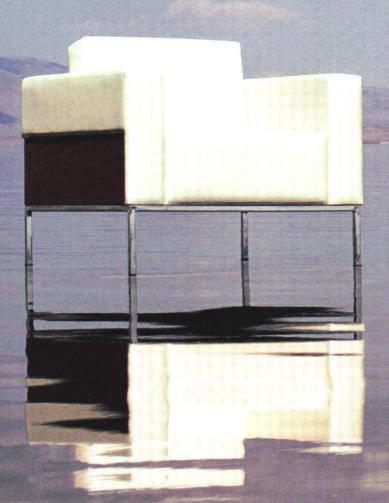
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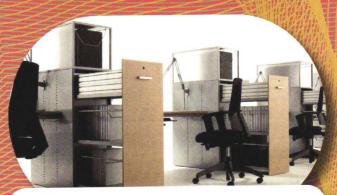
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### 16 editor's note

### 20 introduction

What is the Future of Design?

### 22 resources

The Top 10 Commercial Interiors Products of the Past 50 Years: *By Carl Magnusson* 

### 28 perspectives

Ten Iconic Design Practitioners Reflect on How They Have Seen the Industry Change and Evolve Over the Last Five Decades

### 43 essays from the past:

- 44 The Contract Design Dilemma (May 1962)
- 48 Space Planning Symposium (July 1963)
- 52 Changes in Workplaces Reflect Changes in Task Structure (June 1970)
- 56 Women Need Feminine Desks (June 1970)
- 60 Name "Interior Designer" is a Misnomer Because of Broader Duties (August 1970)
- 62 Research Reveals Proper Height, Width, Depth of Furniture, From Office Chairs to Library Tables (*September 1970*)
- 66 Astounding Technology Portends Drastic Office Changes in the '80s (January 1980)
- 68 Is the Office Really Necessary? (January 1989)
- 72 If You Cut Your Fee, Do You Bleed? (June 1990)

### 75 design: retrospective

A Romp Through History, Contract style

### 102 essays on the future:

- 102 More Happiness, Less Stuff: By Ray C. Anderson
- 104 The Social Aspect of Social Responsibility: By John Cary
- 106 Leading in the Global Market: By Ross Donaldson
- 108 Technology Trends: By Cathryn Barrett
- 112 Inadmissible Evidence: By Michael Berens

### 124 practice

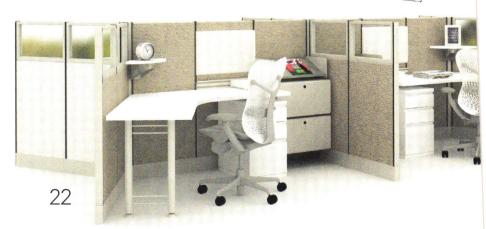
Reading the Tea Leaves: By Jan Lakin

### 128 designers rate:

Eight designers pick their favorite three commercial interiors products of the last 50 years

136 ad index





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56



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contents: online

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### online features:

materials: 10 Materials that will Change the Future of Commercial Interior Design

trends: Future Trends in Commercial Furniture

outlook: The Changing Face of Design Journalism

designing for health: Patient and Staff Safety in Behavioral Health Facilities

### corrections:

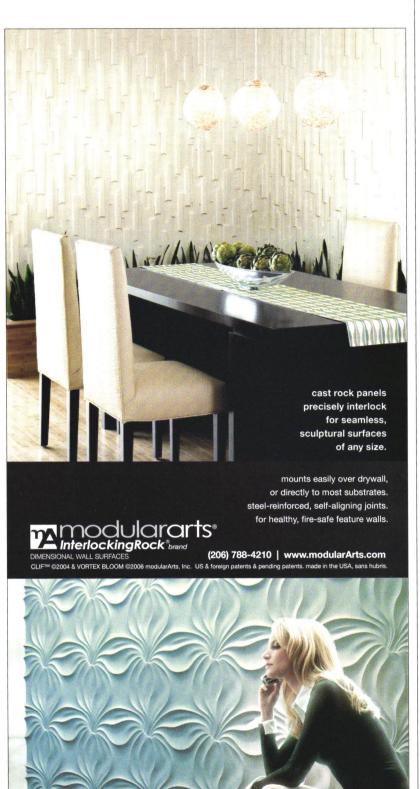
In the cover story on Graft: 2010
Designers of the Year (January/
February, p. 42), the photo was
mislabeled. Shown here (*left to right*) are the members of Graft:
Wolfram Putz, Lars Krückeberg,
Thomas Willemeit, Alejandra Lillo,
and Gregor Hoheisel.

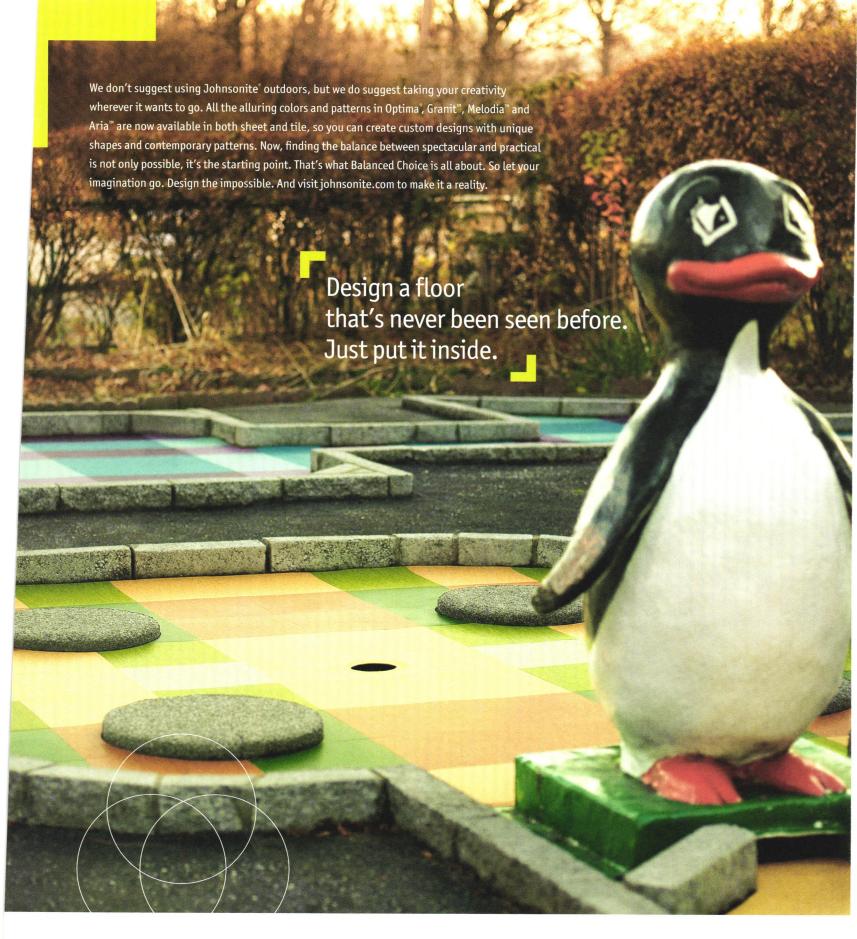




Contract featured the wrong product image for Wilkhahn's ON chair in the focus article "Hips Don't Lie" (November/December p. 20) and Designers Rate: Ergonomic Seating (January/February p. 108). Shown here is a photo of the correct product.

In the January/February Industry section (p. 20), the Burj Khalifa tower was listed as standing close to a mile in height, but rather, the building stands close to a half-mile in height at 828 m.







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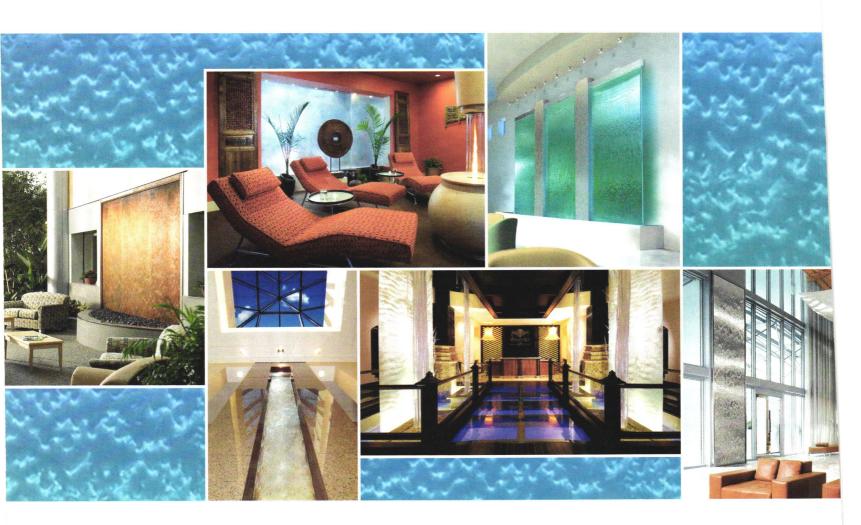


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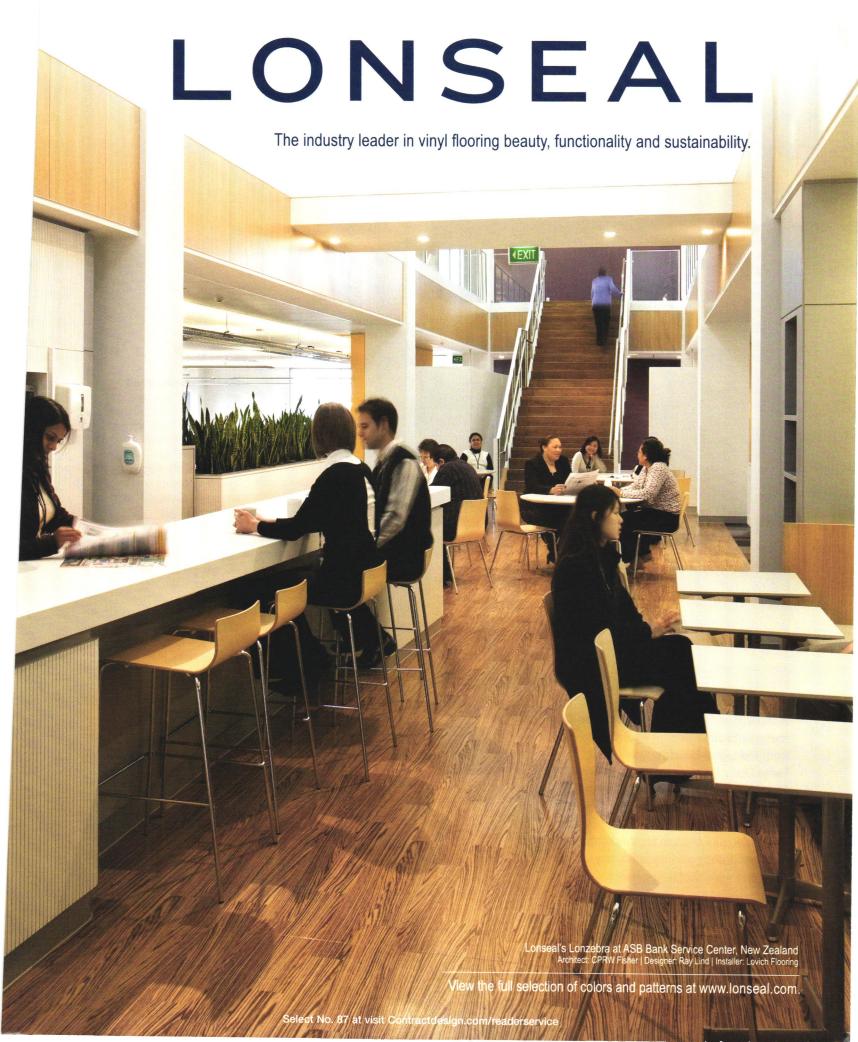
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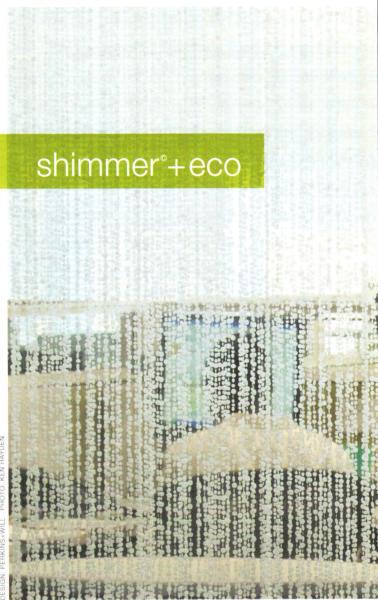
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# the history (and future) of us

What is an anniversary?

Certainly it is an opportunity to celebrate the past, as we have done in spades in this commemorative issue marking *Contract's* 50 years in publication. Here, we have approached the telling of our history with the acknowledgement that the story of the last five decades of the magazine really is not about us, as much as it is about the history of commercial interiors and the firms, practitioners, and related industries that designed and built post-war corporate and institutional America.

The story that has unfolded in our pages from our first issue in November 1960 until the present (which a thorough examination of our archives reveals we have chronicled remarkably well) is one of triumph, challenge, and tremendous change, as the reminisces of our coterie of industry icons—all highly respected designers who were there at "the beginning" and practiced successfully for decades (some of them continue to practice)—most definitely confirms (see Perspectives, p. 28). The early influence of the design community on the companies and organizations that helped propel the United States to superpower status in the second half the 20th century is evident throughout our archives. But present circumstances indicate that the role and status of the designer definitely has changed—even diminished—over time.

A small, congenial, and civil industry has been transformed by passing decades into a highly competitive business that has forced the reduction of fees, unfortunately, often with the profession's own complicity. The direct access to top management at the client organization that the A&D community used to enjoy has been eroded as layers of consultants have wedged themselves between designers and the executive suite. Economics has forced the acceleration of schedules and the reduction of budgets and fees, often at the expense of strategizing and conceptualizing, the designer's most valuable skills. And the growth of mega-corporations and the rapid advance of technology have resulted in a dramatic increase in project complexity that muddies the chain of command and responsibility.

But these challenging forces have created opportunities too, and in the last 50 years the A&D community has shown remarkable resilience in its ability to reinvent itself, taking a lead on such issues as universal design, ergonomics, sustainability, and social responsibility. It has grown more sophisticated in its use of products and materials. It has conquered geographic boundaries, grown incredibly tech savvy, and shown the ability to separate fads from trends from sea changes, then understood how to apply them all to meaningful work.

An anniversary also is a time to look to the future, and, present economic circumstances notwithstanding, ours looks bright and ripe for designers to assume a new leadership role as more organizations hopefully begin to understand that business solutions based on collaborative, strategic, innovative, long-range thinking—design thinking—trump short-term, profit-grabbing, precedented, bottom-line decisions. With everybody taking the opportunity to reconsider the way they do business, now is the time for designers to reclaim their role as valuable consultants to business and industry. For the magazine, the opportunity to encourage and chronicle these developments will be realized across multiple platforms (print, online, face to face) that reflect the new ways our multi-generational audience consumes and processes information.

In retrospect, the history of commercial design is really the history of modern American business and the social, political, cultural, and economic forces that have driven our ingenuity and prosperity and will continue to do so.

