

Editorial

Interiority as Relations

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Understanding the relations between human being and its environment is critical in our attempt to create an appropriate built environment. Interior as a discipline has a privilege to be in the intersection between subjective experience of human users and the physical manifestation of environment occupied by the human. Looking at interiority as a relational construct that occurs between the users and environment should be an essential basis for design practice. This issue of *Interiority* intends to explore various forms of relational construct that emerge in the interaction between space and the users and to identify possible challenges posed by such relations for spatial design practice.

A form of relations that defines the quality of the space inhabitation occurs between the construct of subjective response or experience and the physical materiality of space and its elements. The transactional perspective in environmental psychology (Altman & Rogoff, 1987) views the relationship between human and environment as a form of transaction that allows the human and environment to relate to one another in a reciprocal way. Through this perspective, the human being is present as an active entity within the interior and architectural space. This perspective marks a departure from the deterministic perspective that tends to consider the human being as the passive users that are merely affected by the quality of the physical environment.

The reciprocal relationship between body and space occurs in such a way "that the one not only occupies the other but commands and orders it through intention" (Tuan, 1977; p. 35). The intentional nature of human being allows the human capacity to select, evoke and manipulate their environment (Gosling, Gifford, & McCunn, 2013), which suggests a form of reciprocal relations between human

and the surrounding interior and architecture. Understanding the transaction that occurs between human and environment allows us to define the quality of space based on the active response of the human towards their environment (Yatmo & Atmodiwirjo, 2013), rather than seeing human merely as a passive receiver of the environmental qualities.

The knowledge on interiority as relations inevitably poses some challenges for design practice. Interior and architecture needs to go further “in responding to human body: it extends and enhances human capacities” (Franck & Lepori, 2000, p. 36). To be “life-enhancing,” it has to “address all the senses simultaneously and help to fuse our image of self with the experience of the world” (Pallasmaa, 2012, p. 12). It becomes critical to explore the relevant medium, techniques and materiality in the design attempts that could appropriately respond to the nature of human-space relations. The choice of medium, techniques and materiality remains open for further creative development for practice. In addition, the presence of different interior and urban situation where the relations occur, with diverse characteristics of subjects, the diverse purpose of the built environment, and the diverse social and cultural condition, also calls for innovative design practice through possible appropriation and intervention.

The understanding of interiority as relations involves the needs to explore human capacity in building the relationship with the surrounding. The role of various human senses becomes vital to develop the multi-sensorial relationship with space. In the first article in this issue, Stephanie Liddicoat explores the relations between the subjective construct of interiority by the individuals who self-harm and the physical materiality of the therapeutic interior spaces through supramodal perception. The kinds of triggers and emotional responses provoked by the aspects of the built environment are the critical basis for design practice to create the more supportive therapeutic environment.

The diverse social and cultural contexts could also affect the nature of the relationship between human and the environment. Another form of relations is presented by a study of territory in the contexts of everyday living space of urban *kampung* in Jakarta by Kristanti Dewi Paramita and Tatjana Schneider. This micro inquiry revealed how the boundaries of passage territories were constructed by the response of the dwellers to the limited available infrastructure and their everyday necessities. The ‘patches’ and ‘corridors’ represent the configuration of interiority in which the dwellers appropriated the diverse living spaces and temporality.

The sensorial experiences may take place in various forms, not only through immediate physical response to the stimuli but also through responses to particular stimuli identified in memory with particular time and place (Malnar & Vodvarka, 2004). Thus the relations between human and environment expands beyond the physical sensory encounter and actions. Zarya Vrabcheva discusses another way of how human relates to the environment which is not through physical encounter but through memory, imagination and illusion. The transitional phases of empathy involving those three aspects demonstrate the invisible relationship that we have with the surrounding interior and architectural space.

An important question while working with interiority as relations is in the choice of medium that could appropriately respond to the dynamics of human-space relations. This is addressed by the next two articles that discuss the relations between the subject and the environment through the narrative environments. Tricia Austin explores the space as narrative environments in the contexts of the museum and urban space to demonstrate the embodied experience through space over time as the key aspect of the narrative environment. She suggests that the experience of moving through cultural frames and the presence of obstacles and opponents are the important part of experiencing the story. Sarah Edwards experimented with the traditional dioramic elements integrated with digital technology to create what is called 'sensorial interior.' It embraces the dialogue between the exterior world of facts and the interior world of emotion.

Time and temporality is another key aspect in the relations between human being and environment, as the relations tend to be dynamic and continuously change through time. The final article in this issue presents a project by James Carey that employed a variety of techniques and medium to respond to the existing interior and urban situation. This project argues on the importance of process, time and duration in the practice of interior, and suggests the relation with time and duration as the interiority of the context.

Relations in interior and urban context are complex and dynamic; they cannot be taken for granted or merely generalised. This issue of *Interiority* offers some possibilities of how design practice could be expanded by the better understanding of the relations that occur within the built environment. It remains open to more varied forms of relations that could emerge along with the development of society, knowledge and technology.

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