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The Fluid Contemporary Interior

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This paper looks at the state of the interior at the transition into the new millennium. In it, I explore the elision of public and private realms in the interior at advent of the 21st century, surveying the interior spaces of the house, the apartment, the loft, the office, civic spaces, religious spaces, cultural spaces, retail spaces, restaurants, hotels, and therapeutic spaces, from the mid-1980s to the present. I began my research on the subject in 2002 and commenced writing in 2003 at the American Academy of Rome where I was a Fellow that year. The paper is drawn from 475 case studies from around the world which will be published under the title *Contemporary World Interiors* by Phaidon Press in fall 2006. Because photo acquisition for the book is still in progress, images will not be available to me until September 2006. That said, the paper will be illustrated with multiple perspectives on each project.

Within realm of architecture and design, the contemporary interior has remained largely unexamined as a legitimate index of culture. Here, programmatic shifts, and concomitant changes in form language, are in progress are considered in light of the larger social dynamic of contemporary global culture in the aftermath of the liberation movements of the 20th century and the reappraisal of modernist design.

By and large, discussions of the interior have been prejudiced by its perception as a container of ephemera. Popular media coverage of the interior as a leaky vessel of trends has reduced a deeply significant aspect of human behavior to little more than a compendium of shopping lists. Furthermore, as Joel Sanders argues, "...conventional readings of the interior are fraught with class bias flowing from its centuries-old association with tradesmen and gender bias associated with the relatively new profession of the decorator, a profession connected with women and gay men.¹ As a result, the credibility of interior design as an expression of cultural values has been seriously impaired.

Fortunately, the distinctions between "high" culture and "low" culture are dissipating in a more tolerant climate, which eschews binary distinctions. Within the interior, we now see productive borrowings between design and decoration, once considered mutually exclusive. And while the fields of architecture and interior



design and interior decoration still have different protocols, they are showing a greater mutuality of interest in response to the contemporary appetite for spaces that resonate on multiple levels.

Another way to think of this emergent synthesis is to substitute the triad of “architecture, design, and decoration” with “modernity, technology and history.” One of the hallmarks of the postmodern era is a renewed attentiveness to the role of the past in shaping the present. History is no longer understood as linear, but cyclical, like the spiral of DNA, with dominant and recessive genes that continually recombine. After a century of ill-fated social experiments in the “new,” we no longer discount the role of memory. In the interior, this manifests itself in the revival of ornament, in evidence of craft and materiality, and in spatial complexities that have contributed to a new elasticity in typologies.

Though this paper is, in fact, organized by typology, these genre-distinctions are fragile, particularly once outside the confines of the home. While the residence has seen the least radical changes to its own program, it has become the catalyst and the model for entirely new ways of thinking of spaces once firmly isolated from it, from the secretary’s cubicle to the nurse’s station to the librarian’s reading room. The domestication of such environments is a welcome move to provide more comfort, more reassurance, and more pleasure to domains formerly defined by prohibitions and exclusions. These changes owe much to the social movements of the late 1960s and 70s that fought against barriers of race, class, gender and physical ability and laid the ground work for a larger climate of hospitality and accommodation.

It is also possible to detect, in the same tendency, a wholly other agenda. The introduction of domestic amenities into commercial spaces is also part of a wider attempt to a more acceptable face on the workings of capital. In this view, interior design dons the mask of entertainment. There is nothing new about this charade. Every interior is fundamentally a stage set, which is not necessarily problematic as long as the actors are complicit in the game. Danger surfaces, however, when illusion becomes delusion--when design overcompensates for the realities of illness with patronizing sentiment, or when offices become surrogate apartments because of the relentless demands of a 24-7 economy. In these instances, design relinquishes its potential to transform daily life to a facile re-branding of space, or worse, an act of deceit.