Contract is at once proud and humbled be a part of it.

enuja T. Busch

Jennifer Thiele Busch

Editor in Chief

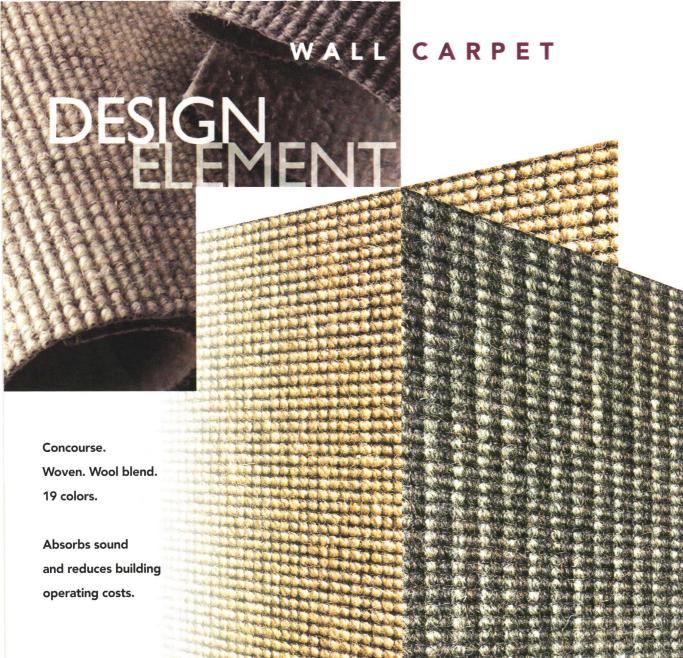


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## what is the future of design?

In the "new reality," a driver of positive change, in business and society

By Jennifer Thiele Busch

t this fateful juncture in our social and economic history, when everything from personal values to business processes is up for reevaluation, there is renewed talk of the potential for design thinking to chart a more enlightened future for corporate America and beyond. As defined by Tim Brown, president and CEO of design consultancy IDEO and a leading proponent of the concept, design thinking (which is not a new idea) is "a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity."

Far from being a fluffy creative approach to business as some have challenged, design thinking, at least by Brown's definition, specifically marries the concepts of creativity and innovation with the practical notions of technological feasibility, customer value, and market opportunity. This brings to mind noted environmentalist Paul Hawken's 1994 book, *The Ecology of Commerce*, in which he emphasizes the point that environmental sustainability and profitability are not mutually exclusive concepts. Neither should strategic, innovative, long-range thinking and profitability be mutually exclusive ideas, and to successful designers, they are not.

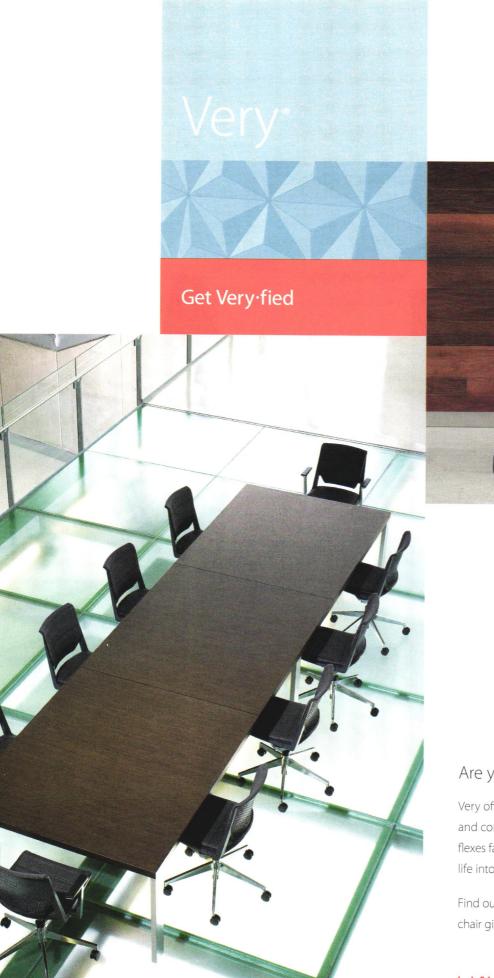
From the Wikipedia definition, design thinking involves a seven-step process of defining, researching, ideating, prototyping, choosing, implementing, and gathering feedback around any given challenge or opportunity. And recently, a prestigious group of design thinkers came together at the World Economic Forum's Summit on the Global Agenda in Dubai (November 2009) to further establish that solutions to complex global problems derived from design thinking should be transparent, inspiring, transformational, participatory,

contextual, and sustainable<sup>1</sup>—all qualities that commercial interior designers and architects routinely embrace in their work.

Clearly the business world has something valuable to learn from designers, and there are encouraging signs that design thinking is gaining momentum in business. Highly regarded programs of study include Stanford's d.school, which uses design thinking to drive multidisciplinary innovation, and California College of the Arts' MBA in Design Strategy, which unites the studies of design, finance, strategy, entrepreneurship, meaning, and sustainability, not to mention a growing list of similar educational opportunities around the world. The design community, then, is already driving positive changes in the business community, beyond the ability to create beautiful and functional space. When the intersection of business thinking and design thinking is complete, acceptance may usher in a new era of value-thus new revenue streams-for the design consultant.

Whether or not that comes to pass, there are many other important opportunities for designers to claim a leadership position in the eyes of business and society at large, not least of which are in the areas of sustainability and social responsibility. These and other forces that we believe will shape the profession for years—even decades—to come are touched upon with expert commentary in our Essays on the Future, a bit further on in this issue, where our thoughts turn from reflections on the past to observations on the future, as any significant anniversary demands.

<sup>1</sup> From Tim Brown's blog http://designthinking.ideo.com/, November 29, 2009 entry





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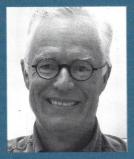
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the top 10 commercial interiors products of the past 50 years



The North American landscape of contract interiors of the past 50 years continues to unfold the concept of the Schnelle brothers' "Burolandschaft," or open office plan. Layouts, initially driven by physical communication patterns, have given way in the last two decades to other

formative influences. Digital communication, social awareness, ergonomics, and sustainability have become the engines of change. Future predictions—invariably inaccurate—had the home office expanding significantly, but with its inherent dysfunction, it lacked the human interaction and spontaneity to take a strong hold.

Technology, such as wireless data and just-emerging wireless power transmission, will become the major catalysts of change. Environmental issues and therefore reusable systems now permeate our thinking and execution of design. The job of contract furnishings is to adapt and facilitate these workplace changes in the goal of higher productivity and work contentment.

Other smaller, yet important, scale change items include the Post-it and PDA, the latter allowing continuity of work communication to become seamless between workstations, into remote spaces, and in transit; its implications are yet to evolve fully. The laptop and PDA also have allowed hoteling to take place.

I have endeavored to identify 10 items that have brought about and allowed for change. They are design winners irrespective of any awards they may have received, as they have had a permanent impact on the profile of interior architecture.

Swedish-born Carl Magnusson has dedicated his career to the profession of design, having worked with the office of Ray & Charles Eames in Venice, Calif., and with Knoll for 29 years as director of design in Europe and North America. With his New York-based firm CGM Design, he currently serves the automotive and furniture industries with design strategy and product design.



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### AO II Office System

Herman Miller, designed by Bob Propst & George Nelson, 1965

Inspired by Nelsons' Action Office I, AO II democratized the concept of open plan and allowed easily reconfigurable layouts. Its ubiquity brought good design to the masses but did not cause a loss of personality of product. It became the benchmark for competitors (such as Steelcase 9000) to follow.



### **Tambient Light**

designed by Sylvan Shemitz, 1965

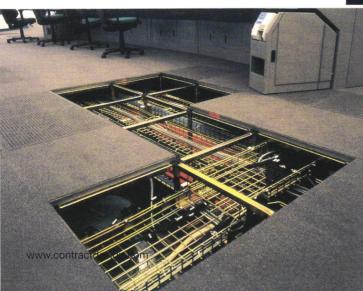
Tambient introduced task/ambient lighting affixed to systems furniture just above eye height while sitting. First installed on the Stephens system by Knoll, the unique louver/bat-wing design directed light to the worksurface and upwards to the ceiling, thus providing non-glare and balanced luminance to the workspace.



### Raised Floor

Tate/Kingspan, circa 1970s

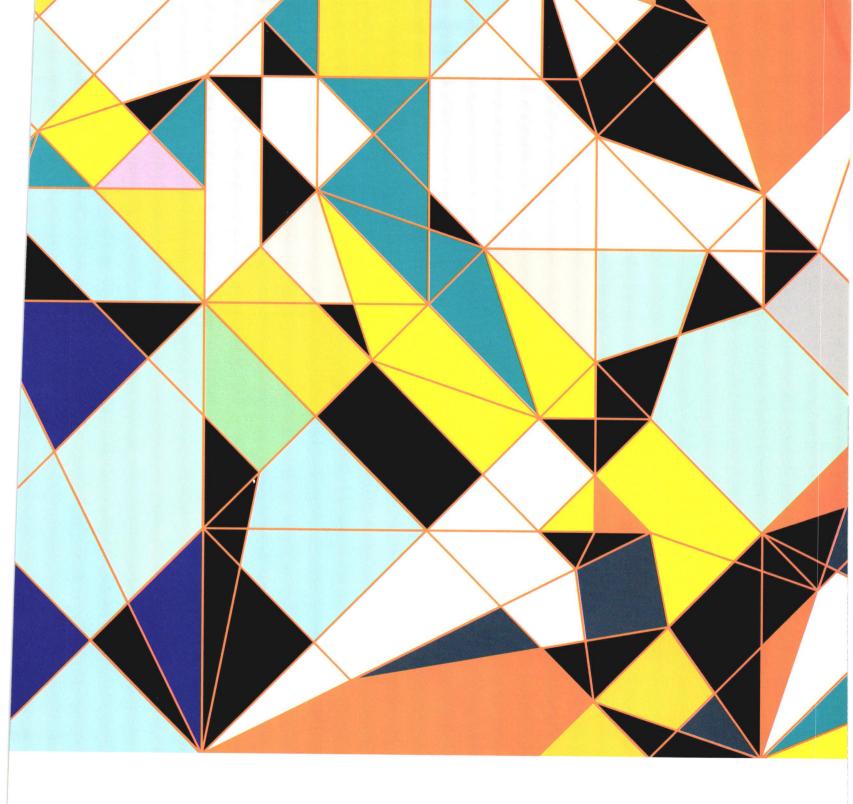
Raised flooring answered the requirement for fast wire access, copious wiring capacity, and space for HVAC. It obviated the need for finished floors as it created its own and could be reused elsewhere. In the 1980s, a study for GSA concluded that there were significant, long-term benefits resulting in a strong increase of usage. Only in the late 1990s did the incorporation of air handling become common, as buildings endeavored to acquire LEED qualification.



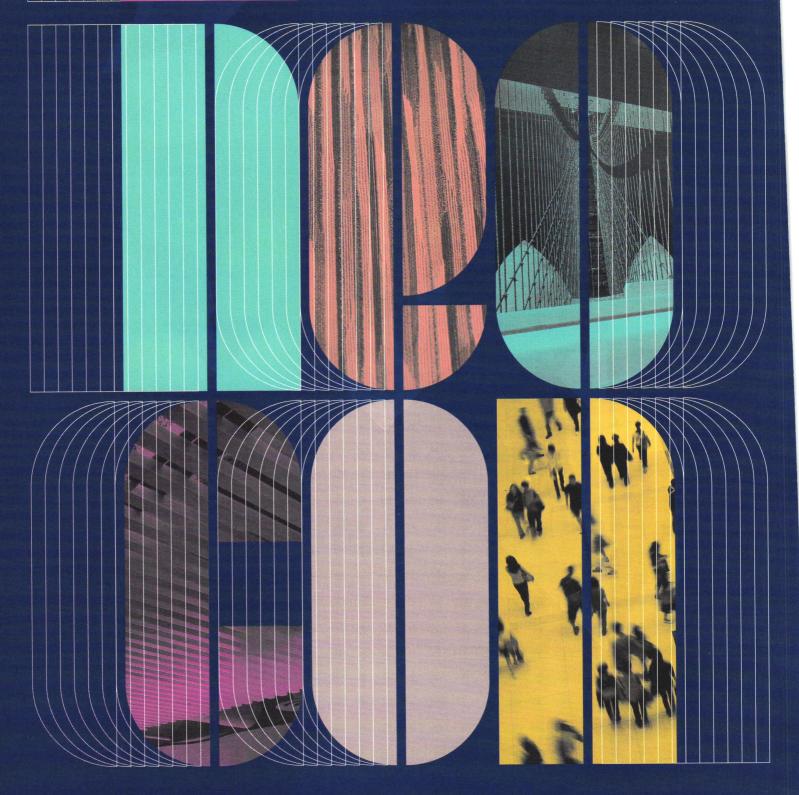


### resources Aeron Chair Herman Miller, designed by Don Chadwick & Bill Stumpf, 1994 The innovative use of Pellicle mesh replaced the traditional upholstery of covered foam for comfort and ergonomic correctness. It allows the body to breath. Offered in three Sapper Chair different sizes with many adjustments, Aeron became the egalitarian chair Knoll, designed by Richard Sapper, 1985 in the modern office. It redefined the expectations of general seating. By utilizing auto industry seat construction from Renault, the result was a very thin upholstery package that took little space yet gave proper support. This allowed executive seating to move away from the heavy, upholstered look to one of elegance and space-savings. Sapper exhibited the same breakthrough thinking on this product as he did on the Tizio lamp for Artemide. Tek-Wall Maharam, 1984 Tek-Wall was the first durable, woven, high-performance wallcovering for high-traffic applications. With the look and pliability of a woven textile, it was high-abrasion-resistant, lightfast, and washable, making it suitable for upholstered walls and systems panels. Originally constructed of polyolefin fibers, Tek-Wall now contains innovative synthetic materials that have been added to elevate the level to a new language of surface finishes Sony XEL-1, the world's first **OLED TV** immediate and near: Convia Herman Miller, 2006 This modular, programmable, electrical and data infrastructure delivers plug-and-play power to anywhere within a space, without requiring the hardwiring of devices or switches. They are imbedded into Wiremold's flexible electrical wiring systems to facilitate control platforms that ultimately can reduce real estate and building operating costs while improving

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# LOOKING BACK Fibry Years

Contract asked 10 iconic

design practitioners to reflect
on how they have seen the
industry change and evolve

over the last five decades

### contributor bios:

### Josephine Carmen, IIDA, CID

Prior to joining the Los Angeles office of Perkins+Will in her current position as discipline leader for interiors, Jo Carmen was a founding partner in 1988 of CNI Design, which was acquired by Perkins+Will in 2006. Carmen previously worked for Perkins+Will in the 1960s when she joined its then interior division ISD Inc. in New York. The intervening years included extensive travel and work in Paris, London, San Francisco, and Seattle with such recognized firms as John Carl Warneke and Associates, Carles Kratka Associates, and Walker Associates. Carmen was selected as one of 32 Women of Design by Beverly Russell for the Rizzoli-published book of that name.

### Stanley Felderman

A partner of Felderman Keatinge + Associates in Los Angeles, Stanley Felderman is the pioneer of the "total design concept" and has integrated planning, architecture, interior design, and product design successfully on a host of award-winning projects. Today, he and Felderman Keatinge + Associates, are applying these ideas on a global basis.

### Neil Frankel, FAIA, FIIDA

Prior to accepting the Fitz-Hugh Scott Endowed Chair for Design Excellence at the University of Wisconsin Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Neil Frankel was responsible for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Chicago architectural interior practice. In addition to his academic commitment, Frankel runs an independent studio, Frankel + Coleman. He is one of five Fellows of both AIA and IIDA and a Senior Fellow of the Design Futures Council. In 2005, Frankel was the sole recipient of the (AIAS) Education Honor Award.

### Milo Kleinberg

Founder of MKDA, headquartered in New York with a second office in Stamford, Conn., Milo Kleinberg immigrated to America from Austria in 1939 and became a draftsman for an architect. In 1959, he decided to strike out on his own, founding MKDA, where he made a name for himself designing showrooms in New York. Since then, MKDA has applied its intimate knowledge of the real estate market to design offices on behalf of many of New York's premier commercial building owners, as well as corporate space users in a variety or sectors.

