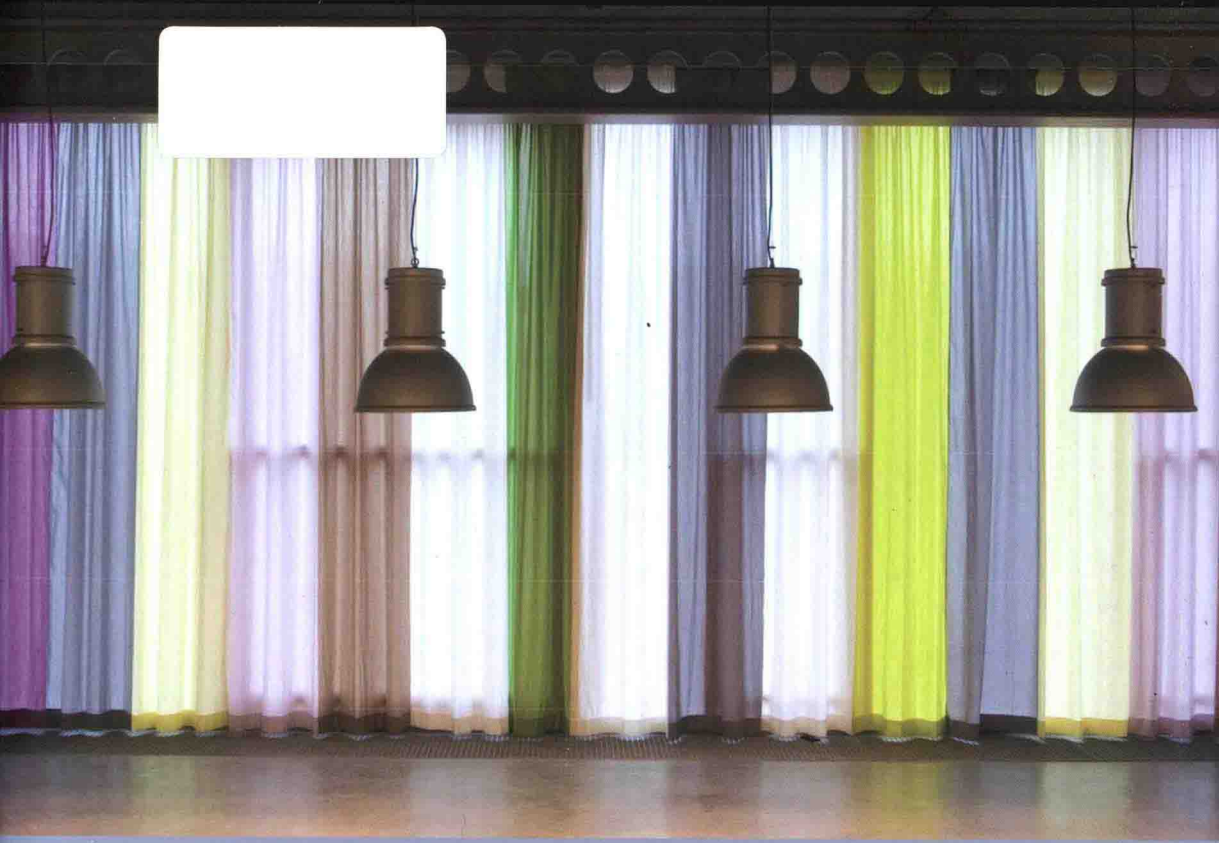


EDITED BY
JO ANN ASHER THOMPSON AND NANCY H. BLOSSOM



THE HANDBOOK OF INTERIOR DESIGN

WILEY Blackwell

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Jo Ann Asher Thompson and
Nancy H. Blossom

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The Handbook of Interior Design

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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.

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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 Kobnithikulwong 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