerge as a pivotal driver of economic expansion. The repercussions of this transition were felt within the interior design sector, catalyzing an escalation in spatial remodeling and decoration projects. Towards the end of the 20th century, residential upgrades became increasingly prevalent, characterized by the incorporation of a wide array of decorative styles and elements. The inclination towards distinctive and adorned living spaces continued to gain momentum, precipitating an array of decorative options and a heightened emphasis on professional interior design services. As a result, renowned decoration material brands from Europe, the United States, Japan, and South Korea began to penetrate the Chinese market, ushering in new opportunities for the domestic interior design landscape. The proliferation of practical design cases and works by international designers, alongside the introduction of Western modernist furniture and decorative materials from southeastern coastal regions, exposed the mainland public to global design aesthetics. This influx induced a notable transformation in the color palettes and design approaches prevalent in residential interiors.

In the course of the preceding decade, a considerable number of homeowners engaged in home improvement initiatives prior to relocating to new residences. The financial outlays associated with these renovations spanned a wide spectrum, varying from several thousand topping off at over a hundred thousand yuan (approximately 1200 USD). When juxtaposed with the mean annual wages of urban employees, which hovered around 5,500 yuan (approximately 660 USD) during that era (NBS of China, 1996), the expenses related to home modifications represented a material portion of their disposable income. Concurrently, a segment of the burgeoning affluent demographic began to manifest their economic status by integrating opulent and grandiose decorative elements into their domestic settings, effectuating the transference of aesthetically pleasing attributes gleaned from television, hotels, and boarding houses into their private abodes. The adoption of excessive styles, European motifs, among other trends, became sought-after in the realm of residential decor, exemplified by the widespread employment of features such as Roman columns and crystal chandeliers. The proliferation of international residential decor case studies and aesthetic vectors ensued with the promotional efforts of furniture and construction material brands, thereby influencing a shift in domestic decorative aesthetics. There was a heightened emphasis on decorative elements across all interior spatial dimensions, with a discernible shift in focus from traditional living and sleeping quarters to bathrooms and kitchens. This era witnessed a departure from decor that was predominantly driven by individual whims towards a harmonized methodology in spatial design that encapsulated personalized requirements.

During the analyzed period, there was a pronounced desire for interior decoration that encompassed diverse aesthetic styles, including those that were exotic, fashionable, and elegant. The burgeoning interest in interior design prompts a proliferation of literature and editorial content in periodicals dedicated to enhancing domestic environments (Figure 5). The editorial content of these publications often emphasized the importance of scientifically informed and

professionally designed color harmonization. Interior designers of the time favored the application of vivid colors on planar surfaces to modulate visual perceptions of space. To cultivate the illusion of a more expansive area, inhabitants and designers alike to decorate using lighter hues, with milk white being the color most frequently specified. Additional popular choices for wall painting included light yellow and pastel blue, which were selected for their ability to complement a variety of decorative themes. It was recommended that walls adjacent to windows be lightened more than other walls to enhance the perception of spatial expanse.

Figure 5: Architecture journals feature numerous articles and columns devoted to the beautification of interior spaces.

Furthermore, the recommendation to adjust the color scheme of furniture, such as opting for woods with a warm hue, light yellow, beige, or light gray, was widespread as a strategy to visually expand smaller living spaces. In terms of room partitioning, the design approach favored the use of glass panels over solid walls to maximize openness and space division. To foster a sense of transparency and color unity, light-colored natural wood flooring and white carpeting were preferred choices in flooring.

These design strategies and trends, as documented in the literature and magazines of the era, reflect a collective pursuit of aesthetic appeal and functional enhancement within domestic interiors. In the designs featured in publications and magazines during this period, designers used high-intensity colors on plane surfaces to adjust the visual spatial perception. To create a sense of spaciousness, interior spaces were decorated with lighter colors, with milky white remaining the most commonly used. Lighter tones such as light yellow and pale blue for wall surfaces were also popular to complement different decorative styles. Suggestions were made to brighten the walls near windows more than other walls to achieve a sense of visually spaciousness. Additionally, adjusting the colors of furniture such as woody color, light yellow, beige, and light gray was recommended to create a visual effect of enlarging small spaces. In the treatment of room facades, achieving openness by reducing the use of solid walls and utilizing glass partitions to divide spaces were common practices. Light-toned natural wood flooring and white carpets were chosen to create a transparent effect through color harmony.