### Robert Kleinschmidt

Robert Kleinschmidt is founding design principal of Robert D. Kleinschmidt in Chicago, where he is involved in each commission undertaken by the firm. Prior to forming his own firm, he was design principal for Powell/Kleinschmidt, also in Chicago. During his 45 years as an accomplished interior architect, he has gained an intimate knowledge of materials, finishes, furniture and furniture systems, carpeting, fabrics, and lighting. His unique ability to bridge functional systems with the art of design has been an extremely important and much renowned contribution to his work. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Illinois, a Master in Architecture from Columbia University, and is on the membership committee of the Economic Club of Chicago.

### Neville Lewis, FIIDA, IDSA

Neville Lewis was born in Sheffield, England, and came to the United States in 1941. He earned a BFA from Syracuse University and a Certificate of Industrial Design from Pratt Institute. Lewis spent his early career at Raymond Loewy, JFN Associates, and Morganelli Heumann. In 1976, he founded Neville Lewis Associates, a highly respected office interior design and space planning firm with offices in New York, Dallas, Denver, and Los Angeles. In 1996 Lewis formed consulting and special projects design firm Iu & Lewis with Carolyn Iu. Lewis is a fellow of IIDA and member of the Industrial Design Society of America. He now teaches design at the School of Visual Arts in New York.

### Ralph Mancini

Ralph Mancini has been involved in the corporate interior design industry for more than 50 years. As Chairman Emeritus of Mancini•Duffy, he focuses on

his clients' strategic business goals. During the course of his career, he has lectured at numerous events in the real estate and design fields. In June 2006, the firm celebrated its 25 – 50 – 85 anniversary (Ralph Mancini Associates, founded 1981; Duffy, Inc., founded 1956, and Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, founded 1920).

### Andre Staffelbach, FIIDA, ASID

Andre Staffelbach was born in Chur, Switzerland, and immigrated to the United States in 1962 following the completion of his apprenticeship in interior design in Luzern and Zurich. He is the founder and creative principal of STAFFELBACH, a specialized group of interior architects and designers with corporate offices in Dallas. Staffelbach was inducted into the International Interior Design Hall of Fame in 1988. He is also the recipient of ASID's highest national professional honor, the Designer of Distinction designation.

### Lou Switzer

Lou Switzer is founder, chairman, and chief executive officer of The Switzer Group, one of the nation's most progressive interior architectural design consulting firms, now celebrating its 35th anniversary. Today, The Switzer Group in New York is the nation's largest minority-owned interior architectural design firm and is currently among the top 100 American design firms.

### Margot Grant Walsh

After graduating from the University of Oregon in 1960, Margo Grant Walsh joined Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in San Francisco, where she spent 13 years, rising to associate director of interior design. In 1973, she joined Gensler as interior design director in Houston; six years later she established the Gensler New York office. Soon, client demand for her personal attention and expertise led her to open the firm's Boston, Washington, D.C., and London offices. She became founder and managing principal of the Eastern Region Division, a member of Gensler's Board of Directors and Management Committee, and rose to the position of vice chairman 1995.

### Jo Carmen

As I sit at a workstation today in the Los Angeles office of Perkins+Will and think back to my early days in the ISD Inc. office in Manhattan (then the interior division of Perkins+Will), I am struck by both the similarities and differences in the working environment. Stacks of drawing sets, documents, manuals, sketches, renderings, and models still proliferate, but with the major difference of the computer now

occupying center stage and iPod buds occupying most ears. Architectural practitioners still are identified by titles such as principal in charge, project architect, and job captain, but a great majority of the work is designed and documented using BIM software that is transforming the architect's task, the coordination of the consultant's work, the contractor's building and procurement process, and the client's maintenance of the building and systems. This is an on-going and fundamental change in the process of architecture.

The practice of interior design is similarly impacted, but it is the growth over the last half century in the overall profession that is startling. The reasons for this are many. In 1963 there were few offices employing architects or designers to provide interior design on a major scale. Prior to the 1950s, architectural masters including Wright, Le Corbusier, and Aalto designed the entire environment from exterior enclosure to all aspects of the interior. Emulating this practice, architectural offices such as SOM, Marcel Breuer, Roche Dinkerloo and Edward Larabee Barnes (for whom ISD worked as interior consultants) recognized interior space to be as important as the exterior. Additionally, a few firms such as ISD, Designs for Business, Maria Bergson Associates, Space Design Group, and the Knoll Planning Unit provided interior design services for both architects and clients directly. The need for and value offered by these more specialized interior firms started to be recognized throughout the country and the world for all types of projects, and the pace was also accelerated by the growth of anonymous office buildings in which a varied group of tenants leased space.

Stanley Felderman

The late 1960s and '70s were a period of optimism. It was the advent of new technologies. I worked on the development of the first ATM and used fiber optics and holographic imagery on Faberge's Corporate Headquarters project.

The interior design community was much smaller, and we all knew each other. We worked together to define what was interior

design. We learned about what was taking place in the industry through magazine and newspaper coverage.

Computers were large main frames. There were fewer restrictions—no ADA, no Title 24, no LEED certification. We didn't know about off-gassing or fluorocarbons—hair spray was the rage.

We drew on mylar and had to go back and make changes on each drawing by hand, slowing down the creative process. It was very labor

Education also has played a part in the change. More progressive schools aim to emphasize the allegiance to architectural thinking in the interior architecture and environmental design degrees offered. This helped to separate their interior design programs from those that were part of home economics departments, which taught style and decoration as a complement to homemaking classes. An additional reason for the infusion and growth of talent in interior design was suggested to me by the designer Joe D'Urso many years ago. He stated that the emphasis at the time on math skills in the architectural departments had discouraged design talent that lacked this skill, but that these designers found a receptive environment in the interior design programs, where the math emphasis was not as great.

Another major change has occurred through the growth in the manufacturing of furniture, furnishings, and accessories, for the commercial and domestic markets. There were only about 20 catalogs of commercial furniture on our library shelves, and we created a great deal of custom furniture and fabrics to meet the needs of our projects. Over the last 20 years, new yarns and production methods have transformed the fabric offerings including sustainable and maintenance requirements. Well-designed accessories had to be searched and shopped for (no Internet for easy reference).

Outside the profession, there was not much awareness of good design and how it could positively affect daily life, and starchitects were not household names. Print media and television have exposed and educated the general public, and shops such as Design Within Reach, Conran's, and Crate & Barrel have provided accessible sources for items once reserved for elite clients.

Today we cannot discuss change in the design world without including sustainability. An awareness of the environment and the dangers to the planet by the irresponsible use of natural resources was not on our radar in the 1960s. As we enter a new decade, no designer or manufacturer who wants to work in this increasingly competitive world can afford not to be responding to this challenge. Maybe this aspect of the change in the profession of interior design is the one to be most applauded and celebrated.

intensive, yet we got it done and were extremely creative. There was a smaller arena of recognized talent. We worked with Ray Anderson who was developing the first green initiative.

Today we have global connectivity to the pulse of the world of design. Through blogs, design Web sites, TV coverage, programs and personal videos we know what is going on. Designers are more socially conscious and environmentally responsible.

Now change happens more rapidly. It is time for designers and the future of design to broaden their scope of work to include interior architecture, industrial design, branding, project management, and environmental responsibility. We are at a pivotal point in our profession. Recessions, as they did in the 1970s, force us to rethink our business, our professional and our creative model. Any design firm today must focus on what are the new drivers for design, address those needs, and broaden its business model.



### perspectives: industry icons



Margo Grant Walsh

I began in the profession in 1960, practiced for almost five decades, and worked on very large projects. (I would say 300,000 sq. ft. would be my average, and three projects I worked on were more than 1.5 million sq. ft.). During the time I practiced, the industry changed considerably.

"Our profession" finally was recognized as legitimate and needed, and more women entered the drafting room. In 1960, I was only

the second woman in SOM San Francisco; the other woman was a plumbing draftsperson.

I was at SOM when they were a beta site for the first Xerox machine. In addition to being a designer and Girl Friday, I was the interiors department head's personal assistant/secretary, typing documents with carbon paper for tissue copies. Technology—phones, blackberries, etc.—has had an amazing impact on design and drafting. Communication became immediate and ubiquitous, which was good and bad. You were constantly involved with the clients, projects, staff, meetings—whatever was going on and wherever it was taking place.

Globalization meant that clients were no longer just American clients; there were practically no borders. While at SOM in the 1960s, I was working in Australia on mega projects, and I thought that was going to epitomize my "international" experience. By the late 1980s my clients were sending me to Europe and Asia. Clients became larger and more widespread, and designers followed them to help implement their standards to all parts of the globe.

The old culture in many of the professional firms and financial firms we served broke down quickly as they merged, acquired, and expanded. If you had provided good service you went with them and had to adapt to a change of leadership. But if a client was acquired, you could also be out of a job/project almost overnight.

The old days of presenting to partners and senior executives disappeared, and designers presented to more real estate brokers and facilities people, many of whom would bring on their own team. At times the designer didn't really know who was in charge.

The rise of project management firms resulted in groups with different loyalties, and these project managers often became a barrier to a design team in establishing a true rapport with the end user. If they valued your role as a member of the team and used you properly for your expertise and experience, that was a good result. If, on the other hand, they decided to rule your results and put you through too many hoops you could lose the vitality of a project (and money as well). Designers spent too much time justifying our work and time so the project managers could justify their fees and services. But, they could also be valuable allies, and convince a client that you had earned those extra services you were requesting

The contractors—those who built your two-dimensional ideas—became larger, and if you didn't have good contractors and subs, they could compromise a job. The days of working out a problem simply and quickly disappeared, replaced by the "change order" process, which also compromised budgets, time, and relationships.

When I started in 1960, there were three acceptable product lines—Knoll, Herman Miller, and GF—and we were still using 36-in.-wide axminster carpets and broadloom. The explosion of products and vendors was a joy. I thought the best service I could provide the client was to present an alternative to every favored product, and let the competition begin with mock-ups, sealed bids, etc. It was not always the low bid that won. It was usually a combination of the function, image, and comfort, then cost, and that was always a client decision. Now an entire new ethic has come on board with the greening of products and projects.

And, sadly, some of the older, iconic design firms and leaders evaporated in the 1980s, yielding to a new breed of competitors.



### Robert D. Kleinschmidt

At the beginning of my career in 1964 the new buildings were demanding of the development of a new language of new furniture. There was not an abundance of standard furniture product in the market place. Therefore, we were forced to design specific pieces to fulfill functional requirements of the new office: i.e. square bar steel desks, task chairs, side chairs, and new lateral files.

I believe the three most important changes that occurred in the work place during that decade are:

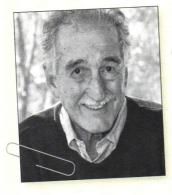
First, the advent of the standard 30-in. by 60-in. modular desk because the offices in the new buildings were smaller.

Second, the advent of the computer in the workplace. The new technology allowed for more flexibility and efficient planning that contributed to the reduction of square footage requirements and subsequent reduction of staff. Further development in the 1970s occurred with the introduction of work station systems.

Third, the offices of interior designers and architects, with the addition of the computer, radically changed the way people worked. Manual tasks including structures, drafting, planning, specifications, and contract documents were replaced by this new technology. Manual tasks became streamlined.

Today, we continue to refine and hone these tools. However, my partner Donald Powell and I are firm believers that the sketching process and detailing by hand prior to applying these skills to the computer is essential.

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### Neville Lewis

I began my career in the early 1950s after serving in the U.S. army during the Korean War. The fields of interior and industrial design were focused on the wartime requirements of World War II. Commercial interior design was in its infancy and began to emerge in a developing peacetime economy with the growing needs of industry, corporations, and real estate developers. Design at that time was driven by need and in response to technology.

The demands of the times created a need for designers, who were talented and eager to fill the vacuum created by the war time years. During this period there was a recognition that employees required better environments in order to accommodate to the new office and communications technologies. Thus, emerged a new era of design. Keep in mind, also, that the computer as it relates to our industry was in its earliest stages at that time.

Looking back on those early days I remember that relationships were more collegial. There was an excitement that was constant and shared, and there was a climate of civility. (It is interesting that the late Bill Stumpf wrote about the lack of civility in our present generation in his book *The Day The Ice Palace Melted*.)

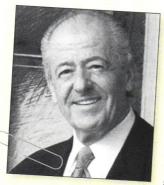
In the earlier days corporate executives concerned with international and national growth were involved with us, the designers,

at the highest level and as a result we were dealing with the decision makers at the top and conceptually, the design requirements were given first priority. As corporations grew and requirements became more complex, many layers of management were added (such as facilities management, etc.) so that our contacts with the top level of management were watered down, which affected design.

The advent of the computer in our industry was a huge step forward. My firm was one of the first to invest into total computer technology in order to serve our technology driven clients. It not only added many advantages to the design process but also tied us into our clients' data bases, thereby eliminating many redundancies.

We saw the beginnings of office landscape, the standards and communications technology that were emerging in brokerage and banking, and learned how these affected the user. This became the reason for change and adaptability and brought about new developments in planning and design. Today, the newer emphasis on green design, adaptive reuse, and environmental concerns are changing the way we plan and design environments and products.

All the developments in technology and the human condition have given today's designer many more tools than we had in the beginning. The computer has given us speed, accuracy, options for design studies, and opportunities to be even more creative. Now, as an educator, I find that our drawing and conceptual skills need to be strengthened; we must not lose our passion for design and the understanding of user needs. The computer is a tool. It is our brains that still create (at least for now!).



## Andre Stappelbach

The industry has changed phenomenally in the nearly 45 years that I have been privileged to be a part of it.

I think that the most significant change is likely the computer and its impact on design and architecture. Many of today's design achievements could never have happened without the computer. There have also been an amazing number of changes in how we

conduct our business and do our work—from parallel bars and ink, pens and pencils, to pin bar and fax machine...then to computers and software and the continuous upgrades within them. The concepts of IT and data were not even close to being considered in the ways that we use them now.

With these technological changes over the years we have also created a greater need for more enhanced levels of communication from architects to clients. In years past we developed the design and then illustrated it. Now, with enhanced levels of 3-D visualization and animation, we explain our design concepts to our clients to secure their approval prior to the actual design being developed. This has transformed the design process. It does not minimize or reduce the need for technical accuracy and precision, it only changes the sequence in which it occurs. I just hope that we, as design professionals, never allow the size of the computer screen to dictate the potential or result of a project.

In the commercial section of the profession, where I have spent a lot of my time, I have watched as the expectations of knowledge and responsibility have increased while the allotted time-frame to complete

a project—and the fees expected to execute said project—have been reduced. There is a bit of fear that our professional services are becoming commoditized. Where it was once revered more as an art form—where patrons were those who solicited the services of a designer—there seems to be a push to take away that understanding. I hope that spaces will always be encouraged to speak for those who inhabit them.

The industry itself has become much more serious. We are a professional field that is now controlled much more by codes and state and governmental regulations and that is a good thing. I remember that the concern for the overall well-being of clients was not a thought. Even ADA wasn't within the parameter of our responsibility. Now we are gauged and held accountable and that provides a real sense of security for both the professional as well as the recipient of the work. It validates us. It separates the serious from the hobbyist.

Something I find very rewarding is that the industry has become much more focused on the sustainability of our planet. We have an obligation to look at our work as another way for our clients to make better choices and how they affect the environment. Designers and architects have been a big influence on how products are made and what they are made with. We can, with our expertise, provide solid, well-thought-out answers to our clients, who are not sure of the right way to make their space more of an environmentally-friendly one.

Overall, I believe that architecture and design is still one of the great professions to be a part of. As long as you have the passion, commitment, and discipline to enjoy the journey, you will find the rewards of it in the long run.



Milo Kleinberg

It is with great warmth that I congratulate *Contract* magazine on its 50th anniversary, and I am pleased that MKDA shares the same distinction in reaching this honorable milestone.

