

EDITED BY
JO ANN ASHER THOMPSON AND NANCY H. BLOSSOM



THE HANDBOOK OF INTERIOR DESIGN

WILEY Blackwell

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Jo Ann Asher Thompson and
Nancy H. Blossom

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David Wang, PhD, is Professor of Architecture at Washington State University. He teaches courses in architectural theory, architectural ethics and practice, and East/West philosophies of architecture and aesthetics. He is co-author of *Architectural Research Methods*, and over the years has lectured widely in the US, Scandinavia, and China on design research.

Preface

This compilation of essays is shaped by our long-held view that there is not a single way to think about interior design. Rather, the body of knowledge that has accumulated over the relatively brief history of the discipline reflects the multiple philosophies, theories, and perspectives that shape this knowledge. The intent is to explore this multiplicity through diverse voices, challenging readers to consider how this diversity shapes interior design.

In putting together this work, we invited worldwide participation to ensure a broad spectrum of contributors. Each author's experiences, academic training, cultural background, and understanding of both the discipline and the profession of interior design shape each essay. Similarly, these are what shape a collective perception of how the discipline is understood, how it is taught, and how it is practiced.

Some essays in this collection present issues that are well known. These issues are revisited with new information or through new voices. Others present new ways of thinking and framing ideas about interior design. Each chapter offers any reader, student, instructor, or practicing designer an in-depth discussion of a topic with theoretical base, exploration, and explanation. Each chapter demonstrates the way the author thinks about interior design. As a group the essays, although limited by the scope of a single volume, portray the complexity and reality found in the field.

With this in mind, we invite you to pay careful attention to how these scholars approach research questions, argue positions, or seek to apply knowledge. We encourage you to use this volume as a means to explore and to challenge your own way of thinking about interior design.

Introduction: The Shaping of Interior Design

“We see design reflected in countless artifacts with which we furnish and sustain our environment . . . But what shapes design?” (Galle 2002). Galle effectively answers this question in subsequent writings, suggesting that there is a direct connection between an individual’s understanding of design and the way, for instance, she practices. An interior designer who views design as a creative artistic endeavor will emphasize an interior’s uniqueness, embellishing and decorating its surfaces. An interior designer, who views design as a problem-solving effort seeks highly functional and efficient space solutions. The way designers conceive the nature and purpose of design affects their practice (Galle 2011).

Then what shapes the way designers conceive the nature of design? It is commonly understood that these conceptions and ideas are shaped by the culture and time in which individuals have been educated, trained, and worked, as well as by the institutional and corporate structures and practices that surround them. In the 21st century, these conceptions reflect complex issues that defy the historic intuitive nature of early decorators, craftsmen, and artisans.

The debate over what shapes interior design has too often been characterized as a struggle between practitioners and academics. This struggle is most apparent between the concepts of applied and abstract knowledge and the pursuit of research. If one is in the academy, particularly in research universities, the term is understood to be the pursuit of new knowledge through empirical means. If one is engaged in the practice of interior design, it is likely that research is understood to be the search for information, for example, product specifications, or anthropometric data, to be applied to an existing problem in a design project. This definition is also often used in the studio classroom. Many times these two definitions of research are

perceived to be in conflict. Information is practical and applicable; new knowledge is impractical and abstract. In fact, each is mutually supportive. Both shape interior design.

A gap in the discipline exists because collectively we have not sought to fully understand and appreciate the reciprocity of the linkages between the generation of knowledge and the application of knowledge. If the way a designer approaches design in practice is dependent on a personal conception, then a shared appreciation of this abstract knowledge of design is essential. Likewise, if the way a design researcher approaches the generation of new knowledge is dependent on a personal conception of design, then a practical understanding of design application is essential.

In an effort to establish common ground, an understanding of several key terms is necessary. In the context of this book, a framework is a set of ideas or facts that provide support for an argument, a concept, or an idea. When an author draws from multiple disciplines or philosophies to build a position, a critical framework guides the reader through the discussion of the author's ideas. Some scholars present the framework clearly as a component of the discussion. Others use the literature to build a framework and leave it to the reader to identify the components and tie them together. For example, Newton D'Souza and Yu Fong Lin rely on the literature in their essay, "Places in the Virtual and Physical Continuum: Examining the Impact of Virtual Behaviors on Place Attributes of Wireless Coffee Shops," drawing heavily from scholarship in environment and behavior to support their argument that there is a virtual-physical continuum. In another example, Siriporn Kohnthikulwong uses the literature to frame her research question in her essay, "Creativity in Interior Design: Cross-Cultural Practitioners' Reviews of Entry-Level Portfolios," returning to the literature later to tie together conclusions about cross-cultural creativity.