The projects selected here make the case for a range of best practices and attempt to describe and analyze the traits of the contemporary interior. They have been curated to illuminate ideas that are enduring and to identify potential areas of change. These selections are offered with a genuine desire to ameliorate the limitations of design criticism so acutely diagnosed by architectural historian Kenneth Frampton when he observed that:

Despite the vast influence media has on the world...we are still subject to a lack of information with regard to world culture...Thus, while we are momentarily informed on Japan, we hardly know anything about India, Australia or South Africa; while we are *au courant* on Spain, Portugal, France, and Germany, we know less about current practice in Scandinavia...²



In response, I have attempted to be catholic in purview. If there is a perceptible bias, it is decidedly toward those spaces which make an art out of hybridity. It favors those who still find wisdom in Renaissance chronicler Baldassare Castiglione's advice:

...he who does not avoid...antique expressions, except in the rarest instances, makes no less serious a mistake than he who in his desire to imitate times past continues to eat acorns after wheat has become available.³

Today, designers no longer have to choose between the modernist Slim Fast diet and Post Modernist acorns, nor discount either precedent. While it is tempting to use the Post Modern style (the inflated classicism of the 1980s) as the whipping boy for the acorn-variety of historicism, surely designers would not be as inclined toward recombinant formal languages were it not for the early appropriations from history, from Michael Graves' Portland Building (1980) to Gae Aulenti's Musée d'Orsay (1987). Likewise modernism survives, indeed, thrives in the work of Richard Meier, Tadao Ando, Alberto Campo Baeza and others. Less restrictive stylistically today, it perseveres as ideology of restraint.

If there is a projective aspect to the contemporary interior, a hint of what's to come, I would argue that it is in those spaces that offer unexpected juxtapositions, such as

Marcel Wanders' Lute Suites hotel (2005) and Herzog & de Meuron's Walker Art Center (2005) in Minneapolis. The appetite for the new has been replaced by the desire for the different. In a time when virtually every style is equally available, form is secondary to formal relationships and to narratives of use. Identifying the narratives of the contemporary interior at the beginning of the new century is the task of this paper.

The House

Shigeru Ban's Wall-less House (1999) in Japan offers a useful fulcrum for a discussion that begins with the naked shelter and ends with the clothed house. The Wall-less House strips the domicile back to first principles, all but reprising the myth of the Garden of Eden. The surrounding landscape becomes the proverbial fig leaf for residents exposed on all three sides. While clearly referencing such classical precedents as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House (1951), the Wall-less House also quietly forecasts an entirely different interior landscape that reaches beyond the modernist geometries. Here, we have the most extreme representation of what appears to be an exorable drive to erase the wall. Ban moves beyond the modernist dictum to bring the outdoors in, tacitly acknowledging that our welfare no longer depends on the notion of shelter from nature but of symbiosis with it.

This instinct to loosen and move boundaries that is the hallmark of postmodernity is given literal expression through a variety of iterations. In the Alterio House (2003) in Sao Paulo, Isay Weinfeld puts the interior on stage by virtually eliminating one façade. There is enormous renewed interest in the potency of the *brise soleil* to animate the interior with patterns of light and connect the experience of the house to the cycle of the day,



seen most dramatically in Sean Godsell's Carter Tucker House (200) in Victoria, Australia. Scrims offer another kind of porosity that can be seen in Toyo Ito's T-House (1999) in Tokyo and Koen Van Velsen's Vos House (1999) in Amsterdam. Boundaries are also blurred in houses like UN Studio's Mobius House (1998) in the Netherlands, but less as a strategy of exposure, than as a means of melding rooms to reflect continuities instead of separations in function and behavior, particularly for those who work at home.

Contrary to pre-millennial predictions of a groundswell of interiors shaped by the complex curves of computer algorithms, organic spaces like those in Ushida Findlay's Soft and Hairy House (1994) in Baraki, Japan, are still exceptional, but no less significant for their rarity and eccentricity. We are still inclined to spaces that house us and our possessions within the stable framework of right angles. Richard Meier's houses elevate those possessions to the stature of museum collections while the late Samuel Mockbee's Rural Studio Alabama restores them to their owners, who hang Christmas lights and collages wherever they please.