Founded in 1959 as Milo Kleinberg Design Associates, our firm quickly became the leading designer of showrooms in Manhattan's Fashion District, but as competition increased in

the late 1960s, we broadened our scope to incorporate more of the commercial landscape.

When I first went into business, the industry was less complicated. Growing a successful firm required talent, hard work, and dedication. The corporate interiors industry today is much larger and more sophisticated than it was in our early years. This increase in competition has created an environment in which corporate interiors firms are required to work harder to accomplish more within tighter time frames and budgets. Additionally, it requires that each of us within the industry consistently strives for a higher level of design.

There were less than 10 commercial real estate brokers specializing in the Fashion District in the early '60s. Assisting these brokers and building owners in leasing offices and showrooms soon became a hallmark of our firm. Over the years, we had to gain an understanding—as would other corporate interiors firms—of real estate and how to work closely with the brokerage and ownership communities in order to remain competitive.

During the economic downturn in the '70s, our work servicing the real estate industry increased, as we assisted commercial building owners in leasing space by designing prebuilt programs. As the cost to lease space rose over the years, our focus increasingly

was on optimizing space, cutting operational costs, and improving headcount capacity for clients. Fewer businesses were willing to lease additional space when real estate costs became their second largest expenditure. Because it factors into our clients' operational budgets more than ever before, our work has become much more important to the lease decision-making process.

I remember fondly the days when drafting was done by hand and important contracts and layouts, were hand delivered. Our industry was built on a high level of attention to detail and personalization before communications technology transformed the way we now conduct our business. These and other technological advancements have increased the need for specialists in an industry that used to consist generalists. Firms like ours now employ strategic workplace consultants that specialize in pre-design services as well as LEED-certified designers. These specialists give today's corporate space users a leading edge in the global market.

It is hard to believe, but in our early years smoking was permitted in office buildings, and 'clean air' was something to be found in the great outdoors. The low-VOC products and other sustainable materials available today allow designers to create beautiful interiors that contribute to a healthier employee and a cleaner earth, which means that our industry has farther reaching implications than ever before.

Despite the many changes over the past 50 years and our industry's increasing relevance as we move further into the 21st century, there remain traces of our early work in many of today's interior environments. The Lufthansa Airlines office we designed in the 1960s, for example, featured many of the same clean architectural lines and classic finishes as many of today's interior environments.

I look forward to seeing what other changes are in store for our industry this decade, and I have no doubt that *Contract* magazine will continue to enlighten us as the industry evolves.



### Neil Frankel

This is a story of leadership and seminal development. It is as much about the sociology of our time as it is about the tradition and legacy of a profound body of work. We do know for sure, interior design has changed. It has moved from the work of Davids to that of Goliaths. It has shifted from a practice of reflection to

that of speed. It has changed from an exploration of craft to being led by technology. And mostly, it has been fifty years of people, projects, practice, products, profession, and ph-ocus.

The journey has seen the shift in the client, from the articulate vision of the individual client leader to the voice of the committee of discrete specialists. The goal of the work shifted its focus from the pronounced message of image to the answerable impact of effectiveness. Today's design firm is no longer centered on connoisseurship of taste but rather, the social science of team accomplishment. While we still struggle to measure design's contribution, we are self conscious of its value.

It has been five decades of the engagement of legions of soldiers led by a galaxy of generals. While the '60s witnessed the introduction of architectural firms and standalone independent design practices offering interior design services, the mid-1970s signaled the adoption of comprehensive services. For

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perspectives: industry icons

me personally, I joined a small group of generals gathered for the beginning of the National AIA Interiors Committee and challenged the practice of Interiors as a profession. Around the table were Art Gensler, Norman DeHann, Mike Tatum, Peter Brandt, Brock Arms, Ken Johnson, Ros Brandt, and Ken Walker, among others. Mike Tatum followed up by creating a document that defined the basic scope of services for interior design. Seeing this document on paper was an amazing wake up call—there was a unanimous, "WOW, we should be getting paid more!"

But, most memorable about this piece of history was the openness, spirit of common interest, and the shared knowledge of these individuals/friends representing competing firms. It authenticated the collegiality of the community of designers and defined the potential of a proactive practice.

Has the practice grasped its potential over this half-century? Many observe that there are miles to go. Complacency that we do noble work has undermined the value equation of effort and reward. The half-century has not been kind to the value of interior design. The sociology of speed has looted the importance of rumination time, time required to aspire for significance. The devaluing of compensation in favor of competition denied the higher worth of the work.

Interior design suffered from the advent and dominance of space planning, a subject that has to do with accommodation not experience. We should object to the notion of the designer as "problem solver" in lieu of "problem identifier." Interior design owes it to itself to be centered in a unique body of knowledge and build alliance to abstract theory. When did a foosball table become a design concept?

Ahead of us lies the opportunity for the establishment of a new body of knowledge, a matchless integration of social research and environmental delight. We look forward to a rigorous and challenging translation of human needs in a context of successful human experience. That is where we are going—to take back the best of this past decade, cut down the obsessive turn-of-the-century tactical distractions that commoditize the work of the profession. This past half-century of design will be celebrated by revaluing what was the prediction of the small band of generals.



Lou Switzer

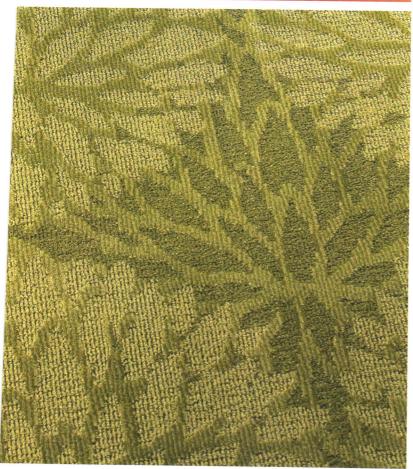
So much has changed since I started in the industry 42 years ago.

First of all, the basic way we provide our services has changed drastically. Technology has changed the field completely. We went from an age of doing everything manually—with T-squares, pen and ink, and don't forget the aprons-to technology-based methods. Today

we design on computers using programs like CAD, we transmit drawings via e-mail and ftp sites, etc., and we have client meetings via video conferencing and Web meetings. You no longer have





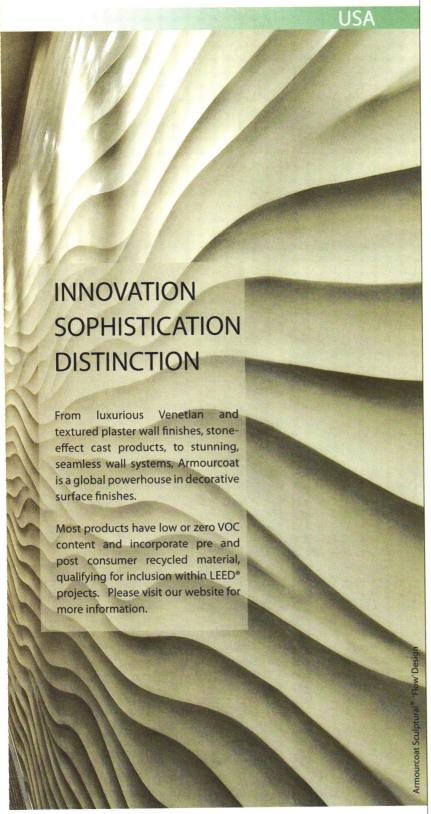


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perspectives: industry icons

to have an office in a specific city or location to work there, so our range has expanded. Information also moves much more quickly, decisions are made rapidly, and clients want deliverables in shorter time frames.

Another big change—and an important one—is the way in which the design team is selected. When it comes to the client's decision-making process, many other players have entered the picture. These include owner's reps, brokers, and even contractors. And while these groups may not be making the decision, they are certainly influencing it. This is the most significant change in the way our business is being done today. The client base is also very sophisticated nowadays. In the old days, you went in, you made a presentation, they liked you, and they hired you. Now it is a whole different story—it is a much more intense and competitive process.

Also, in the past few years, due to the economic crisis, fees have become competitive to the point where you can't cover costs. At some point the industry needs to wake up and see all the talent that we are giving away.

I can truly say that, during my time in this industry, the quality of the construction work has improved tenfold. There are more innovative products in the marketplace, which allow us to create successful, functional, and attractive working environments. That leads me to LEED. Sustainable design has had a tremendous impact on the way spaces are designed and built. The popularity of sustainable design has led to a bonanza of products in the marketplace. This is a fantastic development.

The workplace itself, the way people work, has changed, which inevitably drives the design. Younger generations are more collaborative and tech savvy. Working in groups or working remotely is much more common. In the old days people worked to achieve a "private office." It was a sign of success. Offices still exist, but they are less of a status symbol. Today people work in open, collaborative environments, and cost conscious clients are using these trends to their advantage. Benching, for example, is becoming more popular, provided that the ancillary spaces (to collaborate and work in groups) are substantial. Offices have a more open and airy feel to them. Gone are the days of high-partition maze-like designs. Hoteling also has become a norm for many clients. Flexibility of design is key. Universal standards and workstation footprints give clients the ability to project into the future without fear of additional costs.

The design profession itself has become more specific; people specialize now. In the old days, you had one person who was designer/decorator/project manager/draftsperson. Today, you have different people for different jobs (e.g. project managers, programmers, facilities managers, technical managers, resource managers, designers, technicians, etc.).

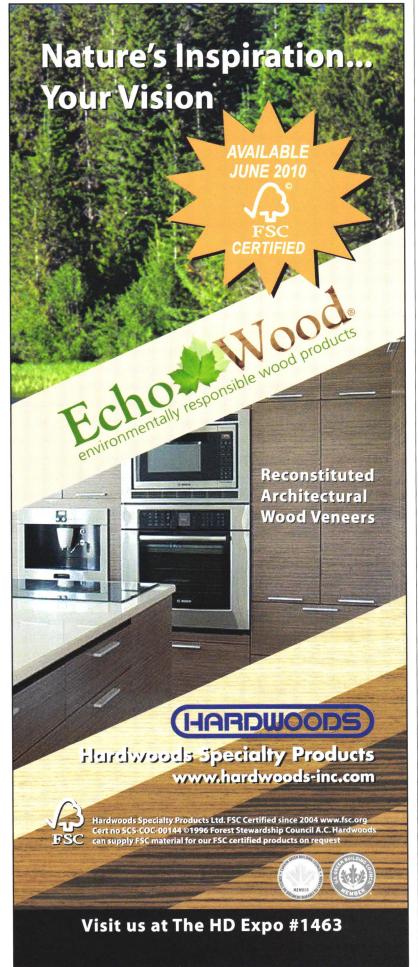
And lastly, when I came into this profession it was basically all white males—happily, now you see a lot of diversity in the industry. There are many more females and minorities as compared to when I started, 42 years ago.



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perspectives: industry icons



## Ralph Mancini

In the 50 years since I entered the profession, I've seen a great deal of change—some of it good, some of it not so much.

One change is the role of the design professional. When I started out, we played a stronger leadership role on projects. But over the years, others have stepped in to provide some of

the leadership that we had been providing. Our challenge now is to continue to collaborate with all team members and pull together for the benefit of the clients we share.

We've also seen some positive trends as we discover how to best support the evolving needs of our clients. As many have grown into global companies, we've had the opportunity to grow with them in ways that, I believe, have the potential for long-term stability for the practice. That has also enabled us to create partnerships and alliances with overseas design practices, which not only leads to more growth, but also insight and information about other cultures—an invaluable asset in our own increasingly diversified society. And technology, of course, has completely revolutionized the way we work.

As sustainability has moved from the tree-hugging fringe to become a key, often unifying, element in projects, the way we work has changed. All the issues and elements are related, and that takes a much more collaborative approach and a supportive, rather than adversarial, relationship among project team members. With increasingly tight budgets and the demand for speed, it's obvious that we can't just pass things over the transom from one discipline to another.

More informally, just as my clients have come to me for advice on getting the highest quality of design and construction, I rely on them as my business advisors. Those relationships have served us both very well over the years: a steady flow of work for us, trustworthy advice and problem-solving for them. That's something I keep urging staff, at all levels, to do, building and maintaining relationships with client representatives who are at a comparable stage in their careers.

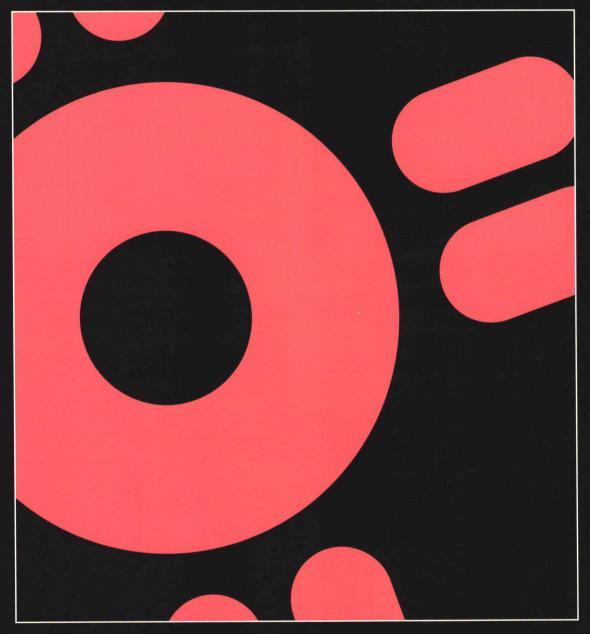
Flexibility and agility are more important than ever in a rapidly changing marketplace. We have to keep an eye out for what's happening and be proactive about adapting the firm's strategic plan, because change, of any kind, takes time. But there are two critical qualities for a successful practice that have never changed and, I hope, never will:

- Excellent design solutions that help distinguish a firm's reputation and help clients express their identity while creating environments that support the client's mission.
- Strong client relationships that foster loyalty and trust and result in a continuing flow of work.

All the bells and whistles and trends and fads in the world will never replace these two essentials. Make them the heart of the practice, and we can meet any future changes with confidence.



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## the more things change

An authoritative voice in a growing and thriving industry

Jennifer Thiele Busch

uring its five decades of existence, *Contract* consistently has covered the practitioners and projects that have defined excellence in commercial interior design in their time (see "Design Retrospective," page 77), continuously inspiring its readers to raise design standards in their own work. But the magazine also has devoted itself to identifying and dissecting important trends that have informed intelligent design solutions over the years and examining the best business practices of the day that allowed the profession to flourish and thrive.

The following essays from our past will give current readers a glimpse (from a vast archive of 50 years' worth of issues) into how the profession matured and how it addressed the most salient issues of the times. In some cases, the content identified important trends early on, as in former editor Len Corlin's prophetic article from January 1980, "Astounding Technology Portends Drastic Office Changes in '80s," and Duncan Sutherland's essay from the January 1989 issue, "Is the Office Really Necessary?"

Other articles prove the old adage, "The more things change, the more they remain the same," and reveal how the industry apparently has grappled with the same issues for decades, as in Maurice Mogulescu's commentary on the distinction between interior designers and interior decorators, "The Contract Design Dilemma" from May 1962, and former editor Roger Yee's June 1990 editorial titled, "If You Cut Your Fees, Do You Bleed?"

Still others show how *Contract* covered in depth the trends that would have a lasting effect on commercial and institutional design, as in the "Space Planning Symposium" article from July 1963 and an early essay on the study of ergonomics, "Research Reveals Proper Height, Width, Depth of Furniture, from Office Chairs to Library Tables," by Dr. Adolph Yilo of Volvo.

And finally, certain articles, such as June 1970's "Women Need Feminine Desks," show that 50 years did not go by without us making some mistakes. Even 40 years ago, the mere suggestion of distinguishing furniture based on gender insulted some of *Contract's* readers, as evidenced by the Letters to the Editor the following month.

