5 DESIGN PHILOSOPHY AND DESIGN APPROACH

Fig 5

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

In today's society interior design is understood in many different genres, but is the discipline falsely understood under the presumption of interior architecture. The preconceived idea around interior architects as inferior decorators for architects and without the ability to rationally design structural elements of form and function, can be seen in the many ways that interior architecture is treated and presented.

This statement is supported by the work of Lucinda Kaukas Havenhand who practised as an interior designer for many years and prolonged her studies with a PhD. It was during the study of her PhD that she soon realised that society as a whole, not excluding the architectural profession perceives interior designers to only have the ability to decorate an interior (Havenhand, 2004: 32). Her article "*A view from the Margin: Interior Design*" reveals the stereotypical notion of women as interior designers and the manner in which interior design is perceived as feminine and imitative of the logical, inventive architecture. The stigmas associated with interior design ranged from feminine, decorative and emotional stereotypes which existed in the early modern movement driven by anti-decorative criticism.

Cathy Smith's article "*Inside-out: Speculating on the interior*" reveals the theory of two feminist philosophers, Luce Irigaray and Elizabeth Grosz, whose critique on space with reference to the work of Martin Heidegger concluded that according to Heidegger "interior is inferior and limited by the architectural form that contains it"(Smith, 2004:93-94). Inserting the stigma of the interior which is created only by the architectural skin that enfolds it, the skin dominates and limits the interior space. This caused a rapid growth of the stereotype that reigned that interior design is a design that is inferior and weak comparing to the organisational and structured sense of architecture (Havenhand, 2004:32-36).

The stigma is still associated with interior architecture today, as stated by Sashi Caan in his article "*Consensus or Confusion*". The article encourages the re-branding of the identity of interior architecture for it has an 'identity crisis' as well as a 'confused image in the public perception', which has been evident since the early modern movement (Caan, 2007:52-54).
Smith concluded in her writing that the interior and interior objects could be more than a contained space but should rather be questioned as to how

a space is inhabited(Smith, 2004:95). The interior is a space in its own, providing an opportunity for objects to redefine the boundaries set out by the envelope or spatial occupation.

Christine McCarthy examined the theory of interiority in her document "*Towards a definition of Interiority* ". In which she argues that 'interiority' is not absolutely dependent on the architectural envelope (McCarthy, 2005:112). This brings us back to the argument of where architecture ends and where interior architecture begins, McCarthy(2005:113) states that the focus must be placed on the 'condition of control' that contributes to the definition of interiority rather than the physical aspects known to divide spaces.

The physical and hypothetical boundaries are the core aspects that must be investigated. The study will attempt to estimate the line between architecture and interior architecture and whether it can by clearly defined as black or white. This desire to constrain or close space tries to impose geometry onto the psychological intimacy of space. The urge to clearly define a space reveals the grey areas between the different spaces. The grey areas expose the ability of a boundary to be either the departure point of the one space or the end point of the other (McCarthy, 2005:115). It is just this that creates the betweeness of spaces.

The betweeness is part of both inside and outside; this may be on the interior or the exterior of an architectural skin. For that reason the emphasis is on the boundary that exists between architecture and interior architecture, could this boundary be more than just a physical line parting the two bodies? Or should it rather not be seen as the skin between these two bodies that interact with each side or collapses the two bodies within each other.
The interior as a site already embraces these qualities where a space evolves from the intimate relation between inclusion and exclusion (McCarthy, 2005:115).

This stereotypical thinking could be used to its advantage for the potential and qualities that interior design possesses could only lead to more adequate design. The opportunity arises for interior design to reinvent the language used by designers in the discipline, creating a non-superficial identity that is true to its inhabitants and social environment. The difference from rationalist design would be the tendency to understand the language, warmth and intimacy of the space, bringing forth different qualities of the space which will influence the design decision immensely (Havenhand, 2004:38).

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Stating a design language with specific terminology will rupture the historical stereotype of interior design and enhance the presence of interior design in the design discipline. Establishing a new set of design criteria will enable the shift of thought and demand new thinking about interior design. The existing qualities that have been de-emphasized through a rationalist design thinking must be reconsidered and reinstated. The question that arises is what the focus of interior design would consist of, which elements and aspects to consider designing a layer of interaction to the user between the empty space and the exterior structure that encloses the space (Havenhand, 2004:40). The layer must not only interact with the physical requirements of the user but also with his/her emotional, personal and specific needs. As stated by Caan, interior design ideally is poetic, it "touches the human soul" and causes discovery and enchantment (Caan 2007, 53). The new language would organize and communicate an improved level of social complexity; it is an attempt to articulate dynamic processes within a spatial and tectonic assembly (Hadid; Schumacher, 2004). The effect of such designed spaces would not only enhance the experience of the users, but on a broader scale enhance the political, economical and social aspects of the society it translates to.