The Apartment

The apartment building has always counted on its name and location name to signal its status and telegraph the nature of its spaces. Today, however, it is just as likely to be the designer's name that accomplishes the same task. Now prospective residents have the opportunity to match and merge sensibilities with designers such as Philippe Starck whose Yoo Apartments are being replicated around the world. As Laurent Guiterrez and Valerie Portefaix have noted, apartment buildings like these become

...a means of expressing an exclusive concept of a collective fantasy. Advertising brochures and showrooms certainly gather more attention than the products they sell. Aggressive promotional campaigns start simultaneously with the development's foundations, meaning flats are sold long before their physical completion.⁴

Still the norm, however, is the apartment that takes its identity from its owners' identities and behaviors. These apartments evolve from transactions that are highly personal. For even more than the house, the apartment assumes the role of repository or even reliquary. With rare exceptions, designers do not have the luxury of breaking out of the frame and must accept the building's perimeters as finite. Thus, the perimeter becomes a frame, and the interior a portrait, particularly in the case of the designer's own apartment. To wit, Italian architect and designer Mario Bellini has transformed an 18th-century palazzo in Milan (2004) into an amalgam of design history and family history, with furnishings designed by himself and his son surrounded by a collection of Novecento paintings and Piero Portaluppi frescoes (c. 1930). In Paris, Andrée Putman curated an eclectic selection of furnishings designed by friends and colleagues in the apartment she renovated for herself in 1994.

The persona of the client is often the catalyst for the apartments as autobiography, as with the Perry Apartment (2003) in Manhattan by 1100 Architects that mirrors the retro-60s, mod mien of the client or as fantasy in the case of Lazzarini Pickering's bachelor apartment (1997) in Monte Carlo, with décor and gadget



like features reminiscent of James Bond movie sets. Ppenly and playfully narcissistic, these interiors directly appropriate from mediated images of the past.

Radical interventions are rare precisely because they usually come at the expense of illustrating the client persona. Case in point is the New York City Ost/Kutner Apartment (1996). Early adopters of software developed for animation and production design, Kolatan MacDonald Studio were among the first to bring a design vocabulary associated large public spaces to the intimate realm of the apartment interior. Here, curving fiberglass planes create a continuous sense of flow, with functional zones demarcated only by zones of color.

Few clients are so willing to live in their architects' skin. Taking the opposite tack, Leven Betts insert their vision via indirection in a Manhattan apartment (2002) with a glass wall that picks up the reflection of the Empire State Building at night and allows it to disappear by day. In the process, they rethink the possibilities of the decorative within the language of modernism by creating virtual wallpaper.

The Loft

Typically, loft dwellers are considered to be the more adventurous clients and clearly the nature of the typology invites more latitude. Like the signature-architect apartment building, the idea of the loft has become so powerful that the concept is used as a marketing device for virtually any open plan apartment, and has given birth to the faux-factory building, designed to look as though it were built in the 19th century but entirely new from the ground up. Loft has become code for apartments with materials that convey an urban ambiance, minus the edge associated with what was once an illegal form of dwelling. Hence, the decision to restrict the discussion to loft conversions.

The residential loft of today is unquestionably indebted to artists' conversions of factories into live-work studios in New York City's Soho neighbourhood. Though artists may be in the minority of loft owners today, their legacy is felt in the tendency of the loft to reflect the aesthetic of art movements of the 1970s in its interior style. This is born out equally in the minimalist stainless steel furnishings of Johnson Chou's Yolles loft (2001) in Toronto and the art brut aesthetic of the Michaelides loft (2000) in London by Buschow Henley. As the art world has moved away from the margins and into the mainstream, and the mainstream actively seeks the caché of art and design, the converted loft has been relieved of its vow of poverty, but not of its memory, particularly in New York City. Architects Sandro Marpillero and Linda Pollak salvage excerpts from a 19th-century building's past in a loft interior that weaves massive wooden beams, iron shutters, and buried columns into a wholly new sequence of spaces. Likewise, LOT/EK architects Ada Tolla andGiuseppe Lignano acknowledge the found-object nature of the loft in the Morton residence (1999), where a petroleum trailer tank cut in half serves as bedroom and bathroom.