There has been so much valuable content generated in 50 years, and we could not possibly begin to summarize it here. Instead, this random cross-section of material is intended to celebrate our history, as the authoritative voice of the commercial A&D community for the last five decades.

#### May/June 1962

his article addresses itself to a dilemma facing the contract and interior design field and particularly as it affects the final client—the business firm or corporation. The dilemma is not of anyone's particular making but it causes serious enough headache to warrant attention and, it is hoped, clarification.

This publication, which is concerned with "space planning and furnishing" is very much to the point, for the dilemma in question concerns who the business firm or corporation properly calls upon to handle problems of planning and furnishing new office space.

Off the top of the head, one would instantly say, "Business calls upon the interior designer of course." One would say this with good reason. In the last 15 years, some 40 odd million new square feet of office space was constructed in Manhattan alone, and the corporate firms which make up the tenancy in this space were settled there and set up for modern operations with the consultation and services of expert interior designers.

As a result, interior design is a tried and proven field today, and the interior designer is recognized as an indispensable factor in the overall office building scene. In fact, new developments in the nation's business make it more so than ever. Corporate mergers which, in the last couple of years have been occurring at an unprecedented scale, are creating new companies, new executive structures, different and more complex operations. It heightens the need for interior design specialists who have the intensive training and experience to express in the interior facilities these tremendous shifts and changes in business.

The business executive, therefore, welcomes the existence of specialists in this field. It gives him a sense of security that he can call upon expert help and services when his own company faces a move or expands or merges.

Unfortunately, however, when the executive actually reaches out to select an interior designer, he runs into an unexpected problem. He discovers that interior design services are offered by the score, from endless and unexpected sources and at a variety of fees, which run all the way up and down the scale and even to that most extraordinary fee of all—the no-fee or free-of-charge services.

## the contract DESIGN DILEMMA:

How can the client make the right choice of interior designer?

By Maurice Mogulescu, president Designs for Business, Inc.



How does this all happen? For one thing, since interior design is such a well established, active, and growing field, it naturally attracts many newcomers. And, as happens with any gold-rush, so to speak, some newcomers know what they're about but most just plunge in and hope. In this case, whether they know or hope—all go by the name of "interior designer," and the burden of knowing who is who and making the right choice falls upon the business executive or client. This is especially the case because unfortunately no

license is required to practice interior design as is true, for example, for the architect. Yet interior design is every bit as technical, specialized, and complex and requires equally specialized, skilled, trained, experienced talent.

To complicate things further, interior *decoration* lately has given up its time-honored title and refers to itself as interior *design*.

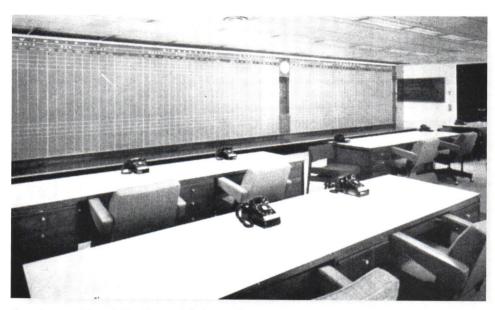
Several years ago, a group of interior decorators broke away from the American Institute of Decorators and formed what they call the National Society of Interior Design. Last year the distinguished and long established American Institute of Decorators changed its name too, by a vote of its membership, to the American Institute of Interior Designers. This is a salutary acknowledgement of the universal acceptance of interior design. And that there are talented members among both groups capable of interior design, we must assume. But to suppose that membership per se in organizations primarily based on the practice and profession of home decoration, necessarily equips one to plan, design, engineer, and furnish business interiors just by virtue of a mechanical change or choice of name, is unrealistic and confusing.

Adding still further to the confusion are the many office furniture dealers who for 30, 40, and 50 years have been suppliers of desks and chairs, but who now, by having added two or three decorators to their staffs, offer *free* interior design services as a bonus along with the purchase of *furniture*.

Confronted by this abundance of "interior design" riches, how does the business executive decide? Everybody seems to be a designer. Are there, then, special qualifications by which a truly professional, trained, experienced interior designer can be recognized? Are there standards? What are appropriate fees? How does the executive make judgment?

The answers are worth exploring. Many dollars are involved as well as the health and well being of the company or business.

Let us establish first and quickly that fullest recognition is given here to the importance of interior decoration. The human and esthetic aspects of the office today have direct bearing on efficiency and productivity. The office population today exceeds that of any other working category





The salesroom (above left) at Lowenstein is one of a series created by Designs for Business to give fabric buyers privacy. This is one part of the huge trading room (above right) at Continental Grain Co.

and to put hundreds, in many cases, thousands of people comfortably and happily together in a set of offices demands every ounce of esthetic creativity of which we are humanly capable.

But certainly when it comes to the modern office, such creative interior decoration and facilities cannot be done in a vacuum. Handsome décor and beautiful designs cannot be drawn in splendid isolation. They only can be done properly as part of the larger scheme, which we call interior design. And in this larger scheme, decoration is vital, but only as a coordinated segment within a vast network of problems dealing with electrical lines, air conditioning ducts, telephone lines, partitioning systems, acoustical equipment, traffic control, etc.

Unfortunately no license is required to practice interior design as is true, for example, for the architect. Yet interior design is every bit as technical, specialized, and complex and requires equally specialized, skilled, trained, experienced talent.

Certainly a decorator can specify luxurious, elegant carpeting and handsome furniture in a conference room. But only a qualified designer can analyze

proper air conditioning specifications so that the unusual heat loads and smoke factors of a conference room can be integrated to the engineering.

The qualified interior designer, in other words, approaches his specialization as something that strives toward a total, coordinated package of total office operations and needs. And he knows that he gets there only through painstaking details, all interrelated and interdependent...

As a result, the interior designer who undertakes to plan and design offices must have familiarity with and knowledge of mechanical and structural problems and their relationships. He must have the ability to apply this knowledge to business needs. He has to understand lighting and the fact that lighting is related to foot candles and to heat loads, that heat loads are related to air conditioning, that air conditioning is related to duct work, that duct work is related to ceiling heights, and that all these elements are related to interior building materials such as glass, doors, hardware, partitions, etc., and their relative costs.

In this overall picture, it becomes obvious that interior design is far beyond the scope of interior decoration. Yet interior decoration is going on all the time. While technical and business problems are being researched, analyzed and solved, the esthetics of the project are always to the fore.... Decoration, in other words, is a natural part of interior design. But if it tries to stand alone and perform by itself it will bog down with every likelihood of damaging the very basic purpose of office interior design and reflecting in an unhealthy manner on the entire profession.

Consider the still further responsibilities inherent in skilled interior design. Once a project is designed, facilities planned and specified and engineered, then someone has to execute it. The designer plans and designs but

contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers come into the picture. Dozens of diverse trades are involved. The interior designer must know the market of all these trades and industries. He must be prepared, in his client's interest, to handle the details of preparing and writing specifications for competitive bids, and he must be capable with sufficient staff and skill of supervising the total execution of design and installation to the final typewriter or file drawer.

Decoration is a natural part of interior design. But if it tries to stand alone and perform by itself, it will bog down with every likelihood of damaging the very basic purpose of office interior design.

And not only are dozens of trades being coordinated, but a multitude of laws and legal restrictions and requirements are involved. For example, the interior designer must know the building code and keep up with its changes if he is to protect his client...

No wonder that even architects...are increasingly shying away from it and suggesting instead that specialized contract designers be brought in to work with them in consultation. Firms of architects are more and more aware that it is neither practical nor profitable for them to concern themselves with the multitudinous details not only of planning and layout but especially of furnishing and decorating. They are recognizing that the preparation, coordination and follow-through of hundreds of schedules, orders and contracts covering wall finishes, colors, floorcoverings, drapery fabrics, desks, chairs, tables, upholstery fabrics, etc., eat into time reflecting in their own costs and eventually, the client's.

The complexity is dramatized by the fact that my own company has given over 1,000 sq. ft. of floor space to a sample room and library containing samples of materials and catalogs that literally run into the thousands. What's more, we have found it necessary to maintain a full-time librarian in charge of the sample room to keep it organized, up to date and orderly. If we did not maintain such a highly organized, rotating, up-to-date library and instead, had to shop the market each time we undertook a new project, it is doubtful if we would come out ahead, as it is certain it would show up in greater client cost. Time, in the final analysis, is of the essence in meeting the tight schedules of any office design project and only an approach in which the space planning and layout and engineering are coordinated as one package along with furnishings and decorating can meet these schedules and properly fulfill the requirements of efficient interior design.

Interiors themselves are being broken down into specialized categories because each is so unique in itself. I mean by this that there are interior designers who specialize in hotels, others in offices, others in schools, others in hospitals. And when my own company recently embarked on a program of institutional interior design, there was no automatic shifting of our personnel from an office interior project to an institutional one. We set up a separate company...We brought in specialists trained particularly in institutional interior design, furnishings and equipment. The furnishings, furniture, and equipment that must be specified for hospitals are in no way related to what must be specified for an office.

And these are the reasons too, that in order to practice professional, sound, serious interior design requires the soundest business methods along with the highest skill in design, planning and engineering.

Interior design, in other words, is a business. A creative one, to be sure. But it is a business in terms of fullest responsibility to the client's dollars, efficiency and function. **©** 



The accounting pool (above left) at Hertz Corp. is another example of large-scale planning jobs by Design for Business, as is a section of IBM tabulating room (above right) at Berkshire Like insurance Co.







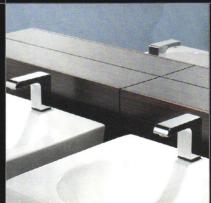




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July 1963

## space planning SYMPOSIUM

Ithough the image of the space planner has begun to come into focus, there are still a good many blurry physiognomic details. In order to help bring the portrait into sharper resolution, *Contract* recently asked a group of space planners a series of 23 questions, and this issue is devoted to their replies. The 11 individuals whose discussion of the practices and problems of space planning makes up the next 22 pages, are all ranking exponents of this new science with a vast amount of important work to their collective

credit....They are representative of a profession that, without status a decade ago, today controls a decisive segment of contract work. We addressed our questions to the participants listed below because we felt that their pooled experience would yield significant information, both for other professionals in the field and for prospective clients.... The symposium that they have developed constitutes, in our opinion, the first publication of a basic primer of space planning and its role in creating contemporary workspaces....

(Excerpts from the 22-page section follow)

**R.L. Forster, Ebasco Services:** In 1947, when I joined Ebasco, we began our consulting approach through the space administration and space utilization avenues, putting the primary emphasis on the creation of physical surroundings as a business tool to carry out the purposes of the business enterprise; the physical preparation of the space is but an implementation in the whole planning process.

**Lawrence Lerner, Saphier, Lerner, Schindler:** Most firms attempt, in one way or another, to recoup their time investments. Some ask for it as a percentage of cost, some as a flat price for the job, and others, in various methods of presentation ask for hourly rates.

Marvin B. Affrime, The Space Design Group: While hourly fees based on manpower may be necessary for projects short of total planning and design, the normal method of fee based on percentage of cost still seems to be the most equitable for over-all planning and design assignments. There is growing evidence, however, that some adjustments may be necessary in percentage arrangements for a flat 15 percent does not always provide adequate compensation for the designer.

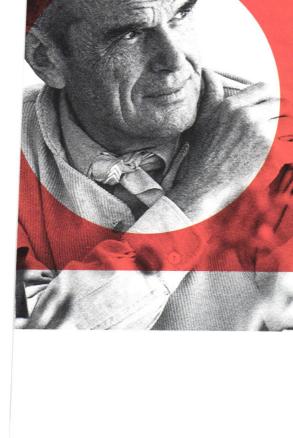
**Frank Colangelo, Leonard-Colangelo-Peters:** ...I am sometimes amused when I hear fellow-planners claim no knowledge of thievery in the business or that it plays a minor role in the business.

I charge deliberate and consistent dishonesty—specifically: a. Bribery—payments to real estate brokers for favors—tips, and recommendations; b. Extortion—in the form of kickbacks demanded of suppliers and manufacturers. This extra "hidden cost" of course is really borne by the client; c. Theft—in the form of "loaded" bills to clients who are not informed of true discount prices and who, therefore, pay outrageous prices for items purchased by the designer.

**Gerald Luss, Designs for Business:** I would say that the main problem in the space planning profession today is in the willingness on the part of some



Sanwa Bank Ltd., New York, by Freidin Studley Associates



### Collaborate

"Eventually everything connects—people, ideas, objects...the quality of the connections is the key to quality per se."

CHARLES EAMES



firms to provide space planning at no cost to the broker or client. I feel that the designer loses considerable stature when he is willing to give away his hard-earned professional knowledge.

Forster: Probably the one thing that the competent space planner can offer that the client himself may never possess is an awareness of the significance of the effect of physical facilities of the company's operations.

Jack Freidin, Freidin Studley Associates: A good space planner provides his client with the following benefits: efficient utilization of space; good design: properly planned environment (re: lighting, air conditioning, sound control, etc.); management of every phase and detail of the project; and budget control.

Affrime: It is impossible for the space planner to know the business operations of his client too intimately. Design, to be effective, must be based upon thorough and objective research. Space planning research, to be effective, must go far beyond counting noses and desks and file drawers, and then sitting down with a table of minimum space requirements and a floor plan and figuring out how to fit everything in the least possible number of square feet. It goes far beyond finding out who rates corners and windows, and what colors the boss is allergic to. Research means taking the lid off an organization and finding out what makes it tick today, and what will make it buzz and click tomorrow.

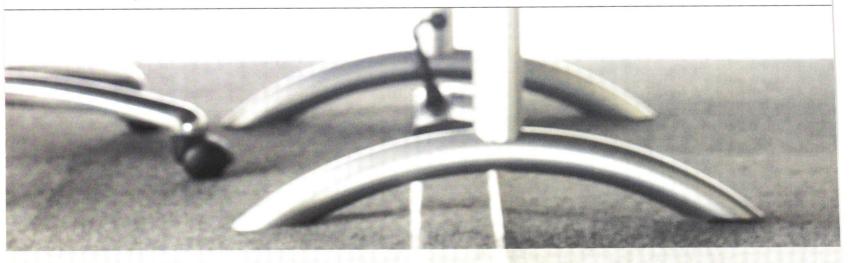
Freidin: As the age of specialization becomes more specialized, as it inevitably will, the space planner will have to become more involved, even than he is today, in all of the technical aspects of modern office planning.

For example, his knowledge and field of experience will have to keep up to date with advances in the fields of communications (radio, television, telephonic), electronic data processing equipment, environmental control (temperature, humidity, sound, touch, smell, lighting, color, materials). As the technical tools at the designer's command become more complicated and involved, he will find himself by necessity becoming more involved with the functional aspects of the business operation and their relationships to these technical tools.

Colangelo: Architectural offices employ (either directly or as consultants) structural engineers, electrical and mechanical engineers. That relatively new breed, office planners, should be involved at the very inception of each building project, just as these other specialists. But the economics of space rentals usually forced these natural partners (architect and space planner) on opposite sides, the architect employed by the building owner, the space planner by the tenant, and this unnatural arrangement has further complicated what is at best a difficult project technically.

J. Gordon Carr, J. Gordon Carr & Associates: ... We are architects and work closely with the building architect when the building design is in its early stage. This works to the benefit of both owner and tenant. The two parts are very closely related. There should be close team work between the landlord's architect and the tenant's professional adviser—in our case, the tenant's architect.

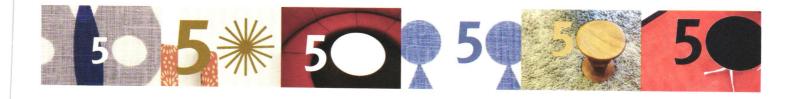
Nathaniel Becker, Becker & Becker Associates: There is a clear line of responsibility between the architect and the space planner. However, both must work closely together and be sympathetic to the work of the other.



