



Interior Choreography in Design Practice

Pawani Mittal¹, Radhika Mittal², Ishika Jain³, Sunakshi Shokeen⁴

^{1, 2, 3} UG Student - Interior Architecture and design, SOD, WUD, Sonipat, Haryana

⁴ Assistant Professor, Interior Architecture and design, World University of Design, Sonipat, Haryana

Email ID: pawanimittal718@gmail.com¹, radhikamittal2103@gmail.com², ijain7157@gmail.com³
sunakshi.shokeen@wud.ac.in⁴

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Abstract

A shaft of sunlight pierces through a carved jaali. A devotee walks barefoot across the cold stone floor. Each step echoes like a drumbeat in the sanctum. The temple does not stand still, it performs. The idea of interior choreography is examined in this study, which frames interior design as a dynamic performance influenced by movement, light, narrative, and historical memory. Interiors are often seen as fixed, designed objects—containers for life. Yet the truth is more fluid: they perform. They guide, they pause, and they crescendo. By suggesting interiors as choreographed spaces where narrative, sensory perception, and cultural memory converge, this study fills that gap. A qualitative interpretative methodology was adopted, combining case studies of temples, heritage buildings, schools, and museums with literature on spatial sequencing and environmental psychology. Fieldwork included site observations, photographic documentation, and analysis of spatial components to trace how interiors guide behavior and construct narratives. The results show how interior spaces serve as experiential scripts, with materials maintaining continuity with the past, movement defining rhythm, and light directing atmosphere. Reinterpreting these ideas in contemporary interior design results in improved cultural relevance, emotional resonance, and memory retention. The study concludes that a transformative design methodology can be achieved by approaching interiors as staged performances. For architects and interior designers, this approach provides a framework to integrate cultural memory, sensory experience, and narrative into built spaces—fostering environments that move beyond static form into living, performative encounters.

1. Introduction

Interiors live longer than we do. They remember the footsteps of those who came before, they reshape themselves with every sunrise, and they script how we move without ever speaking. Step inside, and you are part of a choreography centuries in the making. Interiors are more than functional enclosures; they are living environments that shape

human experience, emotion, and memory. While traditional interior design often focuses on aesthetics and spatial organization, contemporary research increasingly emphasizes how sensory elements influence occupants' psychological well-being. Interior choreography refers to the intentional design of interior spaces so that all elements—form,

offers designers a framework to create more human-centered, emotionally engaging spaces. [4]

1.4. Scope and Limitation

Scope

The study focuses on heritage and contemporary interiors that incorporate story, light, movement, and past. Sensory elements such as form, color, music, and water architecture are included as tools that influence experience. Will be examined.

Limitation

The research is exploratory and primarily qualitative, based on observation and analysis. It does not propose detailed architectural plans but focuses on conceptual frameworks and experiential strategies. Cultural interpretations are contextual and may not be universally applicable. [5]

2. Research Methodology

The research follows a qualitative research design, aimed at interpreting spatial experience rather than quantifying measurable outcomes. It integrates observational study, case analysis, literature review, and field documentation. [6] (Table 1)

Table 1 Tools and Techniques

OBSERVATION	Light, sound, texture, user movement
CASE STUDY ANALYSIS	Heritage & contemporary spaces
INTERVIEWS	Memory, movement, atmosphere
DRAWINGS & VISUAL MAPPING	Spatial flow, light paths, materials

3. Theoretical Framework

If interiors are stages, how can designers choreograph them for emotion, memory, and cultural resonance? This study explores how sensory, spatial, and cultural elements perform together to shape human experience. Beyond the built structure, landscapes and the environment surrounding interiors also play a vital role in shaping how space is experienced. Soundscapes complement visual and tactile elements, enriching the atmosphere and reinforcing the emotional qualities of space. In certain settings, music or water features are thoughtfully incorporated to enhance relaxation, rhythm, and sensory depth. [7]