With little more than a fifty-year history, the loft is a relative newcomer to the residential interior, yet its impact has been profound. As the space where the modernist open plan merged with historical fabric, the residential loft helped position the past as an inheritance, rather than a posthumous straight-jacket.



The Office

This relatively newfound freedom—the freedom to appropriate from both the vertical genealogies and horizontal histories of design—is operative even in the most traditionally conservative of interiors: the office. Alberto Campo Baeza’s use of warm veined alabaster in the General Caja of Ahorros Bank (1992) in Granada, evokes the medieval cathedrals of Spain; at the same time, the breathtaking scale of the atrium’s geometry leaves no question about his modernist allegiances. By contrast, the German firm Behnisch, Behnisch & Partner teases apart the spatial orthodoxies of modernism in their design of the Genzyme Center (2003) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with an atrium that branches both horizontally and vertically through the multi-storied building.

In its spatial configuration and its amenities, Dorte Mandrup Arkitekter’s design of Cell Network (2001), in Copenhagen, is emblematic of a decisive shift in the culture of the contemporary office. Voluminous white curtains cordon off offices, otherwise left large open to view in vertically stacked in towers inside a converted airplane hanger; relaxation areas are equipped with oversized pillows and playful lighting fixtures. Here, we see the narrative of the office colored by the narrative of the home with its promise of leisure—albeit, a promise largely unfulfilled in the new working paradigm. Today, employers offer gyms, cafes, lounges and game rooms to employees working longer hours; and employees, expecting self-actualization from their work, see their spaces as personal.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the re-adaptation of the loft to its original purpose: labor. Ideally suited to the newly domesticated office the hedonistic loft carries an aura creativity that companies are eager to exploit. Pentagram’s design for Musak (2000) in South Carolina restored credibility to a mordant business image; Ross Anderson’s design for Abercrombie & Fitch (2001) in Ohio takes the corporate out of campus and replaces it with a vernacular closer to a barn; Bohlin Cywinski Jackson use the language of the loft to foster chance encounters and a sense of community at Pixar’s headquarters (2002) in Emeryville, California. All of these projects coopt the language of the loft to project a youthful profile—a marked shift from past generation’s tendency to ally business credibility with seniority.

One company in particular went beyond the semantics of the loft and open plan, to extol the virtues of the liberated virtual employee, and that was Chiat/Day, now TBWA/Chiat/Day. Ahead of its time with the notion of hoteling, the replacement of personal space with shared space, the late-Jay Chiat’s New York office (1994) by Gaetano Pesce was a practical failure: employees suffered from feelings of homelessness. But Chiat/Day New York was also a productive failure. It instigated another development in office design: the reincarnation of the private office as the village, seen in Kostow Greenwood’s ‘corrals’ for Mad River Post (2003) in Dallas, Texas and Gensler’s retro-mod booths for Corinthian Television (2003) in London. Multiple working options—tethered and untethered, social and private—are now *de rigueur*.

In the Netherlands, another variation on the idea of the office as a house-within-a house goes beyond spatial differentiation to design differentiation. For the Dutch firm Interpolis, in Tillburg, Holland, interior designer Kho Liang Ie led a team of eight designers to create eight distinctive work spaces. (Notably, Marcel Wanders



created a cluster of mushroom-like huts painted with folk art.) The insurance company's embrace of iconoclastic design matches the profile of the 'personal' corporation in its collage of different sensibilities.

Civic Spaces

Schools, libraries, community centers, court houses, city halls, parliaments and embassies are considered here under the rubric of the civic space. It is a measure of the of the late 20th-century's movement toward greater social inclusion that the signs and symbols of classicism have all but been replaced in the public realm by forms and materials that convey transparency and flux. It is apparent in glass walls, spiral staircases, a preference for intimacy over grandeur, and, above all, in spatial plans that stimulate movement, like Herzog & de Meuron's animated library in Cottberg, Germany (2005). Interiors once filled with furnishings solely intended to weather the treadmill of bureaucracy now take on features associated with the home--upholstered chairs, curtained windows, kitchens and cafes, even working fireplaces, as in Moshe Safdie's Salt Lake City Public Library (2004). There is a specificity to contemporary civic spaces that would have been unheard of even fifty years ago when court rooms, classrooms, and libraries were recognizably institutional.

