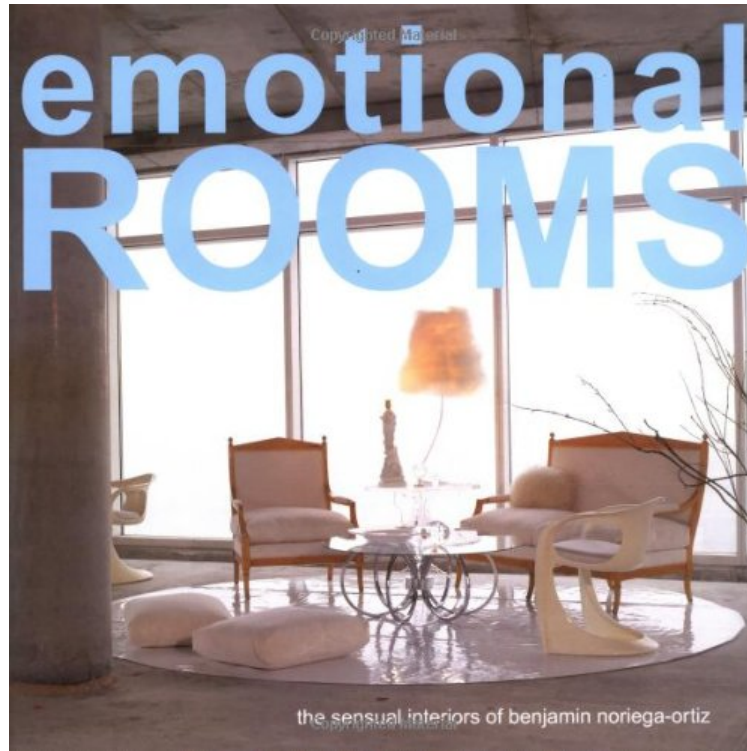


(Download ebook) Emotional Rooms

## Emotional Rooms

*Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz*

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**Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz : Emotional Rooms** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Emotional Rooms:

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emotional ROOMS the sensual interiors of benjamin noriega-ortiz Named by House Beautiful as one of "America's Most Brilliant Decorators" for ten consecutive years, Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz is recognized as one of the most stylish and influential of today's interior designers. His sensuous, glamorous, and ethereal work captures an unusual sense of openness and light through the use of color, materials, architecture, and the unexpected integration of fashion. Noriega-

Ortiz has traveled the world to design spaces for such clients as rock superstar Lenny Kravitz, bestselling author Laura Esquivel, and celebrity photographer Mark Seliger. Now, with *Emotional Rooms*, he shares his process with anyone who may not have access to a high-end designer but wants a home or workspace that is at once beautiful and true to themselves. Noriega-Ortiz brings together in this book not only photographs of his interiors but personal images that will inspire and evoke the designer within us all. With stunning full-color photographs and clear, concise essays, he guides readers through the essential principles of design -- color, architecture, furniture, and lighting -- and gives advice on how homeowners can prevent common mistakes. He shows them how to break the rules, ignore trends and labels, stop pleasing others, and decorate their homes to reflect their own true desires. For those influenced by passing fads and fashions, Noriega-Ortiz's essential advice is: Emotion is always a better guide than intellect when it comes to creating a richly satisfying environment. Home truly is where the heart is, and this famous designer has what it takes to help readers put the heart back into their homes.

About the Author Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz started his career at the world-renowned design studio of John F. Saladino, Inc. Noriega-Ortiz is currently head of his own firm in New York City. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Introduction Interior design books typically fall into two categories. The "how-to" book is the one that "walks" the reader through every step of how to create, say, a feather-covered lamp or a bedroom that feels like the ocean. It would teach them how to install a gauzy curtain to give an office alcove a hint of dreaminess. It would tell them what kind of material to use, where to order it, where to buy the track lighting and how to attach it to the ceiling. The other type of interior design book is for inspiration. This is the idea behind *Emotional Rooms*: inspiration. I'll show you the sources behind my inspiration to produce my interior design work. I'll encourage and provoke you to look into your own experiences in life to find what will inspire you to produce interiors that you can call your own. I believe that by showing what and how I see, you will come to understand how to use your own experiences. That is the best reference you can use to determine and drive your own design. Often clients become so preoccupied with buying what they think is the perfect sink, just the right sofa, and so on, that they fail to breathe and think about what's best for the space. The most important and first thing to decide is how you want the room to "feel." When I decide on a strong emotional concept such as serenity, everything else falls into place. Too many instructions can confine creativity, and my designs are about freedom, not confinement. I treat interior design as an art, not a craft. There is no "correct" way to design a room. In fact, the first thing one has to do is to forget the "correct" way. To accomplish serenity, for instance, consistency of color is extremely important. When you look at furniture as objects with form and color, you remove some of their reality. The objects become individual sculptures that you arrange in space. The shape, color, and feel of an object -- rather than preconceptions about its purpose -- are what tell an artist where to place it. As the reality goes away, one is able to see things one could not see before, such as the negative space between the objects, which is as important as the objects themselves. One also begins to see that every object has a color, and one starts to treat color as another "object." Once reality -- the intellectual idea of what a room is for -- goes away, the emotions are free to arrange the room. The result is a space that elicits an emotional response. Therefore becoming what I call emotional rooms. A room can make you feel calm and serene or agitated and uncomfortable. People are often uncomfortable in their own homes because they choose a variety of furniture and objects that they believe others would accept and be impressed by, rather than what would truly make them happy. They settle for pleasing others and denying themselves the satisfaction of self-indulgence. Life in New York City, where I have been living for more than twenty-five years, is inherently stressful. As a consequence, it's extremely important to come home to a shelter that takes me away from the outside hustle and bustle. When a person gets home, he or she should step into his fantasy, her peace.

