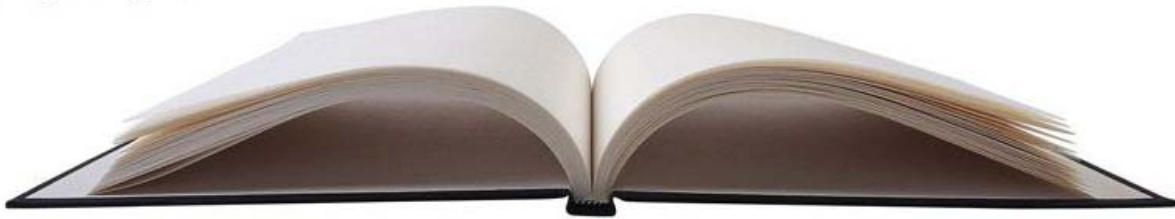


Raison d'Être:
Crafting an
Historical Narrative
of the History of
Interior Design



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Conference Hosts: Bridget May, Ph.D. and John Turpin
Abstract Review Coordinator: Mary Anne Beecher, Ph.D.

RAISON D'ETRE:

Crafting an Historical Narrative of the History of Interior Design

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

8:00-8:30 Registration, coffee and muffins

8:30-8:45 Welcome, introductions
Bridget May, John Turpin

8:45-9:45 Keynote Address

Penny Sparke The Modern Interior Revisited

9:45-10:00 Discussion

10:00-10:15 Break

10:15-11:30 Session I Characterizing Interior Design

Moderator: Bridget May

Jill Pable, Ph.D. The Heresy of the Expressive: Public Pressures for Objective
Ways of Knowing in Interior Design
Caren Martin, Ph.D. Dangerous Disconnect: Internal and External Definitions of
Interior Design and Effects on the Profession
Lucinda Havenhand, Ph.D. "Principles not Effects:" Idea as the Defining Concept in
Postwar Interior Design

11:30-12:00 Q & A, Discussion

12:00-1:00 Lunch (provided)

1:00-2:15 Session II External Perspectives on the Profession

Moderator: Buie Harwood

Marjorie Kriebel Revisiting a 1960s Study of Interior Design Education
Stephanie Clemons, Ph.D., Exploring Theories Identified in *JID*
Molly Eckman, Ph.D. &
Nicole Conis
Ronald L. Reed Design Organizations: Professional Perceptions
Denise Bertoncino

2:15-2:45 Q & A, Discussion

2:45-3:00 Break

3:00-4:15	Session III	Exploring the Roles of Culture & Gender Moderator: Penny Sparke
	Meltem Gurel, Ph.D.	From Decoration to Interior Architecture: A History of the Field in Turkey
	Carol Morrow, Ph.D.	Collective Analyses of the Contributions of Five Sydney Women to Interior Design from the 1920s to the 1960s
	Nancy Blossom & John Turpin	Inhabiting Risk: The Female Decorator in the Public Sphere
4:15-4:45	Q & A, Discussion	
5:00	Dinner on your own	

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

7:00-8:00	Coffee and muffins	
8:00-9:15	Session IV	Interfaces with Allied Professions Moderator: Bridget May
	Mary Anne Beecher, Ph.D.	Creative Companions: Interior Design and Industrial Design in the Mid-Twentieth Century
	Terrence Uber	Shaw, Leffingwell and System: Early Influences on the Design of Offices and their Furnishings
	Daniella Ohad-Smith, Ph.D.	T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings: A Search for the Genuine American Home
9:15-9:45	Q & A, Discussion	
9:45-10:00	Break	
10:00-11:15	Session V	Vernacular and High-Style Interiors Moderator: Mary Anne Beecher
	Alison B. Snyder	The Modern Turkish Home: An Evolution of the Rural Interior
	James Archer Abbott	Maison Jansen: Translators of Social and Political Ambitions through Silks, Tassels, and Fringe
	Jean Edwards & W. Geoff Gjertson	La Maison de Verre: Negotiating Modern Domesticity
	Lisa Tucker	The Architects' Small House Service Bureau and Interior Design in the 1920s and 1930s
11:15-11:45	Q & A, Discussion	
11:45-12:00	Wrap-up	

The Heresy of the Expressive: Public Pressures for Objective Ways of Knowing in Interior Design

Jill Pable, Ph.D.

Abstract

"Not everything that can be measured counts, and not everything that counts can be measured."

Albert Einstein

JID editor Paul Eschelman has referred to a “smoldering tension between the creative/subjective and the rational/objective sides of design. ...It is as if there are two separate... schools of thought vying for dominance, rather than two complimentary dimensions of the same process seeking balance” (2004, pp. v.).

Philosophers have long debated the nature of knowledge acquisition. *Objective thought* considers observable experience the sole source of valid information. Modern scientific method springs from this philosophy. *Subjective (or expressive) thought* uses knowledge gained independently of tangible experience, such as intuition and emotion.

This proposal will argue that 1) it is necessary to consider interior design identity through this cultural lens of objective and expressive ways of knowing; 2) both the public and design professionals’ view of interior design’s credibility and identity are influenced by the public’s preference for objective methods; and, 3) renewed dialogue is needed that reinstates credibility to expressive knowledge and restores a balance that acknowledges the full breadth of interior design identity and capability.

Architectural researchers have discussed western culture’s preference and heightened credibility assigned to objective methods (Rogers, 2001; van der Ryn, 2005; Alexander, 2004). This bias is also manifested in various large and small ways within interior design:

- Health and safety figure prominently in the worth ascribed to interior design within licensing efforts. The “health, safety and welfare” classifications within the continuing education system underscore the primacy of objective priorities. Courses that convey expressive concepts are classified as ‘welfare’ and have more restrictions on their credit acceptance than ‘health and safety’ courses (such as building codes) within some jurisdictions.
- The *evidence-based design* movement seeks to “parallel evidence-based medicine”, bringing objective predictability to design choice making (Hamilton, 2007, pp.1).
- Preferences for objective ways of knowing may underscore interior designers’ attitudes toward other fields. For example, interior designers’ denigration of interior decoration belie a rejection of an expressive approach to knowing and an embrace of objective methodologies.