3.1. Form

Form is the foundation of spatial experience, influencing not only what we see but how we move and feel. Ching's Form, Space, and Order identifies form as the generator of spatial order through

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light, color, texture, movement, and memory as well as environmental elements like landscapes and soundscapes—work together like a performance. It's a way of arranging space so that people don't just occupy it but move through it, feel it, and experience it emotionally and psychologically. Colors, as a universal visual language, are known to influence human emotions, perception, and behavior. The proper use of colors in living and working environments helps create harmonious and psychologically supportive spaces. Similarly, the role of light in shaping mood and guiding movement has been studied extensively, revealing how illumination patterns affect comfort, orientation, and the sense of security in interior spaces. Furthermore, movement patterns, textures, and spatial layout contribute to the choreography of everyday experience, while memory embedded in architectural elements connects occupants to cultural heritage and personal history. In some instances, sound, such as music, and natural features like water elements are also employed to enrich sensory experience, offering rhythm and calmness that support the overall narrative of space. What if interiors were more than just spaces to live in—what if they could move, speak, and stay with us through memory and emotion? [1]

1.1. Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate how interior spaces can be choreographed and understand how these sensory and spatial elements interact to shape human experience, enhance emotional well-being, and foster a sense of belonging within interiors. [2]

1.2. Objective

To study how sensory elements influence the experience of interior spaces, and how these elements are supported by form and environment. Analyze the psychological, emotional, and perceptual effects of integrating sensory elements in shaping human interaction with interiors. Suggest design strategies that holistically choreograph interior spaces. [3]

1.3. Need for Study

The research addresses a growing gap in interior design discourse, which often focuses on aesthetics and functionality but overlooks how spaces perform as lived experiences. Academically, it contributes to interdisciplinary knowledge by linking spatial design with environmental psychology, cultural studies, and sensory experience. Professionally, it

points, lines, planes, and volumes. It organizes hierarchy, circulation, and rhythm—acting as the “score” for interior choreography.

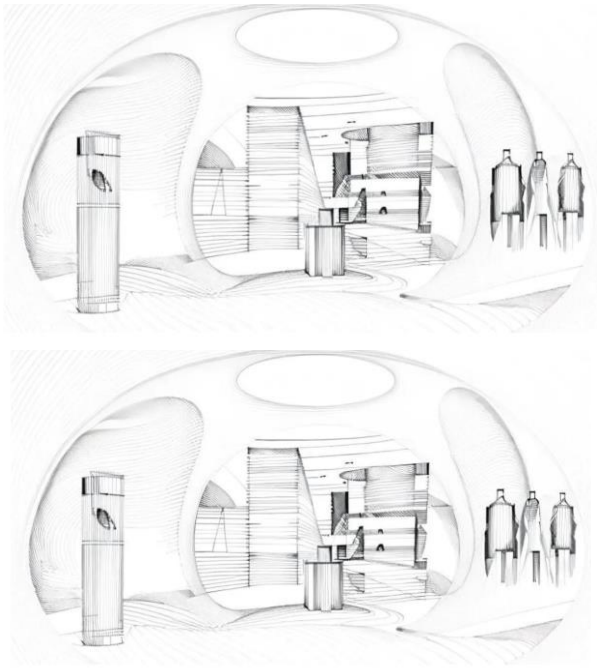


Figure 2 Illustarch and Author

Organic design integrates form with nature, aligning interior movement with the body and environment. Madani’s (2007) study shows that curvilinear forms resonate with human perception, evoking comfort, intimacy, and natural familiarity. Straight lines act as commands, while curves allow improvisation and softness in spatial performance. Lines and curves are contrasting choreographic tools: lines create clarity and direction, while curves introduce fluidity and intimacy. Together, they generate tension and release—like steps in a dance—guiding navigation, pause, and memory. Form’s relationship with music is profound—rhythm, harmony, and variation translate into repetition, symmetry, and scale.