Although the term "methodology" is generally understood, some variations in meaning and interpretation often occur among disciplines. Methodology is the theoretical underpinning for understanding the "best practices" that can be applied to a specific inquiry or case. In his essay, "Human Responses to Water Elements in Interior Environments: A Culture and Gender Comparison," Gwo Fang Lin uses a formal statistical model to guide the research question and support his findings. Patrick Lucas, on the other hand, supports his argument using a more informal, case-study approach in the essay "Community-Building through Interior Design Education." Nichole Campbell's essay, "Designing More Successful Social Spaces: Lessons Learned from a Continuing Care Retirement Community Study," uses a series of "What" questions – established through logical reasoning – as the basis for investigation.

Establishing a methodology is key to the ultimate understanding and interpretation of a study, especially in the cases of inter- or multi-disciplinary studies. These theoretical underpinnings inform the development of and approach to a research question, and can also be seen as essential to a practicing designer's approach to a design project. Ji Young Cho and Benyamin Schwarz, in their essay "Aesthetic Theory and Interior Design Pedagogy," offer insights into the idea of "schema." Their

essay clearly articulates how certain behaviors and preconceived ideas influence the way students and faculty interact in design studios. Schema is defined as an organized pattern of behavior or a mental structure of preconceived ideas that influence design academics and practitioners.

No discussion of key terms can be complete without consideration of the term “theory.” This term is often used, many times rather indiscriminately and casually, to explain nearly every phenomenon that exists in the world today. Thus, to avoid confusion, it is important to clarify that theory is defined simply as a “body of knowledge.” Each author whose work is included in the *Handbook of Interior Design* relies upon a body of knowledge and specific theoretical and methodological orientations in order to explore the rich and complex schema that shape interior design. For example, Tiiu Poldma relies heavily upon the body of knowledge from the domains of education and aesthetic theory to frame the discussion in “Engaging Voices within a Dynamic Problem-Based Learning Context,” and Dana Vaux draws upon theories of “place” in the essay “Interior People Places: The Impact of the Built Environment on the Third Place Experience.”

The sections of the handbook are intended to loosely organize the chapters without confining the way each is interpreted or understood. While there is wide representation of schema in each section of the handbook, there are also chapters that share a flow of ideas or a mutual philosophy across the different sections. Take for example three essays, one by David Wang, another by Mads Folkmann, and the third by David Seamon. Each is found in a different section of the handbook. Yet each author is a devotee of phenomenology. In “An Overview of Phenomenology for the Design Disciplines,” Wang suggests that disciplines such as interior design regularly deal with phenomenological factors, yet lack a foundational understanding of the history of the epistemology. He first situates phenomenology in a historical philosophical lineage, and then establishes ways that it relates to the design literature. Danish scholar Mads Nygaard Folkmann continues a phenomenological discussion in his essay “Aesthetic Coding in Interior Design” by examining three modern cases: Verner Panton’s *Visiona II*, Louise Campbell’s front office for the Danish Ministry of Culture, and the Tietgen Dormitory in Copenhagen. David Seamon also posits a phenomenological approach to place, architecture, environmental experience, and environmental design as place-making. Focusing on the three themes of “place,” “environmental embodiment,” and “architectural sustenance,” his essay uses cases from his university classrooms to demonstrate how he leads students to understand both the underpinning and the application of phenomenology in design education. Although each essay falls into a different organizational section of the handbook, each shares the common foundation of phenomenological theory.

Theoretical positions evolve over years of narrower design studies. Take for example the essay by John Turpin, “Dorothy Draper and the American Housewife: A Study of Class Values and Success.” Turpin’s explorations of the history of interior design in America concentrate on the work of Draper, the New York designer who pioneered the development of interior design and decor in commercial settings.