The interior design profession employs both expressive and objective reasoning in its activities. The expressive shaping of space and the embrace of historical, cultural and emotional influences holds value while remaining stubbornly unmeasurable. While using objective discovery methods within design is a tactic few would argue for its many benefits, the method has its limitations (Hamilton, 2007). Advocacy of objective ways of knowing offers a side benefit of public credibility and acceptance. However, excessive adherence to objective methods can lead to solutions stunted by empirical procedures' limitations and continued suppression of interior design's true nature.

Interior designers may gain little in limiting themselves to believing or valuing only what can be objectively observed—life is likely more complex and multi-dimensional than this approach allows. A renewed dialogue to infuse interior design identity and intention with a balance of objective and expressive ways of knowing is needed.

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Dangerous Disconnect: Internal and External Definitions of Interior Design and Effects on the Profession

Caren Martin, Ph.D.

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to compare how interior design is defined internally versus how it is defined in the public arena. The effect this disconnect has on the profession, its practitioners, and educators preparing students to enter the profession will also be discussed. The current, external definitions used in vocational and governmental publications offer insight to the public's and lawmakers' view of interior design, which differ from the profession's internal definitions. Steps will be identified that the profession can take to clarify external definitions, closing this dangerous gap in understanding.

Framework

A profession is defined by its body of knowledge, the jurisdiction of its professional boundaries (Abbott, 1988). Subsequently, a concise, accurate definition enables the profession to establish itself and provides a basis for professional regulation/licensing (Kleiner, 2006). There is evidence that interior design is not understood outside of its professional boundaries, especially as compared to architecture or interior decoration (Drab, 2002; Havenhand, 2004).

The issue of defining interior design, especially as distinct from interior decoration, has risen to the forefront via a widely-circulated publication by the Institute for Justice (IJ), *Designing Cartels: How Industry Insiders Cut Out Competition* (Carpenter, 2006). Publication of this study coincided with a lawsuit entered by the IJ against the New Mexico Interior Design Board, followed by a similar lawsuit against the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners (June 2007). Both cases claim that regulation of the title "interior designer" is a violation of free speech by anyone who wants to use that title, namely interior decorators. A cornerstone of the IJ's actions is representing interior decoration as interior design, and thus far they are making a convincing case to lawmakers. Even though the interior design profession has a current, concrete definition (National Council for Interior Design Qualification, 2004), what is known in the public realm is somewhat different.

Importance of the Topic

The public's ability to understand the value interior designers bring to the built environment is dependent on how interior design is defined outside the profession (Abbott, 1988). As discovered by the IJ, and used to their advantage against the interior design profession, interior design is not broadly understood. At this time, external definitions do not support, but impede that understanding. Therefore, it is critical to review external definitions available to the public, both citizens and lawmakers, and compare them to the NCIDQ definition

showing how this miscommunication is offering ammunition for current and future lawsuits against regulation of interior design practice, leaving the public at risk for harm.

Relevance to Interior Design

The disconnect between internal and external definitions has a profound effect on the maturation of the profession, influences the profession's ability to attract qualified students, and continues to confuse the public, putting them at risk for injury, loss of life, or loss of revenue through the creation of spaces by persons not qualified to do so in a safe, appropriate manner. The academy has responsibility to mitigate this dangerous disconnect by contributing to the reformation of the public definitions of interior design; action steps will be proposed.

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"Principles not Effects:" Idea as the Defining Concept in Postwar Interior Design

Lucinda Havenhand, Ph.D.

Abstract

In his 1950 booklet "What is Modern Interior Design?" Museum of Modern Art curator Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., created one of the first documents that attempted to explain "interior design," a new practice that had emerged as a profession in the postwar period. For Kaufmann the most important defining aspect of interior design was that it, in contrast to interior decorating, was based in "principles rather than effects."¹ Kaufmann explains in his publication that to use the word "design" instead of "decoration," in relation to the creation of interior spaces implied the use of a systematic and rational approach and basis in idea not personal preference. While, Kaufmann and this document are now rarely mentioned in interior design histories, his effort to define the profession is an important one that not only marks the emergence of interior design as an accepted practice but also succinctly describes its distinct *raison d'être*.

As part of a larger project that considers the "principles rather than effects" at work in interior designs in the 1940's through 1960s in the United States, this paper explores that *raison d'être* and the historical roots of the definition of interior design by bringing to light the varying ideas or "principles" underlying specific interior design projects during this period. Examples drawn from the work of Ray and Charles Eames, Florence Knoll, and Russel and Mary Wright will be closely scrutinized to reveal that not only is modern postwar interior design heterogeneous, but that each of these designers or designer pairs used interior design to explore and express clearly different theoretical premises. And so, although the visual "effects" of the work of these designers may be blanketed by the term modern interior design, for the Eameses interior design was a method of exploring theories about visual communication; for Florence Knoll it was the site for translating the aesthetic theories of *Kunstwollen*, abstraction and empathy that were taught her by her mentors Mies van der Rohe and Eliel Saarinen: and for Russel and Mary Wright interior design was the means for expressing a new form of national identity. This paper notes that while interiors created by these designers and others have been well documented and preserved visually, the ideas behind them have, for the most part, not been fully recognized or recorded. It argues that if a basis in principles is an important characteristic of interior design, then knowledge of those principles is essential for a proper understanding of its history. By exposing these widely varying "principles rather than effects" at work in these historical examples, this paper attempts to not only foreground the importance of idea as a defining element in interior design, but also to highlight the role that design history can and must play in revealing, constructing, and maintaining the proper identity of this practice.

¹ Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., *What is Modern Interior Design*, Introductory Series to the Modern Arts, No. 4 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1950), 10.