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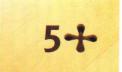








































Happy 50th, Contract.



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essay: from the past

June 1970

## changes in workplaces reflect changes in task structure

Robert Propst, president, Herman Miller Research Corporation, Ann Arbor, Mich., explores many of the psychological and physiological considerations of workplace functions and how they affect workplace design

Indoubtedly one of the most thorough and original thinkers about the office and furnishing systems, Robert Propst, president of Herman Miller Research Corp., answers questions relating to desk design put to him by *Contract*'s editors.

The reader will recognize much of the philosophy and research conducted by Propst in his book *The Office: A Facility Based on Change*, which delved into man's relationship with people and furnishings that had never been examined so minutely and incisively before.

Action Office II was the outgrowth of that research. *Contract*'s editors, while recognizing this irrevocable relationship, have attempted to probe beyond it in this question and answer article.

**Editor:** You generally avoid the use of the word "desk," preferring "work station" instead. Is there a difference between the two? How would you define each of them?

## A large desk provides a fortress feeling of security.

**Propst:** The word "desk" has been used so long that it suffers meaning fatigue. For most people it simply conjures up in their minds a stylized image with little mobility, freshness, or relevance to their actual work life. We are, in fact, not very decisive about using furniture to do work. Using the term station as a place to do office work seems like a useful direction.

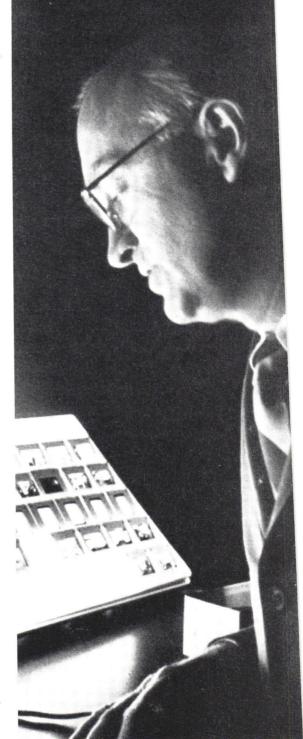
**Editor:** Doesn't the traditional desk, which can vary in size, material, and shape, help establish rank or status? How important is a "status

symbol" desk to the user? To the visitor? What are the exact psychological or behavioral forces at work on both the visitor and user with the traditional desk?

Propst: We are very interested in status and certainly desks have become part of this meaning. The difficulty we see with traditional status symbols is their misdirected emphasis and, in many cases, their obsolete connotation in contemporary organizational management. Certainly, people need strong identification. "What is my authority" is one of the things desks tend to express. However, other critical new statements are emerging with greater consequences. An office should tell us more: who I am; what kind of work I do; what is its variety and diversity. The problem is to retain a tangible grip on a complex world and to make this all eloquently expressive to others. The traditional status symbols are not only simplistic, but also they are a communication hazard in a world requiring clearer, and at the same time, more complex expression.

**Editor:** You advocate the open plan—a modified office landscape. Yet, most offices are still enclosed cubicles. Can Action Office I function effectively for the user within this framework of four walls, a door, and (hopefully) windows? If so, how?

Propst: Action Office II can function effectively within four walls, a door, and windows. This may, in fact, be what some office users still need. However, this is part of a rapidly declining professional population, who are aside from the exceedingly dynamic world of typical organizational and communication structures. And, unless they can stand excessive delay and cost in expressing office facilities, they are bound to be frustrated with unresponsive facilities. We are a change-oriented society, and we expect our change desires to be accommodated. But I would reemphasize that it is a communication



Robert Propst, President, Herman Miller Research Corporation, 1968–1980

deprivation that is the most compelling reason for leaving overly containerized office concepts.

**Editor:** The office and methods of working are changing. How does this affect the desk or work station and its configurations?

**Propst**: Office work has become more complex, tasks overlap each other in time, and we are

discovering that "work" in offices has important structural qualities. A traditional desk comes from a departing era of simpler tasks, conducted in sequence and of short time duration. This kind of work is rapidly disappearing into machines, especially the computer. We see that tasks are generated, that they become mental meaning structures that properly should be maintained, sometimes for days or weeks. We see that our complex affairs may require places for numerous simultaneous task structures. We also can see that conversations across our sensitive personal paper work structures are not very satisfactory.

A traditional desk comes from a departing era of simpler tasks, conducted in sequence and of short time duration. This kind of work is rapidly disappearing into machines, especially the computer.

Within this context, I think you can see why we tend to think in terms of multiple surfaces and a very different kind of office geography.

**Editor**: Based on your research, what types of components should a desk or work station have?

**Propst:** Surfaces for work generation, open storage for tangible information assembly, roundish clear tales for conversation, perhaps covers for some kinds of work in process, and a minimum of drawer storage. Working with this kind of vocabulary, a tremendous variety of offices can be established. Everyone has different needs and some of us obviously need much more elaborate work areas than others. Equally important, some of us need simpler offices that are good at self-purging.

**Editor:** Action Office II keeps most papers out in the open where they are always in sight. Why is this more acceptable than the conventional desk drawer, file cabinet, or compartmentalized credenza? Or simply several stacks on a large work surface?

**Propst**: One of the clearest things that emerges for our research and in the information management

research of others is the disastrous consequences of information sent into files and hidden storage. Expensively generated information dies, and then we pay rent to keep the body around.

Work in meaningful array, if it has the right supportive tools, has a work aesthetic that can have a beauty of its own. This is the meaning of what I am doing. It is interesting, and I can control it. We have to place this against the vapid blankness of too many offices. We need to recover from the idea that the only good looking office is the one in which all work and individuality are missing.

**Editor:** The computer and other electronic equipment are fast dominating the office. The computer demands—and gets—a highly controlled environment, or it will simply quit. What has been done for the employee so that he can function as effectively and comfortably as the computer he operates?

**Propst:** The idea of what will dominate needs to be turned around. The need for high-quality human mental performance is beginning to dominate the office. As your question suggests, we need to apply more attention to our human performers. Unfortunately, not enough has or is being done.

**Editor:** If you were not bound by the constraints of price, marketing, and development of a specific product line, what would you incorporate in a desk or work station that does not now exist?

**Propst:** I don't see pricing, marketing, or development as particular constraints. The real constraint is the still substantial lack of understanding of the office environment. When we really understand the problem dimension, the product programs can be logically implemented.

Looking at new concept implementation from another direction, managers are finding that it is the effective support of their human inventory that really counts. In this context, it is becoming exceedingly pound foolish to under facilitate office workers.

But this doesn't necessarily mean we need costly elaborate furnishings. What all of us are most interested in is maintaining an open option position. In other words, as new demands in performance or new discipline understanding comes along, we want to have the options to pick up the new advantages. This is far more important than over-specialized office design, which can be pretty gruesome to set aside when we want to grow or to change our mind.





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#### ■ Judging Criteria

#### Professional entries:

- · Visual and graphic images of interior spaces that support an environment capable of improving the quality of healthcare
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performance, and increase visitor and community participation? Were higher satisfaction ratings by patients, families, and staff a key design objective? Professional conceptual and student entries:

- A demonstrated response to the goals mentioned in the project description
- Visual and graphic images that support an environment capable of improving the quality of healthcare

#### ■ Recognition/Awards

- Winners will be announced at an awards presentation during HEALTHCARE DESIGN.10, Nov. 13-16, 2010, in Las Vegas.
- An award will be presented to each winner
- Winners will be required to assemble presentation boards of winning projects for display at HEALTHCARE DESIGN.10
- First-place winners will receive a complimentary registration to HEALTHCARE DESIGN.10
- · Winners will be published in an upcoming issue of Contract magazine featuring healthcare design
- · Winners and honorable mentions will be contacted individually by Aug. 9, 2010.

#### ■ Judges

Judges to be announced will include interior designers and architects with expertise in healthcare design and a member of the board of The Center for Health Design. The competition is sponsored by Contract magazine in association with The Center for Health Design, the HEALTHCARE DESIGN.10, and The Vendome Group.

#### Rules for Entry

#### **Professional Categories:**

- Submittals (except for conceptual) must be built and in use by June 1, 2010. Entries also must not be more than two years old or have been entered in previous Healthcare Environment Awards competitions.
- · Submittals must be contained within one binder and must include professional 8 x 10 color photographs and at least one floor plan. Conceptual submittals must include color renderings.
- Submittals must also include the project name and location, submittal category, and a brief program statement (300-500 words)
- The design firm name, address, and contact person's name, e-mail, and phone number must be provided in an envelope at the back of the binder for purposes of anonymity
- Each submittal must include a \$250 entry fee

#### Rules for Entry

#### Student Category:

- · Submittals must be contained within one binder and must include professional quality photographs or renderings
- Submittals must include project type and a brief project description (300-500 words) addressing the goals of the project and how and why the final project improves the quality of healthcare
- · Student names, address, and verification of student status in the form of a letter from the school registrar certifying enrollment at the time the project was completed must be provided in an envelope at the back of the binder for purposes of anonymity
- Each student submittal must include a \$25 entry fee

#### ■ Rules for Entry

#### No OFFICIAL entry form is required

All submittals must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, July 6, 2010.

For questions, call 646.654.7336 or visit www.contractdesign.com.

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EXPRESSIVE ESSENTIALS\*

#### June 1970



"Women prefer an open desk" –Maria Bergson



"Everything should be on casters" –Emily Malino



"I am partial to an island structure" -Ellen McCluskey



"Desk color should not be ostentatious" -Marjorie Michaelson

### Female Designers Comments

## women need feminine desks

While they acknowledge that desks designed exclusively for females are economically unsound, four top female designers think that desk designs should take into account distinctive feminine needs

hen women complain about this being "a man's world," their grumbling extends to office design and the furniture and furnishings within. Despite the large number of females in the work force, better than one third, most offices do not take into account the female executive's or secretary's unique needs, particularly when it comes to desks. Contract went to four top female designers and asked the question: "Has the office furnishings industry really considered the needs of the

female executive and office worker in the design of desks?" All of them felt strongly that femininity is nothing to be ashamed of, and, although it does not have to be flaunted, both a woman and her surroundings should reflect her sex.

Here are the thoughts of Maria Bergson, Maria Bergson Associates; Marjorie Michaelson, Montgomery, Winecoff & Associates; Emily Malino, Emily Malino Associates; and Ellen McCluskey, Ellen L. McCluskey Associates, all in New York.

#### Shaped desks for the shapely

Maria Bergson admits that some women do feel they must compete with men, and, therefore, prefer a heavy, more masculine desk. "However," she says, "most women, who simply enjoy being women and professionals, are more prone to favoring an open or rounded desk.

"Many women enjoy the enclosed feeling that a shaped structure gives them."

All of these top designers agree that a desk should serve as a frame for the woman, and Miss Michaelson and Miss Bergson feel that a woman should be a woman first and a designer or whatever, second.

To meet this criterion, they feel that storage room for personal items in a desk must be carefully considered. There should be room for make-up, shoes, and pocketbooks.

#### Vanity, thy name is...

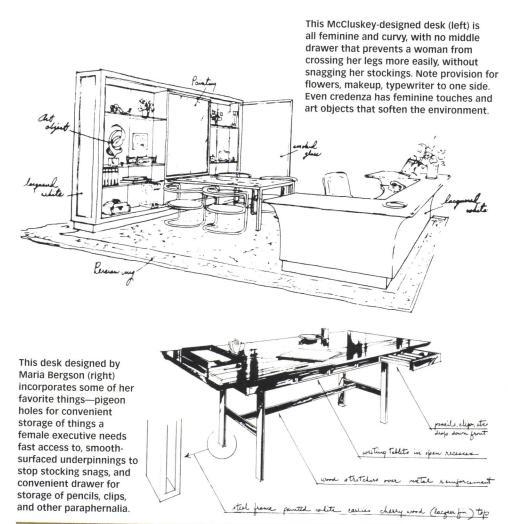
Ideally, Miss Michaelson would like to have a mirror set into a table desk so that it would not show, but would be accessible as a miniature dressing table. The rest of the desk top would be clear with only the necessary accessories taking up space.

#### Nylon snags must be considered

As far as functional storage space is concerned, Emily Malino feels that movable files are more satisfactory. She suggests that everything be on casters so that everything simply can be moved out of the way when not in use. The others favor a storage room consisting of files, drawers, and shelves in units either behind or to the side of their desks.



Marjorie Michaelson has sketched out this "perfectly simple—maybe just glass—table-desk...ornate antique chair with a modern fabric," a wall of flattering color, with lacquer work units to match are incorporated into design. The desk, she says, is just a frame for the occupant, with some pretty flowers and accessories.



Mrs. McCluskey suggests that the middle drawer to a woman's desk be removed so that she may cross her legs more easily. This would minimize the possibility of tearing nylons, an eternal problem of all females. Another and more practical suggestion is that the files and shelves be of varying heights and sizes to conform to various needs. Chairs could be adapted to each facility with needed adjustments.

"It is important for a woman executive to have a drawer with front openings, such as pigeonholes," says Maria Bergson, "to facilitate and to expedite getting such things as pads, pencils, or other items that she or her visitors might need in the course of a meeting."

Miss Michaelson's choice of a desk would be a small French one, cabriole, and therefore, very feminine and fragile looking. Additional working space would be behind her.

Mrs. McCluskey is partial to an island structure

that would include the desk, storage space, and additional work room. The desk would be between 4 and 5 ft. wide.

"The desk should be narrower than that of a man, due to anthropometrics," agrees Miss Bergson, who points out that the work and storage space should be in separate units, so that they could be used for long-term applications. The island setup would permit open communications between several people working together, a characteristic of landscaping that these designers, as women, all favored.

For practical purposes, Miss Malino likes the Designcraft Departure II line of landscape furniture. She admires its versatility and the fact that it would satisfy the need for comfortable conferences, yet look good.

"For a more formal office," she says, "I would choose the Unimark International Modulo line designed by Assalucci. This would be more elegant."

#### No modesty panels

All these female designers feel that it is important to be accessible and exposed so that there is no barrier between herself and her callers. Consequently, there is agreement that the modesty panel is on its way out of vogue.

A woman's legs are nothing to be ashamed of, and there is no reason for hiding them behind an obstruction that serves only to tear stockings and add to discomfort and inconvenience, they agree.

For ornamentation, Emily Malino suggests beautiful containers, such as decorated English tea cracker boxes, in which she could store her personal items, thus making them practical as well as aesthetic. A personal touch increases the feeling of friendliness and openness that Miss Malino and most of the other designers feel is so important in an executive office, particularly that of a woman.

Flowers also ranked high for decoration and a touch of femininity. Miss Bergson has plants on the wall unit behind her desk, and Mrs. McCluskey likes fresh flowers on the desk itself.

#### Shouldn't contrast with occupant

As for desk surface materials, preferences vary. Miss Bergson prefers a wood grain to instill warmth in the room, and because "there is less chance of dirtying bare arms or expensive long-sleeve dresses." Miss Michaelson, too, likes a wood grain and prefers a colored lacquer as a second choice. Whatever it is, it should not be too ostentatious or showy to take away from the woman behind the desk

Glass and plastic are Mrs. McCluskey's preferences; Emily Malino prefers laminates for their huge variety, and wood, such as oak, for its lovely appearance. But, ideally, Miss Malino would like all of her office furniture to be of a soft material, other than the desk surface, which, obviously, would have to be hard for writing purposes. Miss Malino agrees with the others that color should be flexible in decorating an office, particularly a design office, since designers deal with so many colors that the color scheme cannot be distracting.

Another point of unanimous agreement is that there is not enough call for a line of desks specifically designed for the female executive, since there are so many modifications from which to choose in existing lines.

They also feel that in their positions as designers, individuality should be paramount consideration, and therefore, either a one-of-a-kind desk or one that is custom made is preferable.