The first obligation of the civic interior, is to reflect its constituency. In education, student-centered design has replaced teacher-centered design. Nursery schools like the one designed by DSDH Architects in east London (2003) feature windows positioned so three and four year olds can see outside. Herman Hertzger's design for the Montessori College Oost (1999) in the Netherlands gives high school students stairs to sit on and a communal hall to gather in. Universities are also drawn to the urban model for its inherent sociability. Frank Gehry's Ray and Maria Stata Science Center at MIT (2004) is noteworthy not only for its internal "streets" and "town center" but also for its recognition of the ad hoc nature of city life. The open-ended interior allows professors and students to reconfigure their work spaces to suit the specific needs of their research.

For centuries, the provision of a place to read and space to house books were the two determinants of the library as it evolved from an individual carrel to a room in a monastery, palace, or university, to an independent space. Today, with digital access to information and commercial booksellers that encourage reading in their stores, that two-fold program (of reading and storing) is no longer viable to sustain the library as a distinct entity. Libraries like Bolles-Wilson's design of the Münster City Library (1993) are being promoted as "supermarkets" of information, serving the public with restaurants, auditoria, theaters, and community meeting rooms, as well as their traditional repositories of knowledge. Cities like Seattle, which commissioned Rem Koolhaas to rethink and redesign its main public library (2004), are finding that their interiors can function as ancillary librarians—with features like call numbers embedded in the flooring—and as advocates for literacy in a world that requires fluency in both the textual and visual.

Government buildings have a long history of using exterior architecture to signify their presence, but their interiors, the realm of officialdom have received far less attention. An interesting exception can be found in Ljubljana, inside Sadar and Vuga's Chamber of Commerce (2002), where interpenetrating volumes, overlap in productive tension. However, the greater share of design attention is directed toward embassies and legislative halls where public figures gather, from Miralles and Tagliabue's powerful and idiosyncratic Scottish Parliament



Building (2004) in Edinburgh to Norman Foster's iconic addition to the Reichstag (1999) in Berlin. Ironically, the least humane spaces of government are often the halls of justice. Richard Meier's Sandra Day O'Connor United States Courthouse (2003), with its glass dome designed by Jamie Carpenter, is among the rare departures from the norm.

Religious Spaces

Unlike offices or hospitals, both of which have seen marked change in recent years due to shifts in our perception of work and illness, religious spaces support rituals of continuity, so their programs tend to remain stable. As a result, designers are able to concentrate on formal considerations to a far greater degree than might be imagined with such a tradition-bound client. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and shrines as well as non-denominational spaces of contemplation, reflect the ways in which contemporary designers extrapolate and expand on tradition to achieve the sense of renewal.

In the late 20th and early 21st century, some of the most compelling religious interiors manipulate monumentality to create intimate meeting grounds for communities of faith. In Mario Botta's Cymbalist Synagogue (1998) in Jerusalem two massive vessel-like forms prove to be light wells for human-scale spaces of worship below them. In Berlin, Wandel Hoefer Lorch + Hirsch (2001) situate a sky-lit sanctuary within the stark volumes of the highly charged Dresden synagogue, in an effort to assuage the painful memories of *Kristallnacht*. Light and void, the two most persistent metaphors of religious pursuit, have even more potency today, as building technologies permit designers greater latitude for expression, as in Massimiliano Fuksas' San Giacomo Parish Complex (2004) in Foligno, Italy.

A more literal expression of the realm of the ineffable persists in the dome. Ricardo Legorreta's Metropolitan Cathedral of Managua (1993) has no less than 63 domes, the highest of which hovers over the congregation, pointedly not over the priest. In the Live Oaks Quaker Meeting House (2001) in Houston, Texas, James Turrell replaced the domical metaphor of celestial space with a large rectangle, chamfered into the roof to frame views of the sky.