Revisiting a 1960s Study of Interior Design Education

Marjorie Kriebel

Abstract

In 1968 the Interior Design Educators Council published A Critical Study of Interior Design Education by Arnold Friedmann, chairman of its Research Committee. His landmark document defined the status of interior design education in the United States in the late 1960s and provides a baseline for measuring change in interior design education. This paper analyzes Friedmann's study and compares 2007 accreditation standards and accredited programs with the 1968 findings and recommendations.

Of 286 institutions identified by Friedmann as offering interior design courses, 116 offered 119 interior design programs. Seventy-two of the programs awarded bachelor degrees to majors in interior design. Half of these programs were administered in a department of art. Two thirds were offered by large universities, where professional courses comprised an averaged 54% of curricula in art departments, 61% in architecture/design departments, and 47% in home economics departments. For smaller institutions the department consistently was art and professional courses comprised 53%.

Friedmann's visits to 20 United States schools showed numerous programs in process of curricular review. Program quality appeared to be in proportion to how far a school extended in search for faculty, speakers, and exposure to different disciplines. Few faculty applicants held the master's degree required by large land-grant universities, and little emphasis was placed on professional experience. Generally, student work was more concerned with presentation than design solutions; it lacked basic research and analysis of problems, planning concepts, and spatial considerations. Funding was tight, physical facilities were poor, and resource libraries were inadequate.

Opinions on interior design education from 66 leading practitioners and educators in interior design and allied fields stressed the need for greater professionalism. Many of their statements emphasized the integration of interior design and architecture. Programs in junior colleges and schools or colleges of home economics were ranked as non-effective. Almost all of those surveyed (91%) agreed considerable curricular reform was needed, 67% recommended courses be taught by a department of interior design, 64% recommended a required intern experience, and 79% supported certification.

Based on Friedmann's study and discussions with IDEC membership, the Research Committee made recommendations on curriculum and course content, facilities, faculty, administration, and accreditation guidelines. Proposals identified immediate needs: (1) a national accreditation body; (2) a national committee for examination and certification of interior designers; and (3) a federation of all major interior design professional organizations.

Less than ten years after the study's publication, all three proposals had been accomplished. The Foundation for Interior Design Education Research was founded in 1970, and 6 programs were accredited in 1973. The National Council for Interior Design Qualifications was incorporated in 1974, and the first NCIDQ exam was given to 242 candidates in April 1974. In 1975 the American Institute of Decorators and the National Society of Interior Designers merged to form the American Society of Interior Designers; however, multiple organizations have again emerged. As of Spring 2007, NCIDQ has certified 21,000 interior designers and 160 programs are accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (nec FIDER).

Exploring Theories Identified in the *Journal of Interior Design*

Stephanie A. Clemons, Ph.D.

Molly Eckman, Ph.D.

Nicole Conis

Colorado State University

Purpose

Critical to the evolution of a profession is the identification of the theoretical underpinnings of the field. Piotrowski (2002) identified the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge as one of the major components of a profession. It has been said that theory, unique to interior design, does not exist (Guerin, 2003; Loustau, 1988). Is that true? What theories related to interior design is being used to guide research questions and the profession?

To fully appreciate the history and development of interior design as a profession and discipline, an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the field must be examined periodically in a systematic manner. "Theory plays an essential role in guiding research questions, designing methodology, and interpreting results." (Steggell, et al., 2003, p. 23). Wells & Picou indicate that academic journals are "major repositories of the cognitive structure of a discipline" and are worth examining (1981, p. 80). Goldsmith (1983) stated that analysis of an academic journal assists in determining research progress.

This research study documents a content analysis of the *Journal of Interior Design Education and Research* (1975) and the *Journal of Interior Design (JID)* through 2007. (Note name change). This journal was selected as it is the only refereed publication dedicated to the design of interior environments. The purpose of this study was to identify the theoretical frameworks reported and make suggestions for future theoretical developments.

Methodology

The models developed by Steggell, et al (2003 & 2006) were used for this systematic assessment of the use of theory in interior design research. Their models were guided by seminal work in sociology completed by Wells and Picou (1981).

Each article published in *JID* was considered scholarship and included in the analysis. For each article selected, the theoretical framework(s) identified by the authors were recorded. The word *theory* was used in an inclusive fashion and included such terms as *paradigm*, *conceptual framework*, *typology*, and *model*. Identification of the theory, definition of theory, and its application to interior design were gathered in Phase One. See Table 1. In Phase Two variables used to measure the use of theory in the research design were also recorded with statements such as "true" or "false." For convenience these "Design" variables were labeled D1 through D7. See Table 2 and 3.

Findings/Conclusion/Relevance to Interior Design

Findings included that 1) the majority of first authors of articles where theory was cited were from research institutions, 2) the majority of theories were from the social sciences and 3) the majority of studies where theory was cited used qualitative methodology. Theoretical approaches utilized by related disciplines offer a framework as a starting point for interior design to generate its own body of theory. "Theory must be made manifest; it is an important working tool for both the academic and the professional community." (Loustau, 1988, pg. 7). Results of this research study offer educators, students, and practitioners an easy tool to identify theories that relate to the interior design and other near environments.

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Table 1. Sample listing of theories identified in the *Journal of Interior Design*.