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August 1970

#### point of view:

## name "interior designer" is a misnomer because of broader duties



**By Walter B. Ford II**Chairman
Ford & Earl Design Associates
Warren, Mich.

In the past decade or so, the function of interior design has broadened and deepened to such an extent that the term itself has become a misnomer.

The interior designer today is concerned not only with determining furniture, furnishings, colors, materials, and finishes, but also with organizing and predicting basic concepts of work organization and traffic flow for large corporate or institutional entities. His goals go far beyond mere appearance design; they are nothing less than the creation of a "total environment" through the dual functions of design and space planning.

As we see it, the work of the designer aims at accomplishing three prime objectives: First: The Economic Goal, meaning that the space he plans must function as economically and efficiently as possible. This involves not only in-depth programming and space planning, but also the establishment of standards for interior building materials, finishes, and furnishings, which are based on practicality as well as esthetics.

Second: The Human Goal, or the relationship of people to space. By which we mean satisfying the needs of two groups of people: employees who work in the space and use its facilities, and the transients, those people who come inside the building to do business. The needs of these two may be quite different, but they must be satisfied equally and concurrently, keyed to an understanding of the client's activities. The main

ingredients we employ to achieve this goal are esthetic. They involve such elements as interior details, colors, materials, furniture, furnishings, and especially today, the use of art as an integral part of interior design.

Third: The Architectural Goal of cohesiveness or architectural unity. Here, we are speaking of the correlation and synthesis of the interior design with the architecture of the building itself.

#### Mutual respect important

We believe that the designer must respect the spirit of the architecture—particularly if it is good architecture. At the same time, he must coordinate his work closely with the architect, so that the final result is a total and homogenous design solution, in which even the smallest design detail reflects and is related to the overall architecture theme.

In addition, the design is of necessity concerned with interior architecture design. Lighting, elevations, walls, doors and door frames, acoustics, sun and glare control, materials, flooring, partitions, hardware, and air handling systems—all these fall within the purview of the designer.

Obviously, however, both architect and designer must be involved in their solution. The direction of this collaboration is not fixed; it can and should vary according to the job. Sometimes the designer works jointly with the architect. At other times,

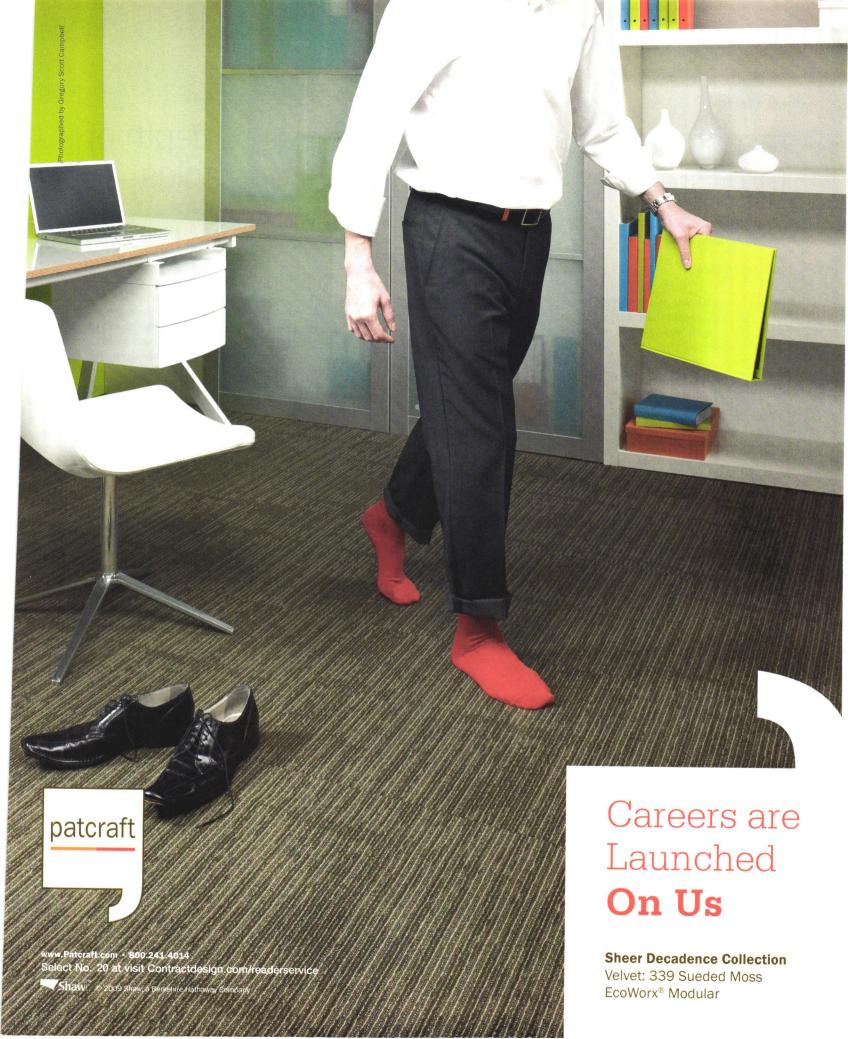
the architect takes the lead, and the designer assumes a subordinate role. A third possibility is for the designer to assume the direction, consulting with the architect, when the need arises.

Whichever path is taken, the final solution will be better if the designer is brought onto the scene at an early stage. The ideal situation is for him to work with the architect from the planning stage on. This insures close collaboration, means that any possible obstacles to the prime goal—architectural cohesiveness—are dealt with and, hopefully, eliminated early in the game.

In sum, modern interior planning for large spaces demands that architect and interior designer work in harmony together. It is the architect who develops the basic structural design concept; the designer/specifier, who, utilizing this concept, brings it to completion.

In addition, the designer brings to the job an independent point of view, based on a richness of experience and a familiarity with all the details of interior planning, which should result in a more profound solution to the myriad of problems encountered in operation of huge office complexes.

When architect and designer begin with compatible philosophies and proceed with mutual respect, the result is indeed total: total design, total harmony, total unity. •



essay: from the past

September 1970

## research reveals proper height, width, depth of furniture, from office chairs to library tables

#### By Dr. Adolph Yilo

Consultant in work physiology Volvo Stockholm, Sweden

uring the last three decades, a new research area has been developed where the man is investigated in his working environment. This research deals with how different work loads and environmental factors may influence the human organism and create unnatural fatigue and exhaustion.

Scientists also have formulated norms for optimum working conditions, adapted to human limitations, bodily structure, and functional capacities. All this summarized knowledge on the man at work, as well as the techniques for fitting the job to the man, has been given the name "ergonomics"

As synonyms—more or less covering the content of ergonomics—the terms "human engineering," "human factors," "biotechnology," "applied physiology," "experimental psychology," to name a few, have been used.

This multitude of terms indicates that our knowledge of ergonomics has sources in many different research areas: anthropology, functional anatomy, work physiology, psychology, technical hygience, industrial medicine, technology, etc.

#### Man adjusts to his work

In one way, man always has tried to facilitate his work by ergonomic applications. The first

crude hammer was designed by the prehistoric man and certainly he would use the implement and consequently provided the handle. During thousands of years, the common sense of man and some ingenious inventions provided him with levers, shafted hand tools, tongs, wheels, etc., he learned to utilize the energy of fire, running water, and wind. Owing to these aids and the fairly wide range of human capacities, it has been possible for man to adjust himself and his working methods to a continuously changing external working environment and increased demands of the work.





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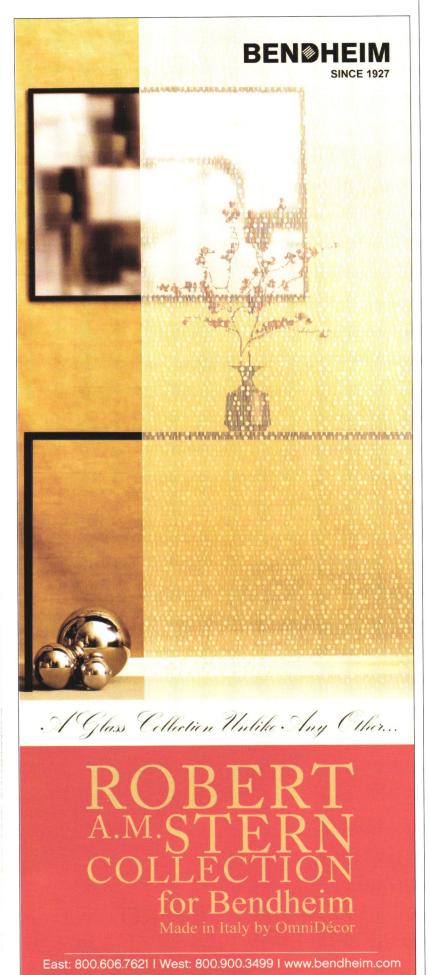


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essay: from the past

As regards working chairs, there must be noted some basic rules: a good work chair should offer stable support for the body and permit as many satisfactory working positions as possible, without the work as such being impeded. The operator should easily be able to change his position. The seat of the chair should be horizontal, or almost so, and its height should permit the feet to be in full contact with the floor, with knees bent at a straight angle.

The depth of the seat should be such that when sitting upright in the chair, using the backrest, two thirds of the underside of the thighs should rest against the seat. The width of the seat should permit minor movements in lateral direction, and the surface of the seat should be upholstered, but not too soft.

A rotary as well as vertically adjustable chair in most cases offers many advantages. The backrest should be stable and provide sufficient support for the upper body. With work mostly confined to the table, the backrest should be fitted in an upright direction. With freer work forms, changes in position may be accepted and the back rest may be slightly inclined backwards.

Our knowledge of ergonomics has sources in many different research areas: anthropology, functional anatomy, work physiology, psychology, technical hygience, industrial medicine, technology, etc.

The back rest usually should be adjustable both in a vertical and horizontal direction. Bigger types of office chairs generally lack this adjustability.

If a chair is provided with arm rests, these should be in proper height from the seat level. In some types of work, however, typing for example, the arm rests would hinder the arm movements and should be avoided.

#### Need free leg movement

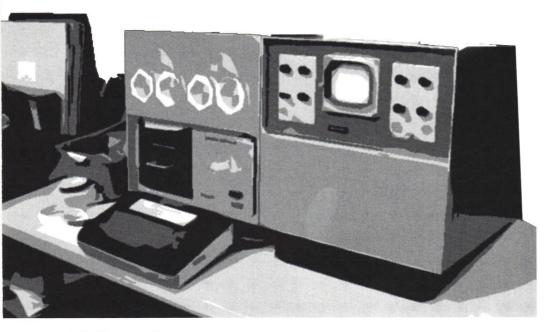
Work table and work chairs should be well-suited to each other. This is generally the case, provided that the height of the work table is at elbow level, when the operator is sitting upright with lowered shoulders and arms hanging freely along his sides. The legs must have room enough under the table for free movements forward, as well as laterally. The necessity of free leg movement also makes it important that the space between the seat and tabletop is kept free from cases and other place-consuming items.

When the character of the work permits, or when intermittent changes between sitting and standing position are required, the workplace should be so arranged that the operator can sit down easily or stand comfortably. In such case, the worktable should be arranged for standing position. The height of the chair and the size of the footrest should contribute to a comfortable sitting position. The footrest should be stable and sufficiently large to permit varying leg movements. It should be horizontal or slightly inclined. When the table is too high, the operator is apt to raise his shoulders, and, in the long run, this can induce tiring strain on neck and shoulder muscles.



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January 1980





### astounding technology portends drastic office changes in '80s

By Len Corlin, Editor in Chief, Contract

hat the pencil did for communications, the microprocessor will do for the office in the '80s. For the uninitiated, the microprocessor is a fusion of electronics and computing that combines three vital functions: memory, logic, and speed. All three are combined in what is called a silicon chip, so small that if you drop it on your carpeted office floor, you may have trouble finding it, since it measures only one-fifth of an inch square.

## "Computers will have ability to talk back to operators."

In that mini-mini circuit, however, is the equivalent of 8,000 transistors. Recall that transistors took the place of vacuum tubes and that the portable radio, which you may have in your pocket, incorporated four to eight transistors. Predictions are that by the mid-1980s, a chip that size will have about one million compo-

nents in it. The implications for office design are astounding. Here are some of the microprocessor-involved information management developments contract designers and manufacturers are already, or will be, dealing with:

Voice actuated typing, which will involve an executive talking into a microphone and having his words translated into typing; facsimile copiers, which transmit 81/2 by 11-in. sheets of data in a matter of minutes, or, if the copier incorporates built-in, optical character recognition capability, at the rate of five or six seconds per page; a laser beam printer-receivertransmitter of documents over telephone lines, which prints at a rate of 1,800 characters per second or 36 pages per minute; talk-back computers, which invite operators to talk to them and then talk back, instead of relying on the typewriter keyboard; nationwide electronic mail systems, which will circumscribe the slower post office department and deliver mail from the California office to the New York office in a matter of hours; CRTs at every desk, which will permit accessing files and detailed information at the press of a button; computer data banks, which will store untold amounts of information and catalogs for immediate access; highly efficient work environments tailored for maximum productivity, perhaps with new lighting sources not thought up yet; and audiovisual transmissions by satellite that will create instant visual contact with employees half a world away.

## Workstations may be assembled from off-the-shelf elements.

A pipe dream? Not at all. The technological developments listed above either are here now or will be in the early '80s. All of them will have a profound effect on the design of offices. An estimate by Daniel F. Kelly, project manager of International Resource Development Inc. (IRD), Norwalk, Conn., projects that up to three million clerical and professional workers in 27 different industries may have their work made more efficient by "personal business terminals" or special-purpose workstations. Increasingly, says IRD, these workstations will be configured into integral desk-like structures, causing computer manufacturers to move into the office furniture market....

IRD, which is a specialized research and management consulting firm, speculates on the possibility that office furniture manufacturers will themselves consider manufacturing specialized workstations, including the electronic components: "Keyboards, CRT displays, microprocessors, and floppy disks are all readily available from OEM sources, so that workstations can be assembled from off-the-shelf elements, without requiring a major investment in electronic design or manufacturing facilities."

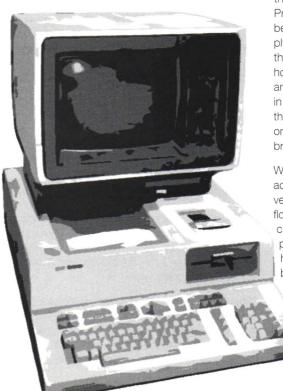
## **Equipment will be designed** to aid decision making.

But that is educated speculation on possible new specification sources. More important to the designer and specifier who will be doing office planning and design are the implications of how radically offices in the 1980s will be changed. While some claim that the office is primarily a place to process and communicate information, the reality is that the basic function is as a place to make decisions. Therefore, all of the new equipment, devices, and furnishings that go into an office will be designed to maximize the efficiency of information management, retrieval, and decision making.

Inevitably, there will be a proliferation of CRTs (cathode ray tubes) at workstations, because access to computer-stored data will be one of the prime functions of the systems in bringing processed information to those who will reprocess, use the data, and make those decisions. That condition alone, in addition to greater use of duplicating and other office machines, will have a significant effect on the design of office space. Lighting that eliminates veiling reflections, new power management sources and equipment, and work environments that provide thermal controls for the comfort of the employee are only a few of the design criteria that will have to be reckoned with by specifiers.

#### Designers will have to reckon with new space design criteria.

Moreover, the growth in white collar workers that is projected for the '80s, both in govern-



ment and the private sector, means that all of this complex equipment—from word processing centers to highly automated workstations—will have to retain the flexibility designed into the open plan scheme 10 and 15 years prior. Departments will still change overnight, some will be moved to another building two miles away, others will be added or combined with bigger or smaller departments, and some even will disappear. The dynamics of business growth and the effect it has on office design will continue to bedevil the space planner with challenges that have not even been dreamed of up to now.