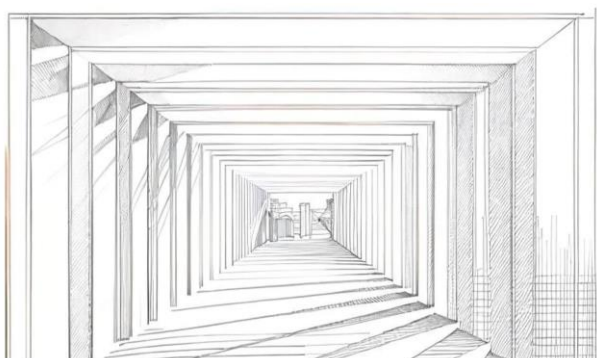


Figure 3 Architectvoyage and Author

3.2. Light

Light is perhaps the most dynamic choreographer of interiors. Research on illumination (Illuminating Emotions – RTF; Sustainability and Lighting Studies) demonstrates that lighting levels, brightness contrasts, and fixture arrangements directly shape perception, emotional comfort, and navigation. Like stage lighting in performance, architectural lighting highlights focal points, creates shadows that slow movement, and guides the rhythm of circulation. Natural daylight layers temporality into interiors, shifting mood and spatial legibility across the day, while artificial lighting sequences can reinforce atmosphere and spatial hierarchies. This way, light acts as both director and performer in interior choreography. [8]

3.3. Color

Color is more than aesthetic surface; it choreographs emotion and memory. Studies (Uticaj Boja u Dizajnu Enterijera; The Role of Colours in Interior Design) show how warm tones energize, cool tones calm, and color combinations shape productivity and focus. Colors carry cultural stories—associations of red with ritual, white with purity, or green with fertility. In interiors, color becomes rhythm: bold hues punctuate focal points, while neutral palettes establish continuity. Color choreographs not only how spaces feel in the moment but also how they are remembered, embedding cultural identity into the emotional experience of interiors. Figure 4 shows Yankodesign and Author [9]



Figure 4 Yankodesign and Author

3.4. Movement

Movement transforms interiors from static shells into living performances. Wyatt’s Towards an

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Interior History emphasizes temporality, arguing that interiors are shaped by evolving encounters, rituals, and cultural practices. Similarly, circulation studies (Movement Flow in Interior Design-2022) highlight different flow patterns—linear, radial, organic—that structure spatial rhythm. [10]

Movement In Interiors Is Both Physical And Experiential: anticipation at thresholds, pause at nodes, and reflection in contemplative spaces.

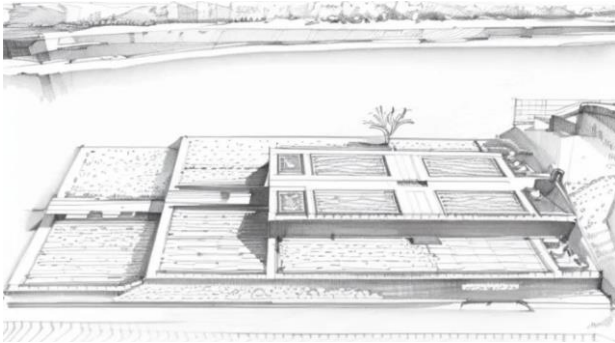


Figure 5 Contemplative Spaces

3.5. Environment and Scapes

The environment is not a passive backdrop but a co-performer, shaping how spaces are perceived, inhabited, and remembered. As Beşkaya & Gökgöz (2025) note, interiors are deeply tied to their physical, social, and cultural contexts, with users forming attachments and identities through this interaction. Wyatt (2007) further emphasizes temporality and cultural layering as integral to environmental meaning. Natural elements and landscapes introduce rhythm, reflection, and continuity, while water features—pools, fountains, and reflective surfaces—add atmosphere through sound, light, and humidity. Soundscapes, whether flowing water, footsteps, or ambient echoes, guide movement and evoke memory, transforming interiors into immersive, emotionally resonant experiences. As On Water, Landscape and Architecture highlights, integrating these natural dimensions extends choreography beyond built form, aligning spatial performance with ecological rhythms and cultural narratives. [11]