Theory	Summary of Theory	Examples of application in Interior Design
Post-structuralist theory	Post-structuralist theory understands society as both constructing and of constructed by people. Post-structuralist thinking encourages professionals to see professional practice, as all social life, as constructed, and to deconstruct in order to reflect on how to develop enabling practice (Goodley & Lawthom, 2006).	This theory was used in research related to both historical elements of the profession and also looking at twentieth-century French design.
Sense of place	The phrase <i>sense of place</i> has been defined and utilized in different ways by different people. To some, it is a characteristic that some geographic places have and some do not, while to others it is a feeling or perception held by people (not by the place itself). It is often used in relation to those characteristics that make a place special or unique, as well as to those that foster a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging.	This concept was used in relation to personal interior spaces such as residence hall rooms.
Human Ecosystem Model	The effect of changes in marriage patterns, resource sharing patterns, or subsistence activities on the ability of the human population to survive in the environment (Weinstein, 1983).	
Kolb's experiential learning style theory	<p>1. Experiential learning theory (ELT) describes learning as the holistic engagement of affective, perceptual, cognitive, and behavioral processes (Kolb, 1984). Learning results from the interplay of these processes, which are positioned along two primary dimensions of knowledge.</p> <p>According to ELT, learning proceeds as a cycle and results from the integration of four learning modes — concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Learners must be able to fully and openly engage in new experiences; reflect on, observe, and consider these experiences from various perspectives; create concepts that assimilate these experiences into sound theories; and appropriately apply these theories to their life situations (Sims & Sims, 1995).</p>	This theory was used in research related to the education of interior design students.

Lewin's Theory	<p>Field</p> <p>Field theory provides us with a map as we begin to describe how the interactions of the elements of culture and the social structure contribute to the creation and maintenance of unique social problems affecting individuals. They attempt to outline the interactive nature of these social problems.</p> <p>This theory attempts to deal with the influences of culture, the social culture, and their components, such as groups, technology, and institutions, on individual behavior.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The interactions of individuals, groups, institutions, nations, and the world community influence our society and create unique sets of interactive social problems. (2) The content and processes inherent in the elements of culture and the social structure at a given time contribute to the development and maintenance of specific social problems (Wheelan, Pepitone, & Abt, 1990). 	
Feminist theory	<p>Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical, or philosophical, ground. It encompasses work done in a broad variety of disciplines, prominently including the approaches to women's roles and lives and feminist politics in anthropology and sociology, economics, women's and gender studies, and philosophy.</p>	<p>This theory was used in research related to the history of the interior design profession.</p>

Other common theories were from the social sciences and design including: Kolb's learning style theory, Stimulus-Organism response model, Mehrabian & Russells environmental psychology theory, color theory, Human Eco-System model, formed affiliation theory, cognitive way finding theory, Moore's integrative theory, Cantur's theory of place identity.

Table 2. List of Design variables.

D1	One or multiple theories mentioned in the introduction or literature review
D2	One or multiple theories mentioned relative to research design
D3	Specific theory or theories named and a clear relationship between variables or methods identified in research design
D4	Specific theory or theories named and author explicitly showed how it was used to select variables or method in research design
D5	Specific theory or theories named and used to develop testable hypotheses
D6	New theory proposed
D7	New theory proposed and implemented in the research design

Table 3. List of Research Outcome variables.

RO1	One or multiple theories mentioned in the discussion
RO 2	Specific theory or theories used to interpret findings
RO 3	Results used to support or refute specific theory or theories
RO 4	Results used to suggest further testing of this or other theory
RO 5	Suggestion for specific use of the theory in subsequent research
RO 6	Modification or extension of theory suggested as a result of the study
RO 7	New theory proposed

Design Organizations: Professional Perceptions

Ronald L. Reed

Denise Bertoncino

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to investigate the presence and quantify memberships in professional design organizations within architectural and interior design firms throughout the United States, find their relevance to the interior design profession, understand the firms' viewpoint on professionalism, and reflect on the historical progression and diversification of design organizations.

Method

The researchers identified 100 interior design firms; a sample size that would provide a wide range of specializations as well as memberships representing multiple design organizations. This research is based only on practitioners currently working in an architectural or interior design firm and does not include educators. The scope was narrowed to allow statistics to reflect only people within the workforce. Firms were contacted by phone to identify the potential participant for the project. These individuals were sent email correspondence asking for their participation and consent. A survey was distributed electronically with a 30% participation rate. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and results were tabulated using percentages and charts for comparison and discussion.

Importance of Topic

Written information by interior design educators and students is available discussing the importance of memberships. Little information, however, is available on architectural/design firms' perceptions concerning significance or value of participation in professional organizations.

Relevance to Interior Design

Unification of the professional interior design organizations is an important topic. Allied design professionals believe in the importance of organizations not only for their benefit to each other and the client, but also their relevance to professionalism.

The interior design professional organizations mission statements all exhibit related concepts and goals. ASID, "seeks to support, foster, promote and advance the many ways that design and designers enhance the quality of life for all of us" (ASID, 2007). IIDA "works to enhance quality of life through excellence in interior design and to advance interior design through knowledge, value and community" (IIDA, 2007). FIDER, IDEC, and NCIDQ all have similar statements, but there is one common goal between everyone and that is for interior designers to be professionals. AIA's mission statement says, "The AIA is the voice

of the architectural profession and the resource for its members in service to society” (AIA, 2007). AIA is telling the public that they are one complete organization that houses everything.

Is there a correlation between one voice and professionalism? Survey participant Jocelyn M. Stroupe, Director of Healthcare Interiors, Principal, states, “They (AIA) are a singular voice for Architects nationally where as ASID and IIDA do not collaborate often and recent efforts to merge were unsuccessful. I think this is detrimental to Interior Designers as a profession ultimately.” Are these organizations being viewed as professional? Do firms support these organizations or require memberships in specific organizations? Survey participant Susan Long at Karlsberger stated, “If the two organizations merged (IIDA and ASID), I would do a better job requiring people in our department to become active in the organization.”

This research intends to assimilate the facts regarding professional memberships within interior design and architectural firms and create further discussion towards unifying the organizations and validating the profession.

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From Decoration to Interior Architecture: A History of the Field in Turkey

Meltem Gurel, Ph.D.

Abstract

“Decorator is the creation of our epoch; decorator is like an orchestra conductor who brings together many different elements to compose a unified whole,” declared French artist Marie Louis Sue as the director of the Decorative Arts Department in the Turkish Academy of Fine Arts in 1940. While this view has maintained its currency, the use of the term decorator in reference to the identity of the professional has come to be strongly rejected in the field. Unlike the English speaking countries, such as the United States and England, the name interior design was never adopted in Turkey; rather, the professional and academic community preferred the name interior architecture. This, in turn, constituted a point of tension in the architectural community. This tension with European and American roots can be compared to the development of the field in an international context. It relates to an understanding of interior architecture as an inseparable part of the discipline of architecture.