A consideration of religious interiors must also explore the way the rituals of faith continue to be realized in form, from public rites of procession and communion, to private acts of retreat and meditation. The former is exemplified, here, in the active spatial properties of the Baroque, as in Mecanoo's St. Mary's Chapel (1998) in Rotterdam, designed as a figure eight to reflect the passage from life to death. The latter, the notion of retreat and seclusion, appears in the cloister, which has found a contemporary correlate in the ascetic minimalism of John Pawson's Novy Dvur Cistercian Monastery (2004) in the Czech Republic.

Cultural Spaces

Where art once was an instrument of religion and political power, it has now become a fully independent social agent, with its own temples and palaces, deities and politics. Today, the spaces where audiences listen to concerts, enjoy performances and look at painting, sculpture, and digital media have become self-reflexive. Instead of the usual characterizations of curiosity cabinets, palaces, temples or stadia, derived from the



sociology of patrons and audience, this overview examines the formal aspects of design that are used to position cultural institutions' relationships to their content, with interiors that serve, respectively, as background, middle ground, or foreground for the art that they contain.

In keeping with the modernist program of erasure, the minimalist house of culture, be it museum or theater, recedes behind the works it displays, reinforcing the 20th century's divorcement of art from contexts other than its own. Two models dominate here: the white box and the loft-- spaces, respectively, of display and of making. The presumption of neutrality of the white box and its deference to the art it houses, is most acutely apparent in Yoshio Taniguchi's recent expansion of the Museum of Modern Art (2004). The formality and monumentality of Taniguchi's addition was conceived to be commensurate with the status of the Museum's benefactors and its role in the cultural international community. By contrast, the white spaces of Dia: Beacon (2003), in upstate New York, a collaboration of artist Robert Irwin and Open Studio architects, are resolutely modern but they are never neutral. They are constructively compromised by the original factory architecture they inhabit.

In the realm of the middle ground, of spaces that take on a curatorial function more usually associated with exhibition design, are projects like in Jean Nouvel's Arab World Institute (1987) in Paris and Williams Tsien's American Folk Art Museum (2000) in New York. With Nouvel we see the emergence of a new receptivity to ornament; with Williams Tsien, to collage, craft and complexity.

Spaces that share the foreground with the performers and artists declare themselves equal to art. Frank Gehry's Disney Hall (2003) in Los Angeles and Rem Koolhaas's Casa da Musica (2005) in Portugal are confident in themselves, confident in the discernment of their audiences, and confident in the strength of the performances they host. They compound experience, rather than simply present it.

Retail Spaces

Retail interiors can be loosely divided between those that draw on the semantics the classical store (informed by the pragmatics of identifying and finding) and theatrics of the romantic shop (which places a premium on looking and imagining). Today, the classical store takes its cues from the museum. By physically isolating merchandise on pedestals and plinths, stores like those designed by David Chipperfield for Dolce & Gabana Worldwide (1999-05) give their clients an aura of assurance and exclusivity.

Establishments like Moss (1994) in New York's Soho neighborhood, designed by Harry Allen, reinforce their clientele's sense of discrimination, presenting their merchandise as collectibles. The museological profile of the store also includes those that base their entire design around a singular display system, like Yasuo Kondo's undulating steel ribbons for Yohji Yamamoto's boutique (1998) in Kobe, as well as those that layer didactic messages into their displays, like Catherine Wagner's photo essay on frozen genetic material in the Kyoto Comme des Garcon (2001).



Fantasy, the hallmark of the romantic shop, has evolved from static mannequins and stock displays into live theatre, borrowing tactics from agit prop and the stage. One of the more interesting developments is the incorporation of animation into display, as in the case of Al-Ostoura (2003) in Kuwait where Shona Kitchen and Abe Rogers of KRD filled an atrium with mannequins that perform their own *ballet mécanique*. Role playing, a common-place of video gaming, is the conceit for AZB's x-Compiler and x-Assembler shops (1999) in Akita, Japan, whose interiors are based on the characters of cartoon robots.