3.6. Story and Past

Wyatt (2007) highlights that spaces accumulate layers of meaning across time, with their past uses, rituals, and memories shaping present experiences. Stories are embedded in forms (arches, domes), colors (ritual associations), and environmental cues (water, sound). [12]

4. Gap in Literature

Existing research richly addresses form, light, color, movement, and environmental psychology, but often as isolated phenomena. Few studies synthesize them into a holistic framework of interior choreography—where design elements perform together like dancers in a spatial narrative. This research aims to bridge that gap by proposing interior choreography as a method for meaningful, human-centered interiors. Figure 6 shows Author

5. Case Studies

5.1. Primary Case Studies

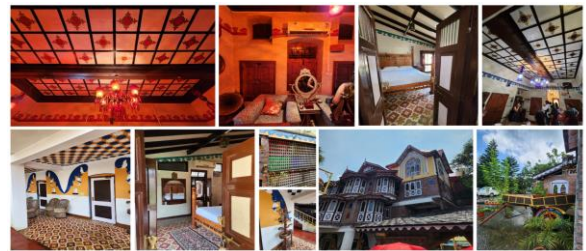


Figure 6 Author

Chateau Garli is a 100-year-old heritage property in the village of Garli, Kangra, meticulously restored to blend colonial, Mughal, Rajasthani, and local Kangri architectural influences. The interiors are a tapestry of ornate wooden furniture, Belgian chandeliers, and hand-painted ceilings, creating a rich sensory experience. The design orchestrates movement through its layout—arched windows, bay windows, and pillared verandas guide guests naturally from one space to another. Each room offers a unique perspective, with balconies overlooking the pool or the village, inviting guests to pause and absorb the surroundings. The central courtyard with a Tulsi plant, traditional mud-plastered counters, and brass utensils evoke a connection to nature and culture. At dusk, the colourful glass windows reflect in the pool, creating a dynamic interplay of light and color that shifts with the time of day. Figure 7 shows Author and Safdiearchitects [13]



Figure 7 Author and Safdiearchitects

The Virasat-e-Khalsa in Anandpur Sahib by Moshe Safdie exemplifies interior choreography by transforming cultural heritage into a spatial performance. Its sculptural forms, inspired by the five rivers of Punjab, choreograph movement through a carefully sequenced procession of narrow corridors opening into vast volumes, creating rhythms of anticipation and release. Light enters dramatically through skylights, shaping atmosphere and guiding attention, while earthy tones and material textures root the interiors in Punjab's landscape and memory. Movement is deliberately narrative, with each gallery unfolding as a chapter in Sikh history, where pauses and transitions echo ritual journeys. Environmental features, such as water bodies and the surrounding foothills, extend the choreography beyond the built interior, grounding it in cultural and ecological continuity. Figure 8 shows Zahahadid [14]

5.2. Secondary Case Studies



Figure 8 Zahahadid

The Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center by Zaha Hadid embodies interior choreography through its fluid parametric form that merges walls, floors, and ceilings into seamless movement. Ramps, curves, and light slits choreograph circulation and atmosphere, while the all-white palette reinforces continuity and symbolism, turning the interior into a living performance of space and culture. Figure 9 shows Metalocus [15]

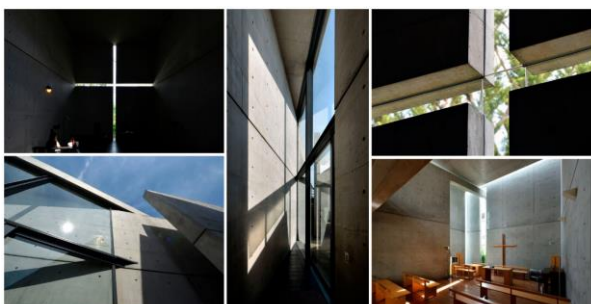


Figure 9 Metalocus

The Church of the Light by Tadao Ando exemplifies interior choreography through its minimal concrete form and the dramatic use of a cruciform cut that transforms light into the central performer. A 15-degree offset wall choreographs movement along a ritual path, guiding visitors toward the illuminated cross. Stripped of ornament, the interior relies on the interplay of light, shadow, and movement to create an immersive spiritual experience where architecture becomes a performance of silence and illumination. Figure 10 shows Angiemcmonigal