Although the professional organizations and the academia have been immensely preoccupied with arguments pertaining to the definition and responsibilities of interior architects in Turkey, the progression of the discipline has remained largely unexplored. This study examines the educational and professional development of interior architecture with regards to a concern about a professional identity in Turkey. Relating this concern to the evolution of interior design in a worldly context, I analyze the formation of the field from its inception to the 1980s. To chart this formation, the study engages archival research and interviews with architects, interior decorators/architects, educators, and some of the founders of the interior architecture professional organizations. How did interior decoration emerge in Turkey? How did this relate to its development elsewhere? What were the Western trends and influences? How and why was the term decorator transformed into interior architecture? What was in a name?

My analysis showed that from a historical perspective, the transformation of decoration into interior architecture was a product of discursive forces acting on the formation of a professional identity. The term interior architect had been used interchangeably with decorator since the 1930s. In the second half of the twentieth century the professionals of interiors perceived the name decoration as problematic since they preferred to define their roles in broader terms: experts who are capable of design interventions while preserving the structural integrity of buildings. The founding of the professional organizations marked the official adoption of the term interior architecture. While this has portrayed an effort in legitimizing the field as well as improving its marginalized status in the architectural sphere, it has also contributed to building disciplinary tensions between architects and interior architects. However, the questioned was not the validity of the profession, but the identity of the professional.

Collective Analyses of the Contributions of Five Sydney Women to Interior Design from the 1920s to the 1960s

Carol Morrow, Ph.D.

Abstract

Drawing from my PhD thesis (2005), *Women and Modernity in Interior Design: A Legacy of Design in Sydney, Australia from the 1920s to the 1960s*, this paper gives collective analyses of the contributions of five women who were seminal to the development of interior design as a discipline and profession in Sydney, Australia. Covering this significant period in the field's development, the study identifies Thea Proctor, Nora McDougall, Margaret Lord, Phyllis Shillito and Mary White as foundational leaders who progressively advance interior design in Sydney through individual and collective understandings of design. Focussing on their contributions, the study explains complex interrelationships between women and modernity in interior design.

This emergence of the discipline and profession in Sydney situates the initiatives of these five women at a transitional phase of the field's global development when 'interior decoration' is challenged by modern attitudes and artistic theories of 'design'. Working as individuals, Proctor and her successors advance the profession—previously characterised as a 'natural' pursuit for women of 'taste' and 'style'—by their artistic, rational and practical approaches. At a time when no distinct discipline exists in Sydney, the women offer instruction and forge new directions by reformulating previous overseas traditions: incorporating a wide-range of aesthetic and theoretical conceptions of design, demonstrating common and different approaches to practice, and integrating changes in requisite knowledge and skills in response to their times. Working within a variety of settings, the women importantly establish professional jurisdiction situating interior design in a modernist context. Their contributions challenge past readings that have diminished the early women of interior design (decorators), at the same time, embody all the conflicts, ruptures, paradoxes and contradictions that are central to modernity.

This research redresses the lack of institutional history of interior design in Sydney and links issues of gender, profession and modernity to explain the women's significant contributions at a critical juncture of the field's development. By investigating in what ways their initiatives were influenced by modern attitudes towards the theory and practice of design, and in turn, in what ways their activities had impact on the development in Sydney, this study subsequently addresses to what extent the women's understandings of design were common, distinct or different from each other and, importantly, from prevailing (male-dominated and architecturally-driven) representations of modernism in histories of interior design. This local Sydney history explains complex interrelationships between women and modernity in interior design. As such, their stories and legacy of design contribute to a wider picture of women and modernity in interior design.

The collective analyses of five Sydney women's contributions evaluate their writings and activities against foundational issues of gender, profession, and modernity; and are summarized in three main areas: (a) the women's contributions to interior design's professional development in Sydney establishing a culture of profession and jurisdiction; (b) their combined contributions to the development of an interior design discipline; and (c) the women's understanding of design (modernism in interior design), the abstract and applied knowledge deemed critical to a profession. Through these analyses their significance to interior design is explained.

Inhabiting Risk: The Female Decorator in the Public Sphere

Nancy Blossom
John Turpin

Abstract

"Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go."
--T S Eliot

This paper explores the idea of “risk” by examining the role of women in the field of interior design throughout the twentieth century. Women’s roles as arbiters of taste was consistent with the social construction of the female gender at the turn of the century;¹ that this role involved risk—the possibility of loss or injury—is, for the most part, overlooked. Yet, the risk faced by women throughout the development of the profession is significant.

To discuss this more clearly, we will establish a context by looking briefly at American women and gender and sex typing in the work place at the beginning of the twentieth century. Then, we will examine the concepts of taste and the interior decorator as embedded in our four case studies—Elsie de Wolfe (1865-1950), Dorothy Draper (1888-1969), Sister Parrish (1929-1994) and Florence Knoll Bassett (1917-)—to demonstrate different elements of personal risk (social, economic, professional) that each faced during their career path. Our position is that it is not enough to categorize women as trailblazers only if they occupy positions typically sex typed as male in the workforce (e.g., woman as architect). Even within the perceived “woman’s realm” (in this case domesticity), women incurred considerable social, economic and/or professional risk in pursuit of their careers.

De Wolfe, the oft-claimed “first interior decorator,” enters a career path and claims it because of women’s roles as purveyors of taste. Draper takes that entrée into the working world but demonstrates an entrepreneurial spirit, which always involves personal economic risk as well as professional risk. Despite Draper’s successes, when Parish follows in the world of interior decoration, she still faces (and overcomes) considerable social risk. Finally, Bassett, well trained in architecture, is “sex-typed” into interiors as a female.

