

Interiority in Everyday Space: A Dialogue between Materiality and Occupation

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Everyday space is a setting where ordinary acts, activities and events take place. Studying everyday space requires a thorough investigation of qualities that are often taken for granted. These qualities incorporate “aspects of life that lie hidden” (Highmore, 2002, p. 1) and construct the everyday spatial practice performed by inhabitants of the space. It is interesting to closely examine how interiority is defined, understood and manifested in everyday space as a way to understand the inhabitation of the interior. The interiority of everyday space is defined not only by occupation, but also by materiality. As suggested by Walter Benjamin in *The Arcade Project*, the material entities of the environment, particularly the interior, always reflect the occupation of the inhabitants.

To dwell means to leave traces. In the interior, these are accentuated. Coverlets and antimacassars, cases and containers are devised in abundance; in these, the traces of the most ordinary objects of use are imprinted. In just the same way, the traces of the inhabitant are imprinted in the interior. (Benjamin, 1999, p. 9)

The practice of everyday life incorporates the “ways of operating” of the users (De Certeau, 1984, p. xi). Various ways of operating are manifested through individual gestures, bodily experiences or acts of organizing the surrounding environment. These are the various ways that users relate to their interior space and engage with the materiality of the interior. The everyday space becomes the setting of spatial practice, in which occupation and materiality always exist in dialogue with one another.

Interiority pertains to the inner life of the individual (Pimlott, 2018). It reflects the individuality and subjectivity that affect the way people attach to their surroundings. At the same time, materials are present as a part of the built environment and are always in contact with people who form, use and perceive it (Poerschke, 2013). Discourse on materiality also incorporates aspects of agency, and is located within the social and cultural domains beyond the material's physical properties (Loschke, 2016).

The interior of everyday space becomes the manifestation of what inhabitants perceive, experience and feel. It also reflects how the inhabitants use, occupy, transform and adapt to space. Interiority is thus defined by occupation, and becomes the reflection of the identity, subjective experience and personal responses of the inhabitants. All these aspects of human occupation are often manifested through the qualities embedded within the physical materiality of the space.

Drawing on Diderot's definition of interior, Caan (2011) suggested an interior as "the manifestations of all qualities concerning the human occupation of space" (p. 40), and that the physical materiality of the interior and the inner life of the inhabitant may overlap.

The interior of a building, as Diderot defines it, is merely the inside, or everything from the walls inward. But as the interior relates to the human being, it reflects both our outward personality and what we might today call our inner self. What is most interesting about Diderot's definition is that it begins to suggest that what is inside the walls and what is inside ourselves may overlap. (Caan, 2011, p. 40)

It is interesting to note that there may be various ways in which such overlaps happen. These overlaps present different ways how interior materiality relates to occupation. This issue of *Interiority* presents articles addressing the relationships between interior materiality and the different perceptual constructs and experiences of architectural space inherent in the occupation of everyday space.

The materiality of everyday interior spaces could be seen as a manifestation of identity and culture. Emma Filippides presents a thorough analysis of self-storage as a manifestation of domestic interiority. Through the contemporary archaeological approach, she discusses how self-storage reflects the relationship between material storage contents and the subjective inner life of the inhabitants. The contents of self-storage reflect the negotiation between the inner life of the individual and the external demands surrounding them that reflect different motives: excessive accumulation, intergenerational deferral and emotional deferral. Examining the contents of self-

storage becomes a way to understand the material embodiment of the identity of the inhabitants.

The interaction between the perceptual body and the materiality of architectural elements was presented through a personal account written by Lisa Stafford. She reflects on her own experiences as a disabled user interacting with doors in her everyday environment. This account criticises the interior materiality that assumes the standardised body of the inhabitants. Various material aspects of the doors play an important role in conveying certain messages, generating a sense of outsidership and insidership. The materiality of doors triggers the perception of the users, especially those with non-normative bodies, regarding the inclusivity or hostility of the environment, depending on the degree to which they are able to manoeuvre within the space.

The next article discusses the relationship between the perceptual experience of the occupants and the materiality that defines the inside-outside dialogue. How inside and outside define one another and how this understanding could become the basis of the design approach is addressed by Demet Dincer, Thea Brejzek and Lawrence Wallen. They perform an analysis of the works of Olafur Eliasson in order to identify his approach in designing the threshold and came up with a synthesis of different materializations and meanings of the threshold: as an object, as an association, as an event and as an immersive space.

The understanding of interiority as a dialogue between materiality and occupation inevitably requires appropriate modes of representation. Gregory Marinic discusses recent shifts in interior architecture visualisation in responding to the challenge for a more appropriate way to represent interior as defined through adaptation, occupation and experience. He proposes a taxonomy of interior visualisation that engages the contextual, material and phenomenological condition of the interior more deeply.

The meaning of interior and its materiality could also be understood by examining the role of architectural surface and how it relates to functionality. Susan Hedges discusses the shifting role of the surface as demonstrated by the ornament on the wall of a building that survived the earthquake and demolition. The changing relationship between surface, ornament and structure after the earthquake suggests a shift in the meaning of ornament and structure, which provides a new way of reading the interior materiality that blurs the differentiation between the essential and the inessential.

Ayman Kassem concludes this issue with a discussion of performativity as a character of the built environment that

incorporates aspects such as flexibility, openness and the ability to anticipate changes. He further examined how the concept of performativity could be materialised through design strategies conducted during design studio exercises. The exercise becomes a medium for reflecting on the relationship between architectural performativity and the mental performativity of the designers in developing the design strategies.

The articles in this journal issue call for further exploration to develop a better understanding of materiality in everyday space. They also pose challenges for architectural and interior design practices to move beyond constructing materiality and to promote sensitivity towards the meaning of the interior materiality as it reflects and responds to everyday occupation.

References

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