process The four elements of design for interiors are architecture, color, furniture selection, and lighting. Architecture is the space itself. Color brings emotions to the space and is of primary importance. Then you select the objects. The pedigree of furniture is not the key to success -- as many would believe. The key is, rather, what the furniture will provide to the space and the inhabitants. Finally, lighting -- this is when everything gets revealed. The right choice will either highlight or obscure an object.

architecture After meeting with a client and establishing the program, it is important to look at the architecture of the space: the structure that defines the void that people fill. Alignment as well as outside vistas are extremely important and should be defined early on. Ask yourself where you will most likely spend your time in the room. And what you see from the room, out the window or door, is almost as important as what you see in the room. The color and feel of the landscape, urban or rural, affects the perception of every interior space. Look at the way the elements in Nature relate to one another. Look at the way the vegetation grows and what direction the sun sets. Imagine that you are in the wild and you have to establish camp. Most likely you will choose the most beautiful view for your sitting area. You will choose to rest where the smells and the sounds are best for you. The freedom that you experience in the wild should be adapted to your needs at home.

color If you want the room to feel calm and serene, which is my favorite emotion for a room, make sure you repeat one color as much as possible. My favorite color is blue-green. In Spanish I call it *bruma*. This is the color of water at the wave crest when it hits the seashore. It is also the word used to represent haze, mist, or fog. In my experience, abundance of one color produces serenity. Think of how you feel when you are looking at the vast ocean while on a

cruise ship. The serenity that you feel is mostly a result of the abundance of one color: blue, green, or blue-green. When the color gets interrupted with too much white, let's say waves, the view is not as serene. This also happens when you look at mountains covered in vegetation. The abundance of green in the lush mountains of Puerto Rico generates a profound calmness. When choosing a color, remember that color is in everything you see, and that the way you perceive color has a lot to do with lighting. Not only is the lighting that the color provides important but also the way colors reflect one another. John Saladino, my mentor in interior design and a marvelous colorist, always reminded me of Joseph Albers's famous theory that you can only see color against color. In applying color I use a basic principle, darker rooms should have darker colors, and lighter rooms should have lighter colors. Consider how people look -- you included -- inhabiting such a room. The result is what will render the environment comfortable for you. It is important to remember that materials have color and that they help you create a mood. Wood is a color, as well as metal and plastic and so on. If you cover a dark wood chair in blue fabric, the chair is not blue. However, if you paint the wood to match the fabric, the color enhances the expression of the shape, and the object therefore becomes the expression of an emotion. I use translucent fabrics and materials to separate rooms, for window coverings, and even for slipcovers and bedspreads. Translucent fabrics cast a "fog" over the view, which helps in diffusing reality. (Women have known this fact for years and they implement it by the use of hosiery.) These types of fabrics silence colors and form, delivering them to you virtually out of focus. I've heard that in the early days of film, Hollywood studios used to require that a "gauze" or "gel" be placed on the camera lens during close-ups in order to remove imperfections from the actors' faces. That is what I like to do, veil reality's imperfections.

furniture selection Think of furniture as sculpture and you will open your mind to an infinite world of possibilities. Furniture is no longer a chair or a table, but a combination of shapes and colors. Again, the pedigree of a furniture piece is not what should lead your decision-making. The piece may be rare, expensive, fabulous yet not serve the space. The history of an object, its age or previous famous owner, is not even visible to the eye. This history must be learned and therefore does not exist in the world of emotions. As a result, I dispose of it very early on in the design process. Combining styles is easy. Again, the intellect may object, but if you isolate styles by shape, color, and scale, you will find that they have more in common than you first thought. For example, if you have a collection of furniture from different periods and you upholster them in the same fabric, they definitely will be at ease in the same room. The same if your furniture has curves or angles. The shapes will "talk" to each other. Two very different curved lamps, for example, will find harmony if placed so that the attribute they share in common -- their curves -- is what is most striking to the eye. The furniture layout is part of the architecture of the space. Furniture is no more than buildings within an interior urban landscape anyway. When I studied urban design, I learned that the shape of a void is as important as the textures and colors surrounding it, and that what is behind a building is not as important as what you see in front of your eyes. The same principle applies to interior design. When you look at a floor plan, you have to remember that this is not how you experience a layout. You do not experience every room at once, from above. You experience it room by room, from the inside. While your intellect might tell you that all the rooms must agree with one another, what is behind the walls or in other rooms should not concern you -- unless you find a way of being in more than one room at a time! Furniture placement is an art in itself. I like to approach it in two ways: (a) creating conversation groups (the practical way), and (b) creating beautiful sets (the camera-ready way). Depending on the function of the room, you can decide if it's meant to be lived in or seen. Transitional spaces such as corridors and vestibules can afford to be overtly dramatic. But one needs tranquillity in a bedroom. Often, when I see pictures of beautiful interiors, I know that the room has been created for the camera. It does not mean that everything has been changed. What it means is that, because the camera sees the room in a different way than the human eye, the room has to be composed to reflect what it really looks like in person. By trying my best to see a room the way a camera sees it, I learned to ...