These stories weave a compelling picture of the complexity of what is often viewed as a superficial profession. De Wolfe’s celebrity status provided a female visage for a new profession and validated women’s daily decorating activities as a valuable, marketable service.² While de Wolfe opened doors to the male-dominated business realm, women such as Draper and Sister Parish changed the profile from the unmarried socialite to the working mother; they also demonstrated considerable business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit. As members of the conservative wealthy class, both Draper and Parish chaffed against an unspoken contract of deportment and conservatism. Finally, Bassett—as the only female in

¹ Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (New York: Harper, 1954).

² Penny Sparke, *Elsie de Wolfe: The Birth of Modern Interior Decoration* (New York: Acanthus Press, 2006):

architectural offices early in her career—was assigned to the few interiors required. She turned those relegated duties into the beginning of the Knoll Planning Unit and the introduction of the modern aesthetic in the work place.

The analysis of risk from within each story reveals an unsurprising theme—the presentation and the representation of the female in the public realm. Paralleling the Women’s Suffrage Movement, the early interior decorators forged an equally significant path in the profession of interior design. Their risks and their successes should be an integral part of our historical narrative.

Creative Companions: Interior Design and Industrial Design in the Mid-Twentieth Century

Mary Anne Beecher, Ph.D.

Abstract

When historian David Potter titled his 1954 historical analysis of the American economic condition *People of Plenty*, he characterized a culture of accumulation that began in the nineteenth century and flourished with wartime employment and with the market redistribution that followed the Depression. This analysis, and others like it, painted a vivid picture of mid-century Americans' obsession with objects; a quality that is also reflected by the emergence of the industrial design profession in the early twentieth century.

The decades of the 1940s and 1950s saw the flourishing of parallel tracks in the fields of interior design and industrial design in the United States. Many design practitioners worked back and forth between the two fields, producing both designed objects and designed spaces for clients and manufacturers. This is evidenced by the increased visibility of personalities such as Edward Wormley, Charles and Ray Eames, and George Nelson, whose professional identities were more closely associated with the interior environment and its designed contents than with architectural design, despite their architectural training. The parallel development of both fields can also be seen in the pages of professional publications such as the journal *Interiors*, which dedicated a sizable segment of each issue to the discussion and promotion of new industrial designs in the period around and following the Second World War. Research projects such as the "Cornell Kitchen" that produced prototypes for manufactured components that could be used to make rooms also preoccupied design instructors in major U.S. universities and exposed students to design methods that encouraged the fusing of "architectural space" with "designed object" in their design thinking.

This paper will explore the close connection between the two fields of industrial design and interior design and their influence on one another during the mid-twentieth century period. Using an analysis of the rising popularity of "unit" designs for mass-produced prefabricated rooms as a common "playing field" where the methods of both industrial and interior design could be invoked, it will present a framework for characterizing this conflation of "space" with "product" within the design community. Using descriptions of prefabricated room "units" found in architectural and design journals and the documentation of such projects found in the publications of design educators, this paper will specifically explore how design projects such as these represent new attitudes toward what design is and how it should be approached. It will make the case that the acquisition of knowledge gained through the measuring and mapping studies so prevalent in the curricula and research conducted by interior design educators in American universities helped move interior design thinking toward a perspective that is less like that of fine artists or architects and more aligned with processes employed by industrial designers who were geared toward manufacturing. It will also demonstrate how this brief period of two decades helped shape the interior design profession as we know it today.

Shaw, Leffingwell and *System*: Early Influences on the Design of Offices and their Furnishings

Terrence Uber

Abstract

Two individuals in the early 20th century were major contributors to the development of new office practices, and as a result, greatly influenced the design of offices and related furnishings. Long before there were designers who specialized in office settings, Arch W. Shaw and William Henry Leffingwell developed and promoted business practices and played a direct role in the evolution of office and furniture design as the office furniture industry developed in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Arch W. Shaw had a brief career as an office furniture salesman before joining with Louis Walker to form the Shaw-Walker Company of Michigan, in 1899. The Shaw-Walker Company was formed to sell card-filing systems for business which Shaw had developed. Based on the Dewey Decimal System from the Library of Congress, card-filing revolutionized the manner in which records were processed and stored in the office, and Shaw introduced these methods to the business community through his journal *System*. While the purpose of *System* was to present broad, generic examples of business operation, not exclusive to the office setting, the journal promoted changes in office procedures to implement new business practices and included articles, illustrations and photographs dealing with space planning in offices and furniture design. Articles in *System* also addressed issues of furniture arrangement, lighting, and positioning of employees within the office. The success of *System* guaranteed that these ideas were disseminated in management offices throughout the country.

William Henry Leffingwell was a disciple of Frederick Winslow Taylor and his principles of scientific management. Leffingwell took the concepts which Taylor had applied to the factory and adapted them to the office. While the emphasis in his work was on scientific management of business practices as applied to the office, he included discussions on the design of offices and furnishings in his publications which included *Scientific Office Management* (1917) and *Making the Office Pay* (1918). In *Scientific Office Management* (1925), Leffingwell stated: "Less thought is devoted to the design and construction of desks, chairs, and tables than perhaps any other equipment, by either the users or office managers, or even the makers."(391). He critiqued existing furniture forms, described the ideal forms, and proposed several of his own designs through line drawings. Considering the popularity of Leffingwell's business philosophies, it is not surprising that articles by Leffingwell appeared in Shaw's *System*, and The A. W. Shaw Company published Leffingwell's treatises on scientific management in the office.

For the early years of the twentieth century there have been no notable designers identified as being dedicated to the practice of office design. The majority of historical inquiries into early office design have focused on the role of furniture manufacturers and the furniture produced. Individuals, such as Arch W. Shaw and William Henry Leffingwell, played a

significant role in the development of office design during the formative years of the modern office. Their expertise in developing business procedures and practices exerted a direct influence on the design of offices and furniture in this period.

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T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings: A Search for the Genuine American Home

Daniella Ohad-Smith, Ph.D.