Turpin focuses on the impoverishing effects of patriarchal trends in art and design criticism by highlighting the neglected contributions of Draper and other talented women who enriched the practice and aesthetic of interior design. His work is well grounded in feminist theory. This new essay, however, takes a fresh approach. Still looking closely at Draper and her place in interior design history, Turpin uses contemporary theories from the domains of marketing and advertising (Reynolds & Olson 2001) to interpret the success that Dorothy Draper had in appealing to the market of the American middle-class housewife. An evolution in theoretical position is evident in Turpin's new framework for interpreting the value systems of the upper class (Draper) and the emerging middle class (housewives) of the mid-20th century. Further, this same framework might be reconsidered and applied to values of contemporary consumers in the interior design market of the 21st century. While Turpin's topic is quite narrow, the application of his thinking is quite broad.

Similarly, in "Reflective Journey in Teaching Interior Design: The Virtual Studio," Kathleen Gibson offers a thoughtful overview of 20 years of teaching in the classroom. The journey she shares encompasses a full range of instructional exploration and innovation alongside empirical and epistemological research. Using computer technology and virtual interiors as her vehicle, she reflects on her continuing search for effective teaching methodologies that will move interior design education and practice forward. This essay validates Oygur and Orthel's argument for the need to document the scholarship of teaching and learning in "Connecting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to the Discipline of Interior Design." Professor Gibson's journey serves as evidence of the contribution such studies can make to the body of knowledge in the discipline of interior design.

A schema that is broadly shared among interior design scholars is that the interior frames experiences and provides a structure within which these experiences can develop. At a micro scale, "Developing a Person-Centric Design Philosophy," by Jill Pable, demonstrates how this belief impacts the author's personal advocacy in design. Grounding her position in the literature of the social sciences, Pable encourages a "person-centric" framework in interior design research and practice. She offers her personal journey in forming such a philosophy and suggests that when a designer develops one's own philosophy it may well be found outside of traditional design knowledge – as it was in her case. Using examples from her practice and research experience in design for the disadvantaged, Pable demonstrates how her philosophy underpins all of her work and provides balance to the full spectrum of human experience that designers must consider.

A poignant personal experience was the inspiration for Shauna Corry Hernandez' research study presented in the essay "Exploring the Schism: Toward an Empathetic Language," where she explores the apparent schism between users who are disabled and designers and managers of the built environment. Recognizing that even though it is federally mandated that all buildings must meet accessibility codes in the US, a large segment of the population remains excluded from using them, her essay, grounded in empirical research, posits the development of an empathetic

language for inclusive design that is understood by all members of the design community.

In the essay “Forging Empathetic Connections to Create Compatible Designs in Historic Buildings,” Jessica Goldsmith also advocates for an empathetic language to inform designers. However, in contrast to the personal impetus that is embedded in Corry’s work, Goldsmith places her emphasis on the historic structure itself and the need to recognize the specific challenges that designers must address when dealing with the adaptive reuse of significant interior spaces. Lisa Tucker supports Goldsmith’s argument and advances the discussion by recognizing the significance of adaptive reuse of buildings as an imperative of sustainability, in “The Relationship between Historic Preservation and Sustainability in Interior Design.”

The power of the interior to shape emotion is acknowledged by Sheila Danko in the essay, “Designing Emotional Connection into the Workplace: A Story of Authentic Leadership.” Using narrative inquiry as her methodology, Professor Danko constructs a narrative, “A Sense of Purpose,” from interviews transcribed verbatim and analyzed for emergent themes. The narrative examines how artifacts, aesthetics, and symbols communicate the meaningfulness of work as well as enhance people’s emotional connection to the workplace. Erin Cunningham also frames her essay in narrative theory. In “Bringing the Past In: Narrative Inquiry and the Preservation of Historic Interiors,” she proposes a new research approach to piece together disparate points of view. This study moves beyond appearance and design form to examine the experiences and relationships represented in historic spaces.