Figure 10 Angiemcmonigal

Casa Gilardi by Luis Barragán choreographs interior experience through bold color, shifting light, and spatial rhythm. Vibrant hues and skylit reflections animate walls and water, while the indoor pool blurs inside and outside, turning everyday movement into a sensory and cultural performance. Figure 11 shows Getyourguide



Figure 11 Getyourguide

The Guggenheim Museum by Frank Lloyd Wright choreographs movement through its iconic spiraling ramp beneath a glass dome, guiding visitors in a fluid descent where art and space merge. The open rotunda and natural light create a continuous spatial performance, making circulation itself an architectural experience. The Chimes House in Exeter, England is a private residential project commissioned to David Sheppard, and its primary purpose is to create a house to display pianos. Figure 12 shows Archeyes



Figure 12 Archeyes

The Salk Institute by Louis Kahn choreographs experience through its travertine courtyard and central water channel that draws the eye to the ocean horizon, creating rhythm and contemplation. Light wells and glass facades animate interiors with shifting illumination, while water and landscape act as performers, merging environment, movement, and memory into a timeless spatial experience. Figure 12 shows Archeyes [16]



Figure 13 Inexhibit

N. Khaleghimoghaddam highlights that thoughtfully designed lighting reduces fatigue and enhances mood, while strategic use of color supports orientation, relaxation, and psychological comfort—benefits rooted in how users move, perceive, and emotionally connect with interior space. Figure 13 shows Inexhibit



Figure 14 Wbpstars

Ossiano Restaurant in Dubai demonstrates interior choreography through its underwater design, guiding guests' movement and gaze with a sweeping staircase, aquarium views, and subtle lighting. The ocean-themed narrative, echoed in table arrangements and dish presentation, creates a dynamic, sensory, and performative dining experience. Figure 14 shows Wbpstars



Figure 15 Atlasobscura

The Kunsthofpassage Funnel Wall in Dresden, Germany, exemplifies how architecture can choreograph sensory experience beyond visual and spatial elements. The facade, designed with funnels and pipes, produces musical sounds when it rains, turning the exterior into an interactive instrument. By engaging occupants through sound, the funnel wall demonstrates that architectural elements can perform and narrate, reinforcing the idea that both interiors and exteriors can function as staged, multisensory environments. Figure 15 shows Atlasobscura [17]

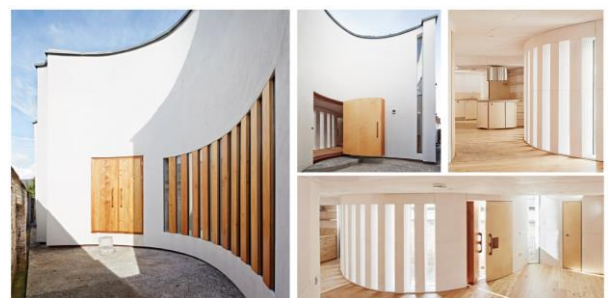


Figure 16 Dezeen

The Chimes House in Exeter, England is a private residential project commissioned to David Sheppard, and its primary purpose is to create a house to display pianos. Figure 16 shows Dezeen