Abstract

Terence Harold Robsjohn-Gibbings (1905-1976) was a trained architect, accomplished decorator, innovative furniture designer, writer, and a true modernist, whose innovative ideas on interior design have made a strong impact on domestic values in postwar America. Fully acquainted with the spirit of the age, the British-born designer redefined national, familial, and individual identities through a distinctive vision of the modern dwelling and its attendant lifestyle. Robsjohn-Gibbings' signature interiors were characterized by plain spaces, neoclassical sensibilities, great attention to proportions and detailing, fine timbers, and luxurious, deep finishes. Photographs of his interiors, executed in the US, Canada, and Greece were widely published for nearly four decades and he received dozens of awards as a designer, speaker, writer, and critic. Yet, his achievements have remained on the margins of historical studies of modern American design. By considering Robsjohn-Gibbings' role in the emergence of middle-class taste during the formative years of modernism, I argue that as a decorator, furniture designer, and a tastemaker he had occupied the central role in shaping popular taste towards a genuine American modernism, formulating a discourse that was rooted in Greco-Roman vocabularies, classical principles and contemporary notions.

Robsjohn-Gibbings' discourse represents a transitional moment in the history of the modern interiors. Throughout his long career, the controversial tastemaker redefined the modern home, addressing the correlation between individual taste, modern needs, and national identity. The modern home, he maintained, was "a new individual kind of beauty, a more honest kind of beauty." He sought to impact the daily lives of the masses, and as such, engaged the public in an ongoing dialogue. Eager to bequeath his legacy of discernment, he established himself as a tastemaker and an industrial designer, articulating his message in books, articles, lectures, and appearances. When his contemporaries sought to detach themselves from historical precedents, Robsjohn-Gibbings pioneered the field by turning his back against the aesthetics of high modernism, reviving humble materials and traditional forms with a thorough scholarly approach to forms, history, and memory.

Robsjohn-Gibbings regarded taste as the central theme of identity; not a quality one was born with, but a faculty one could, and should, acquire. Not "a mere social asset, an aesthetic bone for hostesses to chew on," but "a power that does not come easily, a power that requires unwearied dedication to develop and passionate devotion and great wisdom to sustain." His superb ability to negotiate the conflict between historicism and modernity positioned Robsjohn-Gibbings at the forefront of the American design arena. A natural at self-promotion, he frequently composed the perfect quotation to advance his agenda with the popular press. He saw the two spheres of decorator and philosopher as being interdependent, and freely moved between them: from handcrafted pieces to mass-produced furniture lines, from sculptural flourishes to lightweight modernism, from ancient Greece to

a genuine American style. The profound words, “to be simple is to be great,” appeared in his best seller *Good Bye Mr. Chippendale* summarize his legacy.¹

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¹ T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbins, *Good Bye Mr. Chippendale* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1944).

The Architects' Small House Service Bureau and Interior Design in the 1920S and 1930S

Lisa Tucker

Purpose

This research examines interior design done under the auspices of the Architects Small House Service Bureau (ASHSB) between 1919 and 1934. The impact of this group on interior design of the early 20th century single family house is also presented.

Background

A group of Minnesota architects created the ASHSB in 1914 to provide a solution to the shortage of middle class housing in the U.S. By 1919, the bureau had offices throughout the U.S. and received the endorsement of both the American Institute of Architects and the Department of Commerce. During this time, the members of the Bureau produced hundreds of plan sets and monthly bulletins to assist homeowners with their housing choices. The monthly magazine *The Small Home*, in conjunction with the published plan books--*Your Future Home* and *How to Plan, Finance, and Build Your Home*--dispensed valuable information to potential homebuyers across the nation. To date, only one master's thesis (Lisa Schrenk, University of Virginia 1990) and a single article (Thomas Harvey, 1991) have been written about the ASHSB. Neither discussed the interior design aspects of these designs and publications nor dealt with the broad impact of the interior design done by the ASHSB.

Process/Contexts

This research involved extensive archival research at the AIA. Records from the early 20th century were analyzed to determine the relationship between the AIA and the ASHSB in the early 20th century. An interpretive-historical approach was used for this research. An examination of the publications produced and distributed by the ASHSB reveal a specific design approach to the domestic interior at the beginning of the 20th century which was taking place at the same time as developments within the home economics movement and other reformative ideas about the family home. In *House, Form and Culture*, Amos Rapoport claimed "the assumption behind any historical approach is that one can learn form the part; the past is of value philosophically as well as in making us aware of the complexity and overlapping of things" (Rapoport, 1969, 11). This paper tells the story of the ASHSB and places it within its larger historical context.

Summary

It is important to note that interior design was barely a profession in this period (1919-1934), so the study of its early history often involves the work of architects and others. Architects of the ASHSB specialized in interior design including kitchen design, bathroom design, and

over all advice on good design for interiors, and this provides a piece of interior design history in the U.S.

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The Modern Turkish Home: An Evolution of the Rural Interior

Alison Snyder

Abstract

The historical evolution of interior design must include the study of other cultures beyond the west. In my work, I look at how modernization and western values are affecting long standing eastern traditions (Keyder, 1997). My research focuses on rarely examined central Anatolian Turkish villages to look at how and why the current shifts in these rural landscapes affect the making and re-making of house and home. In this paper, I offer a comparative typological study to illustrate the changing eastern house and its domestic spaces. This study of the house and home focuses on how the interaction of traditions, functional needs and desire merge to express what stays constant and what changes. What I call the new “vernacular interior” exhibits its outside and inside influences.

Indeed, the development of the house as an institution (Rapoport, 1969) and its domestic and spatial divisions are understood by looking at associated socio-cultural behavior and functional needs, along with typical building methods and the local economy (Kucukerman, 1991). In this paper, I will expose the modern rural home in central Turkey as an historical artifact and one that is continuing to evolve as both an eastern/Turkish and partially western entity. Comparative analysis of several homes will illustrate how the series of rooms and spaces (and their built-in or free standing elements) express the necessity of an economy of materials as well as flexibility, the division of public and private space and the influx of technology. I will explain how changes have come about.