May Sayrafi frames a discussion of identity represented by the cultural, social, and political aspects that shape a home in the essay “Contemporary Identity: The Modern Palestinian Home.” Grounding her work in the historic roots of Palestine, Sayrafi examines the different dimensions that shape the interior spaces of a modern Palestinian home. Using the emergent themes from the study, Sayrafi interprets a distinct character for the Palestinian home and uses it to develop design strategies that are responsive to the current modes of living and the shared values of contemporary Palestinians. Likewise, Abimbola Asojo’s essay on the development of a cultural framework for interior design education acknowledges the importance of cultural influence on interior spaces. In “Testing a Culture-Based Design Pedagogy: A Case Study,” she discusses studio design projects purposefully structured to raise the cultural awareness of students. Using this very focused examination as a base, she applies the results to a more broadly reaching pedagogical argument.

The creation of healthy, sustainable, and dynamic interior environments is a recurring focus of many scholars and practitioners of interior design, and this theme informs many of the essays throughout the book. In the essay “Concerns with Daylight and Health Outcomes,” Michael Kroelinger argues through a review of the literature that environmental attributes, such as the presence of daylight in an interior, enhance the human experience of buildings and spaces – while at the same time supporting a sustainable environment. In his essay, Kroelinger identifies key issues that impact healthful interiors in relation to daylight and provides

research examples from across a variety of disciplines to demonstrate why daylight is instrumental in supporting human health. Through these examples, Kroelinger supports his point of view that future research is critical to the continued evolution of what constitutes a healthful interior space.

Using a case-study approach Dak Kopec examines problems associated with the aging population of the United States and the impact having to care for an elderly relative has on a family in his essay “Healthy Interiors for the Visually Impaired.” Scholar Halime Demirkan focuses her essay on the conceptual design phase of the design process when designing interiors for maturing adults. The aim of her essay “Frameworks for Decision-Making in Design for Aging,” is to develop an epistemological and methodological approach that permits designers to capture, describe, prioritize, act on, and evaluate alternative design solutions for the elderly and adults with a physical disability or visual impairment. Demirkan situates her research on maturing populations within the context of how methods and knowledge are linked within the cognitive strategies of the design process.

Several of the contributing authors suggest new frameworks for thinking about concepts of interior design. Many of these theories represent multi-disciplinary approaches to thinking and knowing. In her essay “Sustainable Life-Span Design: A New Model,” Amber Joplin argues that most existing built environments do not serve the needs of our rapidly aging population in a manner sustainable for individuals, society, or the environment. In support of her argument Joplin presents the results of an extensive multi-disciplinary literature review of Western practices in environments for the aging and suggests that there is a gap in the current scholarship in this area. To demonstrate her emergent theory, Joplin presents models from design, education, gerontology, and economics that have been integrated by means of comparative tables to identify significant issues that she proposes must be considered in the design of sustainable life-span design.

Margaret Portillo and Jason Meneely also acknowledge components of systems theory in their study of creativity in the contemporary work environment. In the essay “Toward a Creative Ecology of Workplace Design,” the researchers identify a need for a new model for interior design, inspired by ecological concepts, that acknowledges the creative workplace as an interrelated system of dynamic, complex, and varied human–space interactions sustaining individuals, groups, and organizations. Sharing insights from a multi-methods study exploring job satisfaction, climate for creativity, worker characteristics, and the physical workplace, Portillo and Meneely draw conclusions about ways to cultivate a creative ecology in the workplace and raise questions for additional thought and study.

“The Political Interior,” by Mary Anne Beecher, and Janice Barnes’ “Ways of Knowing: A Position on the Culture of Interior Design Practice” offer discussions of economy, power, and responsibility as it is reflected in the actual practice of interior design from a historical and contemporary perspective, while Ronn Daniel offers an alternative understanding of interior design as a profession in “Taylorizing the Modern Interior: Counter-Origins,” based on the ideas of theorist Fredrick Taylor. Moving away from themes of culture or emotive qualities of the interior,

Daniel looks at the origins of scientific office management to demonstrate the roots of functional space planning in contemporary interior design.

Clearly the contributors to *The Handbook of Interior Design* are highly influenced by a mental structure of preconceived ideas representing some or many aspects of the world. Each scholar relies on this broad understanding to shape an approach to scholarship, practice, and inquiry in interior design. There is a variance of scale among the many chapters, again influenced by each author's point of view, tenure in practice, or research and disciplinary grounding. Some writings stem from specific narrow questions while others look at more macro issues of the discipline. It is possible that viewpoints in some essays contradict or challenge those of another. All demonstrate the richness that can be found in challenging the theoretical and practical realities of the field of interior design.

