

01 introduction



FIGURE 1.1 Elle Decoration stand at Grand Designs Live 2011

I am "...concerned by the perception that design is something that we don't really need, that it is a fashionable or luxurious extra. Design that is good should be embedded within all that surrounds us in the unnatural world. Good design and good architecture improve all our lives - they are not just about decoration."

Gigli *et al* 2007:ix

If architecture is concerned with creating spatial enclosures by means of boundaries, then interiors discipline considers the alteration, rehabilitation or adaptive reuse of the spatial volume within those boundaries. The human scale, well-being and experience lies at the heart of the spatial exploration and design process.

This project accepts the term '*interiors discipline*', as defined above, to consider both interior design and interior architecture (as it is used at the University of Pretoria). For the sake of consistency and to create a sense of unity, the term 'interior design' will be used to describe the interiors discipline in this document.

The interior design discipline appears to be facing an identity crisis. It is commonly described as something that it is not. Currently, it exists on the fringes of both architecture and interior decoration.

To define the discipline, The International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers (IFI) hosted Design Frontiers: The Interiors Entity (DFIE) Global Symposium in February 2011. The event culminated in the signing of the first IFI Interiors Declaration. The Declaration represents a consensus of interior organisations from around the world regarding what the field of interior design entails. The final phase of the DFIE, namely the IFI Interiors Biennale 2013, is intended to visualise this core knowledge, actualising the global consensus as reflected in the IFI Interiors Declaration.

The role of the interior designer falls within the realm of the temporary, and this is what the dissertation is investigating. The project examines exhibition design as a division of interior design. As this study deals with interior design, the influence of and the response to other fields of design are considered and investigated, setting the parameters for the resolution of the design framework.

The objective of the dissertation is to design a travelling exhibition for the IFI Interiors Biennale 2013. The study investigates exhibition design as a method of communicating the basic pillars of the interiors profession, as described in the IFI Interiors Declaration.

The shortcomings and opportunities of the interiors exhibition practice are explored by applying interior design instruments.

1.1 OVERVIEW

The dissertation is organised into an introductory chapter to establish the premise of the problem statement and design intent. The aims and objectives set out in this chapter will be subjected to a theoretical and contextual synthesis formulated in Chapters 02 and 03.

Exhibition, in particular travelling exhibition typologies, and their relation to the interiors discipline, are evaluated in Chapter 04. This leads to the choice of proto-site, Sandton Convention Centre, as suitable host, based on both its universal qualities and the IFI event criteria.

Chapter 05 explores the concept 'design for disassembly' and the influence it has on the design development discussed in Chapter 06. The final design proposal articulated in Chapter 06 is technically resolved in Chapter 07.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

DFIE was conceived with the understanding that interiors professionals in the majority of nations encounter disciplinary confusion and a lack of clarity that extends to stakeholders and the general public (Powell 2011). Brooker and Stone (2007:125) concur that there is a general identity question that has been bothering the profession. Faced with a multitude of interpretations and divisions within the field, as well as rapidly expanding respect and influence, the need for consensus and resolution has become critical. The first two phases of the DFIE (survey and symposium) produced the Interiors Declaration; a consensus-based document.

The Declaration represents a consensus from the interiors profession, but lacks the communication of this core knowledge with the general public.

“To the broader public, the interior design profession is misunderstood and undervalued. As a brand, it is considered to be inferior to architecture.”

(Mitchell and Rudner 2007: 67)

1.3 SUB-PROBLEM

Events branding themselves as interior design exhibitions tend to focus on furniture and object design rather than space-making and volumetric expression, as is synonymous with the interiors discipline.

1.4 AIMS

The dissertation aims to reflect the interiors identity, as investigated by the IFI through the Interiors Biennale 2013.

The design objective is to investigate an exhibition (for the IFI Interiors Biennale 2013) aimed to communicate and promote the core knowledge of the discipline, as identified in the IFI Interiors Declaration.

Ideally, the event should communicate these intentions to all visitors; the industry professionals and public alike.

The project will explore the temporary relationship that exists between the general (host structure) and the specific (installation), influenced by the nomadic nature of the exhibition, which migrates between hosts around the world.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Review of interior design literature and theoretical studies.

Critical investigation of the current practices based upon understanding gained from the literature and theoretical review.

Contextual analysis of universal exhibition space typologies with visits to accessible exhibition hosts.

Study of interior design exhibition precedents and discipline branding.

Conducting of interviews with exhibition designers.

Material and joint exploration by means of prototyping.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a. How could the host building influence the interior design exhibit?
- b. In what way could the event typology (traveling exhibition) influence the interior design exhibit?
- c. How could elements of the interior design discipline as a brand (represented in the IFI Interiors Declaration) be translated into an exhibition?

1.7 DELIMITATIONS

The dissertation will limit itself to the study of different design exhibition methods, focusing on the interior design exhibition.

The focus will be on the Interiors Biennale 2013 as proposed by the IFI as narration.

The core knowledge of the IFI Interiors Declaration will be used as framework with the author's intuitive approach guiding the exhibition design.

The design objective is not to curate the event but rather provide a flexible and innovative 'kit of parts' to facilitate the projected needs of the client.

Two exhibition host typologies are considered: the created host structure and blank host structure.

The interior design exhibit will be introduced to a proto-site to investigate the exhibit's habitation of the host.

Movement analysis and applied systems will be limited to behavioural, use and access patterns within the typical host structure.

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS

The inaugural IFI Interiors Biennale 2013 will be an expression of the final phase of DFIE.

South Africa, more specifically Johannesburg, will be appointed as the inaugural host for the migrating exhibition.



CHAPTER 01: STATING THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 02: DEFINING THE THEORETICAL PREMISE TO APPROACH THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 03/04: UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN/ PHYSICAL CONTEXT

CHAPTER 05: DERIVING A SUITABLE DESIGN APPROACH

CHAPTER 06: DEVELOPING THE MOST SUITABLE SOLUTION

CHAPTER 07: SOLVING THE DESIGN

CHAPTER 08: CONCLUDING THE LEARNING CURVE