

objects and space concepts of habitation are changing as we connect publicly from the privacy of our homes. Interior design education will provide an experience and exposure that prepares students for a future that is constantly changing and evolving. It is in knowing this that design education of interior design education becomes key. Design is always rethinking itself, reflecting on its parameters, questioning existing constraints with its contribution. Design must overcome outdated disciplinary divisions and demonstrate to students and the public the interdisciplinary complexity of the changing charge and organization of its practice. As practices evolve—architectural firms designing interiors, interior firms branding environments, and graduates from both emerging as cross-disciplinary practitioners—it is essential that the relationship between disciplines in academic programs overlap, the relationship between schools and industry open, and the relationship between practice and education become significantly more collaborative.

The development of interior design education as a value-based service will require that schools look for opportunities to expose students to varied experiences beyond the traditional role of furnishings, finishes, and equipment. Opening studios to communities, offering services to individuals and institutions who cannot afford design consultation, will change the misnomer that interior design is mere luxury. Collaborative projects with the public will contribute creative design thinking to the renovation, adaptation, or creation of spaces. Design Response, Inc., based in Campbell, California, offers the services of pro-bono interior designers to local community agencies. Collaborative teams of designers, architects, artists, craftpersons, and interns contribute design services to the local community. The organization, led by volunteer designer Helen Carreker, completed over 100 projects in the 1990s. Carreker says, “It is very gratifying to see these newly emerging designers finish their training, assume career positions in the field and continue to use their talents to give back to the community.”<sup>35</sup> Design Build opportunities such as the University of Auburn’s Rural Studio, led by MacArthur Foundation Awardee Samuel Mockbee, and the Jersey Devils’ community projects, led by Steve Badanes, at the University of Washington, allow hands-on construction experience, introducing students to the logic, problems and physical realities of joining disparate materials in the creation of objects in the public sphere in collaborative community practice.

Interior design education will continue to emphasize consumer and user needs and to develop new methods of research that will structure ways of

studying and understanding activities in people's everyday lives, with a focus on learning what people actually do. Designers will amass information in reusable, easily organizable formats for collaborative networking and creative thinking. Interior design education will benefit by research and application of new materials, similar to George Beylerian's "Material Connexion," a digital research library, service, and data bank on green materials via the web. Interior design education will combine the science of research with the wisdom of human experience to contribute to the quality of life.

Interior design education must offer students an integrated approach and an integrative course of study. Design educators can expand design's area of experience, open its traditional boundaries, and allow for comprehensive study and practice if they approach design education more as a liberal arts education with integration of the history of ideas and study of life. This education offers designers the potential to network all of their thinking, research, and creative envisioning to influence our habitation. Interior design education is less about training the designer as technician, and more about developing the designer into a leader in imagining innovations and implementing them.

## Notes

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