Local magazines such as "Furniture World" "An Jia" and "Furniture" have successively launched special columns in home decoration publications in 1990s, showcasing international cutting-edge design styles to readers through design cases and brand advertisements. "Furniture World" focuses on interior decoration techniques, furniture design principles and methods, and the latest trends in the home decoration industry; "An Jia" focuses on design cases and personal home decoration stories; "Furniture" contains three main sections: "Industry Enterprises" "Craftsmanship and Technology" and "Design Trends", providing textual guidance and visual

demonstrations to improve residential interior spaces through "bottom-up" case studies or "top-down" selection guidance.

In examining the content of various magazines that feature cutting-edge designs and Western decorative motifs, it becomes apparent that the residential designs showcased may present significant challenges for the average consumer seeking to implement these designs in their personal living spaces. A prime illustration of this occurs within the kitchen design domain, where open-concept Western-style kitchens and comprehensive cabinetry systems are frequently highlighted in such publications (Figure 6). Yet, it is important to note that the concept of "integrated kitchens" was relatively unknown in premier cities like Shanghai and Beijing during the early years of the 21st century. The heuristic approaches to home decoration as depicted in these magazines appear to be at odds with the practicalities of everyday life for layperson readers, leading to their limited utility as practical guides. Nevertheless, for professionals in the field of interior design, these examples serve not only as a source of innovative spatial design inspiration with a global trend, but also as a reflection of current trends in interior color schemes and material selections.

Figure 6: The white and silver modern style cabinet design published in "An Jia" .

The conception of house adornment delves into the pervasive influence of urbanization and the proliferation of commercial housing on household decor. While a predominant practice in wall coloring is the utilization of light hues, advancements in material texture have engendered a distinct visual outcome in paint application. The burgeoning interior design industry has imported diverse stylistic elements from hospitality venues into private residences, leading to an expansion in the spectrum of color selections for spatial surfaces—transitioning beyond the traditional white to include high-luminance hues with chromatic nuances. Affluent families have catalyzed a focus on decorative aesthetics, specifically in surface finishes, which has precipitated a shift in the choice of wall coverings emulating international trends. This evolution has seen a migration from immaterial paint applications to the incorporation of natural resources such as wood and stone. Additionally, ceilings and intricate plaster moldings, once merely depicted in periodicals, are now finding their way into real-world domestic settings.

Residents are no longer restricted to the monotony of white ceiling and wall finishes. Modern, French, and novel Chinese-inspired designs are favored, with practitioners leveraging their professional expertise to integrate a variety of decorative materials, thereby infusing spaces with a sense of richness and opulence. The confluence of Chinese-inspired decor with modern Western styles engenders the emergence of novel color palettes by employing a variety of

materials and strong hues to augment the overall style of the living space. A residential showroom located in Shanghai exemplifies a harmonious blend of traditional Chinese motifs and western modern aesthetics (Figure 7). The bedroom features walls, ceiling, and flooring in light tones, which starkly contrast with a dark bedroom set juxtaposed against a thematic accent wall, creating a compelling depth of field. The amalgamation of Chinese-inspired decor with modern Western furniture coalesces into an aesthetically harmony. To ensure a cohesive design language, a color palette featuring extensive use of deep-hued wood on walls merges with the hues of the furniture and flooring. In terms of flooring decor, there is a departure from traditional monochromatic tiles towards more vibrant colors and bold patterns, injecting dynamism into the domestic environment. Simultaneously, ceilings are no longer limited to the pale white; instead, they are enhanced with diverse materials and bold color choices, accentuating the overall stylistic theme of the room. In stylized interiors, light-toned horizontal surfaces serve as a canvas to showcase the decorative role of color within the domestic setting, reflecting the inhabitants' aspirations and tastes during this era. This approach highlights the significance of color as a pivotal element in defining the spatial character and underscores the evolving decorative desires of the contemporary consumer.

Figure 7: A residential showroom located in Shanghai exemplifies a novel blend of color blend of traditional Chinese motifs and western modern aesthetics.

Embracing Healing and Simplicity: Color Trends Returns, the 2010s-2020s

In the contemporary era, advancements in material prosperity have established a substratum for the pursuit of premium, sophisticated, and individually-tailored interior design and decoration. The rise of novel lifestyle patterns has engendered fresh aesthetic inclinations. Simultaneously, there is an increasing emphasis on health perspectives and the enhancement of life quality, which has precipitated elevated standards for the hues and textures of domestic materials. Nonetheless, the attendant social pressure and economic vicissitudes serve as constant reminders to contemplate future development and adaptive strategies. The global economic paradigm shifts have introduced challenges to the physical and mental welfare of individuals.

