

# CONTEMPORARY INTERIORS

ROOM  
BY  
ROOM

ROCKPORT

CAROL MEREDITH

# Contemporary Entrances

*As you begin to plan your entryway, think about the ideas and feelings about your home that you want to convey through the design.*



Entrances have a profound psychological impact on those who come and go because they create a first impression and also convey symbolic meaning.

Some contemporary doors, for instance, are heavy, wooden barriers offering the reassurance of protection from the world, while others are framed transparent or translucent glass that invites the outside in.

Most entryways accommodate very few pieces of furniture; make sure the items you select immediately establish the contemporary aesthetic that will unfold throughout the rest of the house. A single distinctive chair—whether a taut, linear form made of inexpensive materials, or a Modern classic such as Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona chair—can go a long way toward setting a style. Avoid clutter in favor of a clean look, choosing only a few focal points such as an exotic, cutting-edge mirror or avant-garde painting, a sleek table or hand-crafted console. Tables and chairs have their practical side, as well, providing surfaces to hold items in transit and places to sit while putting on boots and coats for inclement weather.

When designing large entrances, long hallways, and other transition areas, recall the experience of driving an automobile down a highway. In a car, the sense of movement comes from the rhythmic passing of regularly spaced utility poles and other markers on the road. Similarly, movement through circulation areas becomes noteworthy when the space is articulated, that is, divided into distinct parts by a progression of artwork or a series of architectural features such as pilasters or niches. Lighting also plays a key role in articulating transition spaces.

Stairways, typically celebrated in grand traditional residences, are particularly exciting elements in contemporary homes. Here, the Modern idea of reducing a functional element to its simplest form often is carried to an extreme, with nothing more than stair treads and stringers suspended in space like airborne sculpture. Balusters and balustrades run the gamut from purely functional forms, to designs that are highly expressive of construction materials, to witty renditions of contemporary style.

In a departure from the Modernist philosophy that urges the exposure of even the most basic components of functional design elements, this contemporary entry hall conjures a sense of mystery. A dreamlike surface covered with an abstract design creates the illusion of a painted wall, but closer inspection reveals the door-knobs and panels of folding closet doors. Design: Mary Knockledt. Photo: Bill Rotheschild





The sturdy horizontal planks and hefty frame of the front door express the idea of a protective barrier, while the transparency of the glass sidelights serves as a counterpoint. The absence of artwork and furnishings keeps the focus on the door's basic function. In another part of the house (left), the sense of movement through a long corridor is emphasized by floorboards laid in the same direction as the flow of traffic and stately pylons marking progression through the space. Design: Dan Phipps and Associates; Photo: John Sutton



This entry's powerful sightline to the fireplace immediately draws people to the heart of the house. The resulting psychological impact is considerable: the entry and fireplace say "welcome" and "home. The design of the door is strongly asymmetrical, a common approach in contemporary design. Design: Dan Phipps and Associates; Photo: John Sutton



In contrast to entrances that immediately reveal intimate spaces, this one—in the spirit of Frank Lloyd Wright's philosophy on entries—offers only glimpses. This entry hall is particularly coy in that the use of stucco, a material typically used on exterior walls, makes the space seem like it is outside as much as inside. Interior Design: Uley Hack Associates; Architecture: Based on a design by William P. Bruder; Photo: Warren Jagger

When dining is open to nearby rooms and a serene, peaceful interior design is desired, select aesthetically compatible furniture united through similar textures, woods, and colors. Design: Lucy Hack Associates; Photo: Warren Jagger



This dining area makes mealtime less serious but not less pleasurable. Easy comfort comes from cushioned banquette seating, a table large enough to accommodate serving platters, and a pendant fixture that pools light to focus attention inward. Unexpected guests are welcome, such as the colorful reptile sculpture darting up the wall and chairs that are cousins to tin watering cans. Design: Dan Phipps and Associates; Photo: John Sutton





This attractive space features many elements found in well-designed contemporary kitchens: a central island that encourages socializing, a stainless-steel cooktop with a sculptural hood, a multilayered lighting system for specific tasks and overall illumination, and an innovative use of exotic wood and natural stone. Design: Dan Phipps and Associates; Photo: John Sutton