For a new language to materialize the easiest technique would be to adapt the presentation and drawing style to suit the merits of interior design (Havenhand, 2004: 41). Specific views and angles would much rather enhance the qualities of the interior space than the standard sections and elevations used as norms in architecture. The view of an interior detail could reveal much more about the design and the emotion captured in the space than an elevated view from the exterior (Havenhand, 2004: 41). The opportunities that arise with the new language of technique expand the domain of digital design and express the need for design and technology to intertwine. The digital design media is pursuing design into tentative areas of design that must still be explored and studied to its full potential, but it also opens up doors to new and innovative design (Hadid; Schumacher, 2004:5).

Interior spaces have the opportunity to translate information to the users on a more intimate and interactive manner, creating a space that could be experienced by the many different senses. The relation between space, information and human senses must be closely examined to optimise the experience or the journey through the space, making it imperative for interior spaces to be at the forefront of design.

Interior design has an important role to play in the information age that we find ourselves in; to contribute to the fast evolving technology driven markets. Interior spaces must enhance the driving image rather than diminish it to a lower outdated version (Riewoldt, 1997: 7). New ways to translate information through architecture have developed even though interactive media is often understood as only the audio and visual devices. Opportunities that arise with the realm of other senses and the factor of real human senses should ensure that interactive spaces don't just evolve as screen-based media with adherence to imagery (Bullivant, 2006:9). The relationship between the digital and physical must be fully investigated to enhance the interior space with the physical qualities of depth and space as well as the digital information to the distributed.

To understand the significance of translated information through designed spaces, the knowledge and boundaries of information must first be understood. Information as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary is an act of information or the act of giving a form or shape to the mind. In the ancient Greek the word 'information' derives from 'eidos' meaning thought, proposition and concept. These definitions open up the concept of giving or translating information from one sender to a receiver. Translation is to express the sense of a word, sentence, speech or book in another language or in a simpler form so that it can be easily be understood. At the same time translation must interpret the significance of a situation, action or space and reform it into a new situation in a new context.

Information will be made public to be received through a specific medium; it must be understood and translated for future generations to gain the knowledge or information. The translation process becomes imperative and creates a link between the body of information, the receiver and the spatial environment it's represented in.

Buildings adapted and transformed with technology, in the sense that it can be digitally controlled to the way in which buildings adopt to their environment. Buildings became more self-sufficient with enhanced economic, ergonomic and ecological profiles (Riewoldt, 1997:9). The importance for Architecture in this Information Age is not to forget its basic functions; to design spaces that enhance the social-cultural and environmental qualities rather than to design for optimal accommodation and multimedia technologies (Riewoldt, 1997:11). Technology can add new dimensions to the existing qualities of the space but must not drive the fundamental features of design.

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DESIGN APPROACH

Following on the design philosophy the design requires certain qualities to for the intended approach to prevail and to reveal the intention of interior design to enhance and transform existing architectural envelopes taking into consideration the existing structural context, history and orientation. Frazer Hay (2207:35) from the Napier University of Edinburgh argues that the transformation of existing architectural envelopes utilizes three systems or strategies, which are classified according to the understanding of the relation of the new to the old.

1 Intervention: Where the old can no longer feasibly exist independently and the old and new are completely intertwined.
2 Insertion: When the new is completely dictated by the old and built to fit exactly in the confines of the existing.
3 Installation: When the old and new exist independently of each other. The new elements are placed within the boundaries of the existing and the new elements may be influenced by the old but do not fit exactly. Should they be removed, the old would be able to revert to its original state.

The project specific design approach is a combination of insertion and installation. The existing structure will guide the design but not dominate it completely.

GUIDELINES TO DESIGN APPROACH

_Break the boundaries

The boundaries between interior and exterior must be investigated and adapted to transform the exiting constrained perimeter. The structural component must be identified to indicate areas where demolition and expansion can occur. The boundaries between active interior and exterior spaces must reveal the activities of both spaces. On the same basis of elimination should the interior boundaries be investigated to ensure that only the structural boundaries are kept.

_Ease of Access

The large entrance to the building will be accessible to all visitors including disabled visitors. When entering the building the different areas and walkways will be clearly indicated. Signage will be visible and highlighted throughout the building for visitors to have a clear orientation to the different activities.

_ Layering

The original structural column grid will be preserved with only the unnecessary walls removed to accommodate the new function. New structural elements are placed in specific spaces for these functions. The new materials are layered with the existing to create the opportunity for infill materials to form a new diverse environment.

_Transparency

To create a space that reveals its activities not just through visual transparency but create transparency in space, organisation and depth. The newly placed elements should be transparent to the existing constrained environments. This will enable spaces to complement each other and reveal their spatial qualities.

_Responsive Environments

The spatial experience will be designed to work with technically advanced exhibitions to ensure a rich and inspiring environment. The environments will have the ability to adapt to specific exhibitions.

_Visibility

The relation between physical visibility and phenomenal visibility must be introduced to ensure an awareness of the different activities of the specific design. This will enable interaction between inside and outside activities, resulting in attentive and inspired visitors.