In response to the burgeoning complexity of societal structures and economic paradigms, there is a growing acknowledgment that the pursuit of interior decoration should not be solely confined to a quest for opulence. Instead, the domain of interior design necessitates an integration w. In light of the relentless pace of contemporary life and the attendant pressures,

there is a discernible shift towards a more pragmatic approach in the conception of the "HOME" space. It is increasingly perceived as a sanctuary that offers refuge from the intrusions of the external environment. This shift is reflected in the emergence of distinct design keywords, where differentiation in hue and material is artfully executed in harmony with the functional roles of various living spaces. Pale, light greyish, and white tones have come to dominate as the predominant color palettes, catering to the innate human desire for minimalism and purity amidst the excesses of prosperity. This aesthetic is realized through the refinement of spatial details, the elimination of superfluous elements, and the celebration of clean lines and the resurgence of white as a symbol of purity. Attention is now being given to the spatial and sensory experiences mediated by material choices, with a meticulous control over the visual impact of white on various substrates to engender a cohesive and holistic ambiance.

Amidst the unprecedented dissemination of epidemics domestically and globally, since 2020, there has been a profound transformation in societal perspectives on life and values. Concurrently, the emergence of pernicious viruses, such as the coronavirus, has imperiled human life, prompting a demand for indoor environments that prioritize flexibility, health, and tranquility. In the face of public health emergencies, the confluence of living and working environments within the domestic sphere has become a pressing reality. Consequently, the "HOME" has evolved from a singular living space to a multifunctional domain capable of accommodating diverse activities, necessitating the integration of "flexibility" into domestic design principles. The ability to transition between dynamic and sedentary pursuits within the same space necessitates a harmonious interplay of interior color palettes and lighting. In terms of color attributes, white and high-brightness hue enhance reflectivity, contributing to a more luminous atmosphere that mitigates a sense of spatial constraint and provides the requisite "negative spaces" for various living scenarios to fulfill the demands of versatility. Light-toned palettes are appropriately responsive to the needs of adaptable interiors, as seamless white walls, ceilings, and flooring exhibit a subtle texture and color harmony, thereby emphasizing the distinctiveness of spatial configurations.

The practice of home quarantine has necessitated an upward adjustment of the benchmarks for indoor air quality and hygiene standards. Within the realm of "sterile" medical settings, the color white is systematically employed to foster perceptions of cleanliness and order. The integration of spatial immune functionality into residential constructions has rendered cleanliness an additional criterion. The cleansing influence of color imparts spatial attributes such as emotional tranquility, which concurrently exemplifies the tenet of Le Corbusier's Purism, encapsulated by the phrase "no dirty corners," and reflects a sense of serenity and equilibrium. The eradication of soft materials, including fabrics and fur, mitigates the dissemination of viruses and bacteria, thus aiding in the containment of pathogens. The utilization of white paint within sterile environments has been instrumental in fostering an impression of hygiene and order. Now, the sanitized ambiance has extended into domestic spaces. The purifying effect of color endows the environment with calm and balanced emotional attributes (Figure 8). This de-decorative design approach, which salutes modernist aesthetics, streamlines and sanitizes the spatial environment, ultimately converging on a health-centric essence of purity and reduced risk.

Figure 8: The purifying effect of color endows the environment with calm and balanced emotional attributes.

The utilization of light color schemes within interior spaces has been shown to mitigate the psychological impact of crises and stressors on individuals. Human-centered design principles incorporate natural elements and warm hues into the indoor environment, thereby augmenting its inviting softness. Contrasting the neutrality of white or light greyish tones, the warmth imparted by a combination of natural wood textures and warm colors renders the space more physically accessible and alleviating tension, ultimately facilitating a sensory experience that evokes a return to nature. The current trend in interior design, characterized by a shift from complexity to simplicity, reflects the discipline's alignment with the essence of life and the genuine requirements of a "HOME" in terms of psychological needs and functional practicality. Within the complex and rapidly evolving socioeconomic landscape, the quest for purity in design is emblematic of humanity's true nature. Following an era of ostentatious decor, the "subtractive" approach in interior design resonates with the social zeitgeist.