There are also growing numbers of spaces that critique the nature of consumption at the same time they support it--from Konstantin Grcic's transient cardboard scheme for Ayzit Bostan (2002) in Berlin to Klein Dytham's dystopic designs for Final Home (2003) in Tokyo. However, with the victory of capitalism now complete and total, there is also growing movement to accept its voracious appetite as the new global zeitgeist. Designers like Koolhaas and Herzog & de Meuron, in New York (2001) and Tokyo (2003), respectively, celebrate fashion's rapid cycles in flagship stores for Prada. These well-publicized interiors are highly successful global advertisements of the Italian brand's patronage of contemporary architecture and interior design. In turn, Prada, and stores like it, display architecture as a product that is symbiotic with their brands.

Restaurants

Before the mid-18th century, the features of the restaurant as we know it--menus, private tables, waiters--did not exist; all public meals were served in inns at single seatings without the amenities of décor we now take for granted.⁵ In fact, the restaurant is a Parisian invention, an invention rooted in the Enlightenment era's preoccupation with the body and personal health, and the protocols of public life of a newly urban society. Today, two and a half centuries later, designers still find themselves contending with the public and private nature of eating out, between diners' desires for individual attention and their cravings for social acknowledgement.

The design dialects of the contemporary restaurant parallel the formal languages of other interiors, with one significant difference. Because they perform in service of a brief temporal event, a meal, restaurant interiors are that much more ephemeral and exaggerated in their deployment of the various strands of design that have woven their way into the new century. The social agenda of early modernism, long since compromised by its own preciousness and cost, resurfaces in Claesson Koivisto Rune's restrained design for a McDonalds franchise in Stockholm (1998).

In the restaurant, however, restraint can seem inhospitable. Hence, the dominance of spaces that are distinguished by their gregariousness, like Adam Tihany's Le Cirque (2000) in New York and Karim Rashid's Morimoto (2001) in Philadelphia. It is here, in the restaurant-as-spectacle, that some of the most interesting subcultures of design can experiment and flourish. At Georges (2000) in Paris, Jakob + MacFarlane reprise the private booth with semi-private aluminum-coated pods. In New York, Tsurumaki Lewis bring a hyper-materiality to Fluff Café (2004) and Tides (2005) turning walls and ceilings into sensual sculptural reliefs. Visual puns, nostalgia, and optical illusion reach their apotheosis in Sketch (2002), where Noë Duchaufour-Lawrance assembled a cast of designers, to turn a London townhouse into a tea room, restaurants and night



club that entertains its clientele in spaces that range from the camp neo-classicism of Gabhan O'Keefe, to the inventive eclecticism of Droog Design's Jurgen Bey.

Hotels

While the Internet, television, telephone, and airplane are recognized as the main protagonists of globalization, the hotel is rarely mentioned, except as casualty of electronic media that has reduced the number of business trips (and hotel stays) by enabling placeless, virtual transactions. The hotel has been responding to the condition of global flows, putting its energies into serving the leisure class.

The evolution of the boutique hotel, under the aegis of entrepreneurs like Ian Schrager and Andres Balazs and designers from Philippe Starck and to Lindy Roy, lays the ground work for the branded hotel. It appears in new iterations of the bed-and-breakfast, like the intimate apartment-hotel produced by fashion designer Alaïa Azzedine with Milanese entrepreneur Carla Sozzani (2005) in Paris for jaded travelers who cannot face another reception desk but nonetheless require temporary accommodations furnished with extraordinary discrimination. Companies like Bulgari (2004) and Campers (2005), in Rome and Barcelona respectively, offer their guests a similar brand association, substituting the *caché* of the couturier with the ineffable qualities of their merchandise.