6. Design Choreography

6.1. Concept Statement

Our design project tested these insights. By the Applying light as rhythm, form as anchor, and environment as co-performer, Sinfinity

demonstrates how interior choreography can reframe hospitality design. A rooftop sanctuary where elegance meets organic fluidity. Inspired by celestial formations and nature's sculptural beauty, the space blurs the lines between dream and reality, offering an immersive escape into a world of shimmering light, dynamic forms and textures. The guests are greeted by a sensory contrast—a tranquil escape under the open sky. Creating a state of infinite nightlife in the sin city. Figure 17 shows Central Sculptural Structure Space



Figure 17 Central Sculptural Structure Space

The central sculptural structure anchors the space, creating a visual landmark that naturally draws people and encourages. Seating arrangements are grouped into clusters, allowing both social interaction and private retreats. [18]

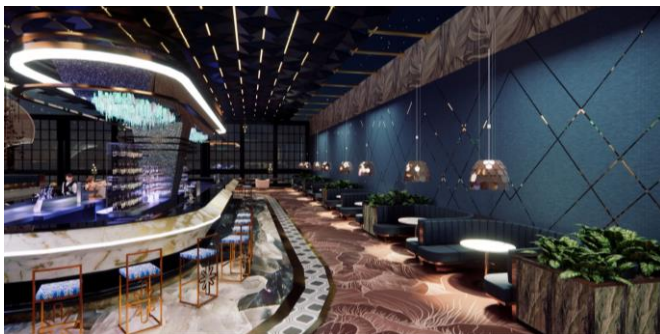


Figure 18 Highlight Pathways

Lighting is choreographed to lead movement and shape emotions. Accent lights highlight pathways, pools, and seating zones, while reflective surfaces amplify brightness and create dynamic contrasts. The gradual transition from dusk to night is thoughtfully designed, enhancing the experience and setting different moods as guests move through the space. Figure 18 shows Highlight Pathways

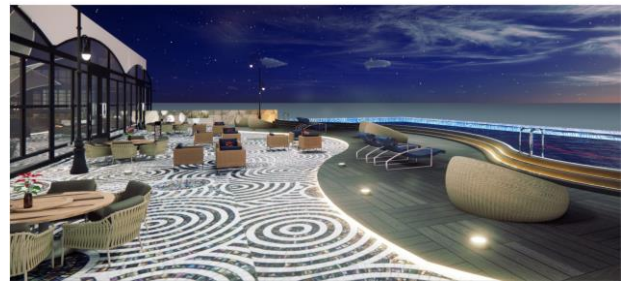


Figure 19 Open-Plan Design

The open-plan design encourages free, uninterrupted movement, while subtle curves, partitions, and seating arrangements create pauses where guests can rest or socialize. Sharp lines and soft forms are balanced to guide navigation intuitively, ensuring that users flow seamlessly from one area to another while being visually and physically engaged. Figure 19 shows Open-Plan Design [19]



Figure 20 Glamour of Las Vegas

Materials, colors, and forms are selected to evoke the iconic glamour of Las Vegas while offering a unique identity. Sculptural furniture and dramatic lighting create emotional connections and storytelling layers that make the space memorable and expressive. Figure 20 shows Glamour of Las Vegas



Figure 21 Rooftop's Open

The rooftop's open views of the sky and cityscape establish a strong connection to the environment,

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while seating is oriented to highlight these vistas. Ambient sounds, such as soft music and water reflections, are integrated into the design, adding an auditory dimension that reinforces spatial rhythm and comfort. Figure 21 shows Rooftop's Open



Figure 22 Blend of Materials

A careful blend of materials—smooth surfaces, plush textiles, patterned flooring, and reflective elements—creates tactile variety that invites touch and exploration. The contrast between textures ensures that guests experience the space not just visually but also through subtle sensory interactions, enhancing their overall experience. Figure 22 shows Blend of Materials

Conclusion

This research shows that interiors function as choreographed environments where form, light, movement, memory, and environment work together to shape experience. From heritage spaces to contemporary projects, the study demonstrates that well-designed interiors guide circulation, evoke emotion, and embed cultural narratives. Interior choreography reframes design as the orchestration of lived experience—spaces that perform, connect, and endure in memory.

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