What shapes interior design? We leave it to the reader to explore these chapters, consider the ideas presented there, accepting some rejecting others, and finally to shape a personal answer to that question.

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Section I

Explorations of the History Of
Interior Design

An Overview of Phenomenology for the Design Disciplines

David Wang

Introduction

The word phenomenology is used often in design circles, but accessible definitions of the term are harder to come by. This is unfortunate because disciplines such as interior design, architecture, landscape architecture, and product design regularly deal with phenomenological factors. These include how users respond to light and color, to tactility, to climate, or to user preferences. Other related factors include way-finding, sense of belonging, and cultural differences in how space and place are experienced. Such a wide variety of factors is one challenge to a concise definition of the word. Another reason is that “phenomenology” is a technical term with a rich history in Western philosophy, one which those of us trained in the design disciplines may not have had systematic access to.

This essay situates phenomenology in its historical-philosophical lineage and, in light of this, identifies ways it applies to design. The history makes clear how, by the mid-19th century, phenomenology had split into two conceptual threads – what is called here individual phenomenology and corporate phenomenology – both remaining relevant for design theory and practice. Interspersed throughout this section of the essay are sections headed “applications to design.” These are numbered progressively, each relating to the aspect of phenomenology being explained. After the historical introduction, a “map of phenomenology” is provided (Figure 1.1), identifying four regions in the phenomenological literature related to the design disciplines. The conclusion summarizes current trends in design theory and practice, underlining their connections to phenomenological principles.

Phenomenology: A Brief History

The Greek word *phanesthai*, which means “(to be) about to reveal itself,” is the root for our word phenomenology. *Phanesthai* is in the Greek middle voice, denoting the subject acting upon itself. This middle voice is different from the active voice, in which the subject acts upon another entity, or the passive voice, in which the subject is acted upon by another entity (Heidegger 1962: 51). Putting these two elements together, we have *phanesthai* as the self-revealing, or the self-coming-into-light, of an object, independent of external causes. It is from this root that phenomenological inquiry emphasizes immediate experience. Immediate experience refers to experience that cannot be captured by sentences, equations, photographs, even social conventions; all of these are second-hand derivatives of the initial self-revealing reality.

This self-revealing aspect is historically important because phenomenological inquiry arose as a reaction against Enlightenment biases in general, and scientific method in particular. The Enlightenment outlook celebrated measurability, that is, a thing is not knowable unless and until it can be empirically defined, its height and width and depth all captured by fixed propositions. Measurability was the spirit behind René Descartes’ prescriptions for scientific knowledge, patterned after the unchanging nature of geometry, accessible only by the reasoning mind (Descartes [1637] 1980).¹ In such an ideological climate, not only physical phenomena but even inquiries into beauty were driven by a scientific agenda. For example, on the Continent, Alexander Baumgarten (1714–1762) held that feelings for the beautiful were “confused” until they can be scientifically ascertained (Baumgarten [1739] 1970).² As well, in England, John Locke (1632–1704) divided between an object’s primary qualities (those that can be measured: “solidity, extension...number”) versus its secondary qualities (those that “in truth are nothing in the objects themselves”: colors, sounds, tastes) (Locke [1690] 1994: 71). So in Locke’s very influential view, factors usually associated with immediate experience – colors, sounds, tastes – were not essential to the objects they just happen to be attached to.

It was against this scientific mindset that Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) first embarked on a journey that led to phenomenological inquiry. Husserl was initially a psychologist, but he soon felt the limits of the field, noticing that its empirical methods were unable to delve deep enough in accessing original (read: immediate) experience – the “things themselves” (Lauer 1965: 10). Thus began another hallmark focus of phenomenological inquiry: getting to being itself as the starting point of inquiry.

This emphasis on being is strongest in the thought of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) who was a student of Husserl’s early in his career; they parted ways later. Heidegger contributed some of the most well-known technical terms to phenomenology studies, one of which is “being-in-the-world.” Being-in-the-world does not designate two things, that is, a being (1) that is in the world (2). Instead, the entire