Result

The evolution of residential interior decoration styles and techniques offers a proximate and expedited indicator of a nation’s developmental status when contrasted with the progression of spatial configurations. In the context of Chinese urban residential interiors, color tones have been a critical factor in the pigmentationally development process. This research reveals that in conjunction with the advancement of economic conditions and the perpetual transformation of societal perceptions regarding home decoration, the preference for light colors on interior spaces signifies the periodic needs of societal cohorts. The variegated utilization of vibrant hues across different materials, settings, and design eras signifies a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of “home” as a spatial cognition within the populace. Each decade of China’s economic reform displays unique developmental traits, with home decoration serving as the most authentic reflection of the era’s distinct features.

In the initial phase, the extensive utilization of white-washed walls, in conjunction with cement flooring, emerged as the quintessential design choice for mass housing, integrating into the daily lives of the populace. Following the inception of the urban housing reform in 1998, China's housing landscape transitioned into an era of market-oriented housing. This shift was

catalyzed by the robust growth in the real estate sector, which in turn propelled the decoration industry forward, designating home decoration as a subject of significant popular interest. Interior finishes exemplified a visual continuity from traditional spatial treatments while concurrently embracing modern material advancements. The advent of commercial housing accommodations spurred the real estate industry's progression, inherently influencing the renovation sector and transforming home decoration into a topic of widespread discourse. Academic journals in the realm of interior design began to circulate content concerning interior surface treatments, aligning with the pragmatic demands of domestic decor. These publications encapsulated and conveyed valuable insights through illustrative renderings and instructional texts, chronicling the evolution of interior decoration. Concurrently, by showcasing international design paradigms and laudable projects by local designers, these periodicals popularized a spectrum of home decoration styles. The amalgamation of Eastern and Western decorative motifs within conventional residences, which reflected individual aesthetic preferences and societal standing, accentuated the usage of vividly hued walls and flooring as distinctive markers of rich stylistic diversity.

In the opening years of the 21st century, as the economy surged forward, the pressures and challenges faced by individuals across societal, economic, and life domains reconfigured the notion of "home" as a sanctuary for recuperation and solace. This shift in lifestyle dynamics precipitated a transformation in the conceptualization of "HOME," ushering in novel expectations regarding the quality of living spaces. The design philosophy of "reducing complexity to enhance essence" reframed the design discourse to prioritize "quality and harmony." This approach emphasized the creation of serene interiors through the use of neutralizing white and soft, light greyish hues, thereby responding more effectively to contemporary demands for "shelter" and aesthetic satisfaction.

The evolution of interior decoration, shaped by the era's context, material craftsmanship, and stylistic proclivities, serves as a mirror to the progression of Chinese interior design. The rise of public consciousness regarding home decoration, the adoption of Western modern decorative idioms, and the redefinition of "home" in response to societal crises have been pivotal in driving the development of light-colored plane surfaces within Chinese residential interiors since the era of reform and opening-up.

Conclusions

Drawing upon the developmental trajectory of color tones in the realm of residential interior space, the progression of house decoration in China throughout this period can be delineated into three distinct phases:

1) During the 1970s and 1980s, a milestone in the industrialization of decorative materials marked a significant advancement in the sector, albeit predominantly accessible to economically advantaged families. The prevailing aesthetic remained entrenched in the traditional "four whites hitting the ground" motif, reflecting a conservative approach to interior decoration. 2) The 1990s and 2000s saw the introduction and integration of international decorative styles into the public domain, culminating in a syncretic amalgamation of Chinese and Western decorative idioms within residential design. This era was characterized by a more audacious and opulent application of interior plane surface colors, accompanied by an expanded array of material selections. The period also heralded a notable transformation in the interior home decoration preferences of the general populace. 3) The 2010s and early 2020s witnessed a paradigm shift in lifestyle choices and the conceptualization of "HOME," giving

rise to a trend favoring simplification in residential interior decoration. This was manifested in a shift from ornate and distinctive styles to an emphasis on establishing an atmosphere conducive to security and comfort.

Subsequent scholarly inquiry is poised to examine the developmental processes of a broader spectrum of colors, and the deployment of various materials. As critical components that underscore design aesthetics and spatial ambiance, the study of color application, material selection, and texture manipulation will continue to assume pivotal roles in assessing the contemporary narrative of interior design in China.

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