The newest extrapolation of this model is the hotel that promotes itself through the reputations and distinct sensibilities of a constellation of designers. The Hotel Puerta America (2005) in Madrid, features rooms, lounges even parking spaces, designed by luminaries such as John Pawson, Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel, Christian Liagre, David Chipperfield, Kathryn Findlay, Arata Isozaki, Richard Gluckman, Teresa Sapey, and Javier Mariscal. One of the most transparent uses of this strategy can be found in Hotel Fox (2005) in Copenhagen, where 21 artists were commissioned to redecorate the guest rooms as part of a promotional campaign for Volkswagen. Intended as short-term intervention, the installations have become a permanent feature of the hotel, an indication of the appetite for any semblance of differentiation in settings like hotels—settings that customarily depend on high degrees of standardization. What is noteworthy about all of these hostelrys is not so much their marketing savvy, but the levels of design ingenuity provoked by it—by their absorption of the forces of market and the facility with which we negotiate them.

Therapeutic Spaces

At the turn of the millennium, therapeutic spaces are under intense scrutiny. It is premature to say that they are the most changed, but it is telling that, today, it is more common to speak of spaces of well-being than spaces of illness or injury. As the semantic boundaries between clinics and health clubs, hospitals and spas become more fungible to appease the vanities of aging baby boomers, therapeutic interiors are also starting to resemble each other. Moreover, whether devoted to rehabilitative medicine or elective plastic surgery, the spaces of care (like those of the office) increasingly reference the home as their primary model—both as the domain of personal freedom and the source of physical comfort.



Large medical institutions, often the most unwieldy of bureaucracies, are increasingly conscious of criticisms of patient indifference. Design responses, such as Ernst Giselbrecht's Ear, Nose and Throat Unit (2001) in Graz and Rafael Moneo's Maternity Hospital (2003) in Madrid, favor restoring patient confidence by strengthening the perception of institutional confidence, drawing on the clarity of the modernist tradition. Others make convincing arguments for playful, narrative environments. David Rockwell's lobby for Montefiore Children's Hospital (2001), in the Bronx, offers useful distractions that relax patients and speed their recoveries. Tailored to different needs and specific users, specialty clinics often elicit design responses more overtly idiosyncratic, as seen in projects ranging from Frank Gehry's Yale Psychiatric Institute (1990) in New Haven to Kapstein Roodnat's Pediatrics 2000 (2000) in upper Manhattan.

The growing acceptance of cosmetic surgery, spa treatments, and workouts as legitimate wellness therapies lends yet another dimension to the health care paradigm. Spaces like Architecture Research Office's spa for Qiora (2000) in Manhattan and Michael Young's clinic for Dr. James Cosmetic Surgery (2005) in Taipei blur the line between necessity treatments and discretionary luxuries with a design language that conveys both a hygienic purity and material generosity. That the confluence of design ideas and social currents is not solely a prerogative of wealth, is seen in muf Architecture's Sure Start clinic (2002) for immigrant families in England and Joep van Lieshout's Portable Health Clinic (2001) for a group of Dutch abortion-rights activists—Women on Waves—who have installed it on a ship that travels countries where abortion is prohibited.

Conclusion

It is very likely that a century from now that the genres that provided the organizational principle for this discussion will be quite different. The loft is susceptible to change not only because it depends on a finite resource but also because the sources of its identity—the studio, the gallery, the museum, the spaces of culture—are themselves no longer tethered to a formal canon of the empty box. Hotels, under the ever-heightening conditions of globalization, show signs of morphing into houses, campgrounds, and galleries. Clearly, spaces designed to heal are already superceding those designed to quarantine; and as people live longer, these spaces will take on different features to accommodate what it means to be human when a lifetime spans four or more generations.

Footnotes

1. Sanders, Joel. (Winter/Spring 2002) "Curtain Wars," *Harvard Design Magazine*, p. 14.
23. Frampton, Kenneth. (Winter Spring 2001) "Community Builder," *Design Book Review* 44/45, p. 84.
3. Cleugh, James (1966). *The Divine Aretino*. New York: Stein and Day Publishers, pp. 200-201. (Original work published in 1965.)
4. Gutierrez, Laurent and Portefaix, Valerie, "Homes for China," *Design Issues*, Volume 19, Number 3, Summer 03, p. 27.
5. Spang, Rebecca (2000), *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, p. 42.