

Revisiting Bodies in Interior Design Practice

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Discourses on bodies in interior design disciplines highlight the body's critical role as the central subject that defines the interior's spatiality. Addressing human bodies is inevitable in interior inquiries and practices, as human bodies have become "the inescapable subject and measure of our interiors" (Daniel & Chalmers, 2021, p. 3). The practice of interior design uses the human body and its dimensions as the basis for defining interior space and spatial elements, as the generator of interior space (Penner, 2018). Le Corbusier's *Modulor* is perhaps one of the most famous approaches to defining spatial dimensions based on human body measurements (Le Corbusier, 1954). Despite its prominent contribution to the rational design method, the system has received much criticism regarding its inclusivity and transferability to diverse users and contexts (Lorenzo-Palomera et al., 2022; Tell, 2019).

Integrating knowledge about human bodies into design practice can extend beyond the idea of bodies as merely static entities with fixed dimensions. The idea of bodies as the basis for spatial design practice views the human body as a living entity that dwells, occupies, moves, and engages in space. Kira (1967) conducted a meticulous study on spatial dimensions based on empirical observations of bodily acts, producing documentation that challenged the traditional practice at that time (Penner, 2018). It is an attempt to consider actual bodily practices in which bodies act and move in various sequences, styles, and preferences. Various design practices have attempted to integrate the idea of bodily movement as an approach in configuring the dynamic spatial experience (Blundell Jones & Meagher, 2014).

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Meanwhile, discussions on the corporeality of architectural experience (Voigt, 2021) have highlighted the bodily experience of "touching the world" (Pallasmaa, 2012, p. 9) and bodily responses to 'affective spaces' (De Matteis, 2020) in which human bodies become central subjects receiving spaces' sensorial and experiential qualities.

Knowledge about bodies as the basis of practice also needs to view bodies' presence as sociocultural entities. Extant studies have identified human-based measurement systems in traditional contexts (Leonard, 2018; Oderman, 2005; Smith et al., 2013). Notably, these systems did not merely reflect the physical body dimension but also were imbued with bodily engagement, local identity, and cultural practice. While sociocultural conditions require a thorough inquiry into actual bodily practices within the diversity of contexts, the emergence of the virtual environment provides another context with a shifting materiality of bodies and interior spaces. The idea of virtuality implies "an entirely new way of seeing, inhabiting and designing space" (Grosz, 2001, p. 89), in which bodies are no longer limited to physical bodies in physical spaces, with the idea of dwelling in space taking on another dimension.

This issue of *Interiority* acknowledges the breadth of knowledge about bodies in spatial design disciplines. The articles demonstrate various ideas that reflect some challenges surrounding integration of knowledge about bodies into design practice. The first two articles discuss the practice of designing from bodies in physical and immaterial contexts. Selin Geerinckx and Els De Vos trace the design process of *Bruynzeel Kitchen* by two designers, in which knowledge about body culture strongly influenced their approaches. *Bruynzeel Kitchen* offers a model of kitchen units resulting from thoughtful consideration of bodily dimensions, movements, and everyday acts in the users' domestic kitchen operations. Adopting bodies as the basis of design becomes complex when the interior is no longer physical, producing immaterial contexts and virtual bodily experiences. Belinda J. Dunstan, Michael Stonham, and Demet Dincer analyse a series of design practices in the Metaverse, exploring shifting ideas of how bodies interact with various forms of virtualities, as well as revealing some new dimensions of bodies' relationships with space. These practices suggest new interior typologies, redefining the experience of sensing, perceiving, experiencing, and dwelling.

Bodies also become instruments for sensing and perceiving space. Architectural experiences are mainly subjective, thereby issuing a challenge to establish systematic ways that allow such knowledge to be translated into practice. Taraneh Saniei, Mansoureh Kianersi, and

Shervan Fekri-Ershad offer a systematic approach to measuring visual perceptions as the body's subjective experiences. They established a convolutional neural network (CNN) model to assess an interior scene's complexity and coherence, thereby providing an objective measurement of how users visually judge an interior.

The next two articles discuss bodies' presence within sociocultural contexts. Long Yang and Safial Aqbar Zakaria describe the origins and development of Chinese *kang* as a form of culture-specific technology that allows the human body to survive during cold weather. A review of *kang* across geographical contexts and disciplinary perspectives reveals that its emergence is not merely a survival necessity to cope with the cold but also an expression of society's personal, psychological, and cultural needs. Understanding the emergence of culture-specific technological objects becomes important in reflecting their dual role as technological devices and cultural representations. Patcharaporn Duangputtan and Nobuo Mishima address bodies' presence as occupants living and dwelling in space. They examined the interior living conditions of inhabitants of a housing upgrading project in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The study reveals the inhabitants' diverse living conditions, which cannot be addressed using a one-size-fits-all upgrading design strategy. Designers' awareness towards such diversity becomes essential when offering appropriate spatial solutions.

The final article, by Tutin Aryanti and Amanda Achmadi, examines the interiority of urban spatial configuration in relation to the political agenda of uniting the nation as a collective body. They demonstrate that the Istiqlal Mosque's presence as the frame of Independent Square contains the visual narratives on Indonesia's identity as one of the world's most populous Muslim countries while emphasising religious tolerance. The act of framing represents the vision to unite cultural and religious diversity.

This collection of articles in this *Interiority* issue presents a variety of ways in which knowledge about bodies could offer expanded possibilities for interior architecture practice. These articles celebrate the potential of knowledge about bodies in defining interior design approaches; expanding interior typologies, media and representations; and manoeuvring within the diversity of interior conditions in various sociocultural and political contexts. They also establish the agenda for further inquiries about bodies and various alternatives for creatively, thoroughly, and appropriately transforming knowledge about bodies into practice.

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