There are many methods for conveying information about the built environment that are central to interpreting or defining the interior. Graphic and information specialist Edward R. Tufte (1990) says, “...the world is complex, dynamic, multidimensional; the paper is static, flat. How are we to represent the rich visual world of experience and measurement on mere flatland?” This question became central to this study (focused on showing and explaining change) and influences this paper. My methods for documenting grew out of not only core aspects of design practice and professional design analyses but also a variety of communication and documentation techniques used in other disciplines. In this research, I mesh social science and cultural studies methods for interviewing and documenting while conducting fieldwork. In the villages, I analyze habitation by making maps and by measuring and drawing architecture and interior spaces to document what exists in detail. For instance, the intention of archaeological renderings is to show a series of previous lives over a specific time period through a system of layering stratigraphy in vertical and horizontal compression (Juokowsky, 1980). Floor plans as well as the large “vertical slices” I developed became the source of my primary data for the interpretation of spatial sequences, room forms and the various objects within them. A detailed typological recording of the house, the spaces and the material culture of different periods, will be explained along with data gathered from family interviews.

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Maison Jansen: Translators of Social and Political Ambitions through Silks, Tassels, and Fringe

James Archer Abbott

Abstract

More than any other decorating firm of the late-19th and 20th centuries, Maison Jansen is counted as the creator of modern history's great backdrops. Founded in 1880, at the height of Beaux-art fashion, Dutch-born Jean-Henri Jansen's Paris-based design house first became recognized through word of mouth among the burgeoning upper classes of France's still young Third Republic; by the turn of the century, Jansen's reputation was international, honored at numerous expositions, with the monarchs of England, Belgium, Holland, and Spain counted among its clientele. The Jansen aesthetic was further promoted through an unrivaled network of satellite offices, antiques galleries, and boutiques that spanned the globe from 1905 through the 1980s in cities like Buenos Aires, Havana, London, Cairo, Alexandria, New York, Sao Palo, Prague, Rome, Milan, and Geneva—always catering to the desires and ambitions of society's elite.

Though the firm closed the physical doors of its 9 rue Royale headquarters in 1989, Maison Jansen's style—a melding of 18th-century Bourbon court historicism, Hollywood fantasy, and English country house subtleties—remains a visual reference for emulation today. Indeed, surviving interiors created for monarchs, dictators, and social doyennes many years before are now subjects of restoration and study, while the furniture and object d'art made to complete such rooms are sought after and heralded by designers, collectors, and museum curators alike. Encouraging this “connoisseurship” of the Jansen style have been celebrity auctions over the last decade that vetted the furnishings created for such influential clients as the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, the Honorable Pamela Harriman, and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis—forever bonding Jansen with the 20th century's mythical connotations for love, power, and tragedy.

This paper will explore how Jansen interiors came to symbolize power, connoisseurship, and iconic taste for the most famous power players of the last century. It will also offer an exploration into the evolution of the interior decorator – from purveyor of fabric samples to celebrity-status tastemaker and personal confidante. Furthermore, the paper will look at true original Jansen designs for furniture and textiles that later became trade standards.

La Maison de Verre: Negotiating Modern Domesticity

Jean Edwards

W. Geoff Gjertson

Abstract

La Maison de Verre in Paris, an early Modernist project acknowledged for its groundbreaking use of new building materials and technology, curiously has been neglected, if not ignored, within the canon of Modern architecture and design. This is particularly true in the case of texts that specifically cover interior design in the 20th century (Kurtich and Eakin, 1996; Massey, 1990; Pile, 2000; Tate and Smith, 1986; Trocmé, 1999). The recent acquisition of La Maison de Verre by Robert Rubin, an American architectural historian, and his intent to carefully restore it, have occasioned renewed interest in the house and its position within the history of Modern architecture (Ouroussoff, 2007). The authors of this abstract are particularly interested in locating the significance of this project within interior design as well as architectural history. We intend to explore reasons for the omission of this project from the Modernist canon, including to what degree the domestic character of this house contributed to the neglect.

La Maison de Verre's deviations from early Modernist rhetoric seem to preclude its inclusion in the canons of design. At the outset the principal designer, Pierre Chareau, is inconsistently identified as an architect or an interior or a furniture designer. Furthermore, sole authorship of the house cannot be assigned. Dutch architect Bernard Bijvoët and the metalworker Louis Dalbert collaborated with Chareau, and there is evidence that the client, Annie Dalsace, made significant contributions to the overall concept of the project (Vellay, 2007). Additionally, few construction drawings or plans exist; the house itself cannot be apprehended as an object in space – it is, rather, an insertion into an existing structure. Finally, the technological advances within the house are clearly placed at the service of domesticity, a concept under severe attack by Modernist theory (Reed, ed, 1996); the glass block on the facades is employed more for its translucency, not its transparency, thus focusing the attention inward, not outward; the paths of circulation and the pattern of visual access from one space to the others, both controlled through high-tech means, suggest a flexible rather than fixed relationship between the inhabitants and visitors to the space.

On an interior tour of La Maison de Verre, the house revealed itself as a genuinely livable dwelling - not just a place of contemplation like the Farnsworth House or weekend holidays like the Villa Savoye. Unlike La Maison de Verre, which remained in family hands until its recent sale in 2005, these two acknowledged “masterworks” of Modernism suffered periods of abandonment before eventually becoming uninhabited modern museums. Through La Maison de Verre's client-driven, collaborative design process and the subtle use of novel materials to create an experiential ordering of space (as opposed to a plan-ordered space), the home negotiates Modernism in an unprecedented way. It is this negotiated interior architecture that reflects more appropriately the complexity of human habitation rather than the modernist dialectic of male vs female, exterior vs interior, architect vs designer. Thus, La

Maison de Verre seems to offer a possible resolution to the Modernist interior design/architecture divide.

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