## Components will be miniaturized to enhance communications.

The National Office Products Association (NOPA) estimates that word processors, which totaled around 200,000 units in 1974, will reach about the two million mark by 1989. NOPA spells out projected growth in office dictation machines, copy and duplicating equipment, computing machines, telephone and communications equipment, and calculators in its July/August 1979 special report that dwarfs the imagination.

Coupled with all this is the drive toward miniaturization, which will shrink the size of all of the electronic equipment mentioned earlier. Projections are that CRT terminals will even become mobile and businesspersons will simply disconnect units on their desks and take the CRTs with them when they go to lunch or home at the end of the day. One telephone call and a special plug will enable them to access in the home the same information available in the office. The possibilities are endless, limited only by the ingenuity of the same people who brought chunks of the moon back to earth.

While the special article in this issue on power accessing developments reflects the latest developments for the early '80s—flat wire, raised floors, and so forth—miniaturization may decrease the actual amount of power needed per appliance. The number of appliances, however, promises to increase as the office becomes more and more automated.

Michael Brill, president of the Buffalo Organization for Social & Technological Innovation, says, "About 10 years ago, when I worked at the National Bureau of Standards, we started to develop

performance specifications on Federal office buildings, with the aim of reducing costs.

An analysis that we did was reasoned out as follows: If one perceives the office building as part of a system for producing informationand that is what it is—the components consist of people, reproducing machines, systems furniture, machines to add value to information, and other office tools. Examining the cost of that intricate system over a period of 30 years, the first cost of the building is 2 percent of all the money paid out over that three-decade time frame. The cost of heat, light, and maintenances is another 6 percent. What is paid out for people is 92 percent. The issue then becomes that instead of trying to reduce the first costwhat is already the smallest cost-instead of squeezing something out of something that already is squeezed to start with, we ought to be trying to find a way to use that building to support people's performance in the office. In effect, if one believes that the 2 percent cost of facility has an impact on the 92 percent, then current priorities are wrong."...

On the energy scene, task/ambient lighting in open plan installations has enabled wattages to be reduced from five watts per square foot to 1½ and 2 watts per square foot for lighting. Greater use of machines, however, may mitigate those savings. But a reduction in one area keeps the aggregate sum down.

## Shorter work week, decentralization of offices

Implications of the office of the future are far reaching. Greater efficiency in the office environment and the thrust to conserve energy may result in a shorter work week. Businesses will be given the capacity to decentralize, move to the suburbs, since information heretofore found only in the centralized main office will be available to any satellite with the use of the computer and CRT terminals.

But by far, the greater impetus in the technologically complex '80s will be the ability of management to make intelligent decisions fast, based on fast communication and immediately available information.

The space design and specification industry must gear now to meet those irresistible needs. 

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essay: on the past

January 1989



## is the office really necessary?

A visionary rethinks the way we work and offers insight on managing people and technology.

By Duncan B. Sutherland Jr.

here is a revolution brewing in the office—a revolution, which, as a totally unintended side effect, may well sound the death knell for the design profession as we know it today. The revolution doesn't have anything to do with sophisticated computer-based local area networks, state-of-the-art systems furniture, or even "new approaches" to office layout. Rather, its seeds are sown in a much more fundamental question: do we even need offices at all?

This may sound like a rhetorical (or even silly) question. After all, if we didn't have offices, where

would we put millions of American office workers? What would we do with billions of square feet of existing office space? What would happen to the thousands upon thousands of people whose livelihood depends on the continuing existence of the office—from custodians to leasing agents? What would magazines like *Contract* find to write about? Perhaps most important, what would office designers design?

As important as these questions might be to each of us as individuals, they ignore a basic point: the "modern office" is a relatively recent

phenomenon. Its foundations were laid down only a little more than 100 years ago, during the period of dramatic social, economic, and technological upheaval historian Arnold Toynbee characterized as the "industrial revolution." As a result, the modern office is a product of a "mechanized" way of thinking about the relationships between labor, management, and machines. Perhaps even more significant, the form and function of the modern office is a product of a set of technological constraints—in particular, in the areas of communication and transportation—that existed in the 1800s and early 1900s but that no longer holds true today.

Whether we are simply experiencing the rolling after-shocks of Toynbee's revolution...or whether we are, indeed, in the midst of yet another and perhaps even more profound revolution...there is no question that we are experiencing an era of unprecedented social, economic and technological change. Thus, should we really expect that the white-collar workplace that will eventually emerge from what we might characterize (for lack of a better term) as the officing revolution will bear even a passing resemblance to its industrial predecessor?...Of course, the logical follow-up question is a bit more difficult: If the office of tomorrow won't look like the office of today, what will it look like?

#### Technomania as the 'magic bean'

In recent years, corporate America's strategies to improve office productivity have been largely driven by management's knowledge about the nature of the office and of office work—specifically, that the office is some kind of "information factory." The result has been that management has come to view massive infusions of technology as the "magic bean" that will once and for all turn the nation's white-collar productivity cow into a goose that lays golden eggs.

What makes all of this even more interesting, of course, is the fact that, in spite of a decade or more of investment in new technology of all kinds, office productivity may well be getting worse rather than better. Robert Solow, serving as vice chairman of

68 contract march 2010 www.contractdesign.com

an MIT blue ribbon panel on American productivity, summed up the situation this way: "If someone landed from Mars or, more to the point, from Tokyo, he'd conclude that the computer has had essentially no impact on our white-collar productivity [Fortune, September 28, 1987, p. 62]." Anecdotal evidence garnered from survey research conducted by BOSTI, Steelcase, and others notwithstanding, the same can certainly be said for systems furniture and "new" approaches to office design.

This doesn't mean, of course, that people shouldn't expect to work in safe, supportive environments, or that they won't be more satisfied—and perhaps even work a bit harder—if they have non-glare task lighting..., a pleasant view, an operable window, a closeable door, individualized control over air flow and temperature, more space to spread out, and an ergonomically designed chair.

However, this again misses the essential point. This is one of those all too frequent instances where corporate America and its designers, with all good intentions, are trying to solve the wrong problem.

#### The knowledge machine

Just as the sun looks as if it revolves around the earth, the office often looks like a factory. In fact, parts of some offices...even function like the "paper mills" that they really are. However, when it comes to what most of us think of as "office work"... we need something that will help us gain enough perspective to see the office for what it really is—how it really works.

We are all familiar with the concept of analogy—a form of logical inference in which it is assumed that if two things are alike in some respects, then they must be alike in other respects. Used properly, analogy can be a powerful problemsolving tool. For example, the story is told that Henry Ford got the idea for the automobile assembly line by watching beef carcasses being pushed along an overhead rail in a meat packing plant while individual butchers performed specialized operations as each carcass passed by their work stations—just as "Model Ts" were later pushed from station to station along overhead

rails in Ford's first assembly plants. Whether this story is apocryphal or not, it clearly illustrates the intellectual power of analogy.

Imperfectly drawn, however, analogies can be problematic and, when it comes to an issue as important as maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage in a rapidly changing world, even downright dangerous. For example, with the development of robotics and concepts like computer-integrated manufacturing (CIM), a traditional assembly line is probably the least cost-effective way to produce cars today. Nevertheless, breaking out of traditional ways of thinking about the process of building cars...continues to be on of the biggest competitive stumbling blocks facing American automobile manufacturers.

When it comes to addressing the "problem" of office productivity, exactly the same thing is happening today in the office....The office-asinformation factory analogy has led management to adopt a mechanistic way of thinking about the office, both as a physical entity and as a process. Many companies even have gone so far as to try to measure "office productivity" in the same way it has historically been measured on the farm and in the factory—in terms of the efficiency with which inputs are converted into outputs—leading to such absurdities as multibillion dollar corporations worrying about counting the keystrokes of individual word processing operators.

It is true that offices, like factories, have floors, walls, and ceilings. But here the similarity ends. While we can talk about the "flow" of office work and the "productivity" of office workers, the office is not an "information factory." In fact, the office is not a factory of any sort. This helps to explain why productivity improvement strategies that have worked so amazingly well in the fields and on the shop floor have largely failed to live up to management's expectations when transferred into the office.

Clearly, we have lost sight of the purpose of the office..... The office wasn't invented to fulfill some deeply felt social need.... The purpose of the office

is not to produce what we normally think of as "information"—the memos, letters, management reports, etc., that pile up on our desks. Rather, it is to create knowledge, which allows us to get along in a hostile and (more often than not) contradictory world. This is the purpose of the human mind. As an extension of the human mind, it is also the purpose of the office.

The distinction between information and knowledge is not a trivial one—something that Francis Bacon knew very well when he observed, in *Meditationes Sacrae* (1957), that "knowledge is power." Information, rather than being something tangible that can be "managed," is simply what chemists would call an "intermediate product" in the intellectual process we call information processing. It is an intellectual experience, based on the interpretation of sensory data (sights, sounds, smells, etc.), which answers some immediate question about the world we live in.

Our day-to-day survival as a species depends on how efficiently we process data from the environment. Likewise, it is in the management of the process of information processing—both at the individual level and, equally important, at the organizational level—that companies will find the key to increased competitiveness, not in the management of artifacts of the process. Nevertheless, it is in the management of artifacts that most companies are spending the bulk of their technology dollars today. However, in a world in which intellectual agility counts for much more than physical prowess, companies must learn to manage what is essentially an intellectual rather than a production process.

This will be a difficult challenge to meet. Not only will it require a totally different set of management skills than that which exists in today's executive ranks...but it will very likely mean the demise of the office as we have come to know and love it. Why? Because, as companies are inextricably drawn into the vortex of what Harvard sociology professor David Bell has dubbed the "post-industrial" society, competitive pressures will force management to ask—and answer—what is

perhaps the most difficult question of all: If we didn't have offices as we know them today, what (if anything) would we invent?

Perhaps needless to say, as the office goes, so goes office design.

#### The birth of the virtual office

For the first time in history, officing—undertaking the intellectual work that is necessary to meet a commonly agreed upon set of organizational goals and objectives—can take place with total independence of time and space, something that was impossible before the development of modern telecommunication and transportation technology.

This doesn't necessarily mean, of course, that future generations of middle managers will find themselves working out of "electronic cottages" rather than traditional office buildings—although that possibility certainly exists. What it does mean, however, is that management can, if it chooses, begin to free itself from traditional concerns like constructing corporate headquarters buildings and focus, instead, on two much more critical issues:

- Managing organizational knowledge.
- Managing variables that impact the efficiency of organization-level information processing.

This, in turn, will require management to pay much more attention than it does today to the question of how and where people work best.

If our goal is to take fullest advantage of our intellectual resources...we can no longer afford to adopt a monolithic approach to the office. We can no longer afford to constrain our most valuable asset—the human mind—by force fitting it into what amounts to an anachronistic straightjacket called "the office," no matter how pleasant and well-planned that office may be, and no matter how many design awards it may have won. We have to find ways to exploit the fact that not only do we often do our best intellectual work at strange times and in strange places (and sometimes even in strange company), but that the mind "works" 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for as long as we live. And herein lies both the risk—and the opportunity—for the design profession: management has no one else to turn to help them meet this challenge.

For years, the behavioral sciences have been viewed with skepticism (if not outright derision) by top management. Perhaps this skepticism is deserved, perhaps it is not. Nevertheless, the office—whatever form it eventually takes—has been and will forever remain a behavioral rather than a technical phenomenon.

Thus, management will need designers who understand how to create and manage the creation of knowledge systems—information processing megasystems that are, themselves, comprised of individual information processing systems we call people. This will require:

• An in-depth understanding of the process of human information processing and, of equal importance, an in-depth understanding of the role that technology

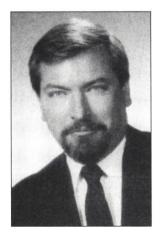
can and should play in this regard, whether we are talking about computers or buildings—an expertise that doesn't exist in most organizations today.

- An amalgam of what are now viewed as distinct disciplines—architecture (and, in particular, interior architecture), the cognitive sciences, sociology, information systems, and probably a number of others.
- The ability to design seamless infrastructures of technology (including, of course, facilities) that support officing whenever, wherever, and in whatever form it requires to be effective—at home, in the car, on an airplane, in a hotel, or even in a "traditional" office setting.

Obviously, this is not something that today's designers are well-prepared to do, even if they wanted to. However, it is an issue that will confront the design profession head-on in the not too distant future. Why? Because this is not only an American problem. The issue of increased office productivity—of intellectual competitiveness—is on the minds of management in virtually all industrialized countries (and even in some countries like China that although not full industrialized, are keeping a weather eye to the future).

As for the future of office design, the scenario cast here holds both risk and opportunity. The opportunity is evident. The risk, on the other hand, is that a totally new profession will emerge that will subsume much of what has traditionally been viewed as the purview of design.

This is not as far-fetched as it might sound. Throughout history, lots of professions have come and gone, more often than not as a direct result of technological shifts like the one the world is now experiencing. And consider this: Japan has recently taken a keen interest in what they call "FM"—facility management. Only some Japanese companies have a rather interesting perspective on what this term encompasses—everything from the design of a corporate logo to the management of a corporate culture. How does that old saying go? "Forewarned is forearmed."



Duncan Sutherland is chairman of the Sutherland Group, Inc., Socio + Technical Systems Consultants, Reston, Va. He consults with corporations and governments in the United States and abroad on issues related to technology strategy and the development of innovative, technologically enabled approaches to improved office productivity. Prior to that, he was a vice president and director of officing for Houston-based CRS Sirrine Inc., where he continues as officing consultant. He is the author of a Japanese book on the future of the office, Officing: Bringing Amenities and Intelligence to Knowledge Work.



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June 1990

## If you cut your fee, do you bleed?

ou've done your best to win the job. Pored over the RFP minutely since the client invited you just two weeks ago. Coached your team through nonstop days and nights. Pulled together a solid proposal—only to be told you've lost. In the follow-up call to the client you hear that all the short-listed firms offered competent solutions. "But you priced the design fee at \$2.25 a square foot," the voice at the other end finally concludes. "The winning firm quoted 75 cents."

Even if these remarks were not based on an actual incident involving a complex office design in New York City (they were), other examples are all too easy to find. Architects and interior designers are losing a small yet significant number of commissions to reputable competitors who bid so low that clients feel they must accept them. For practitioners who recall the dark days of the mid-1970s, when overbuilding created excess inventories of space and a glut of design talent, this situation has the aura of a *deja vu*.

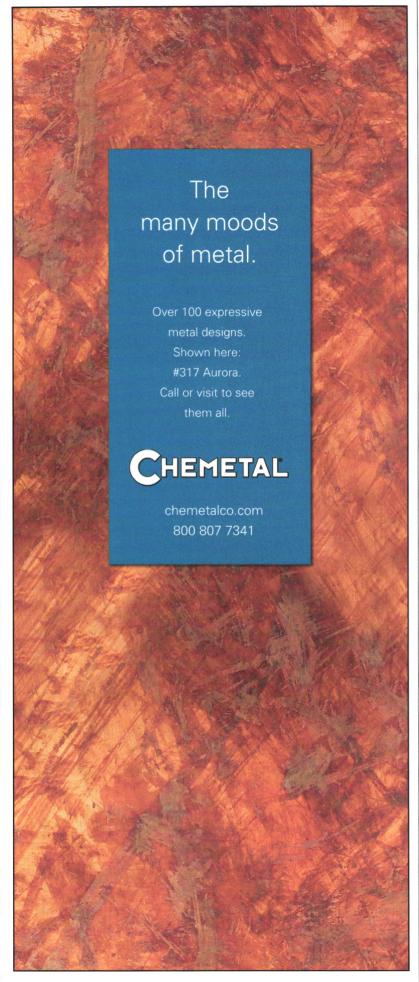
Designers can readily understand why firms are tempted to undercut fees. Keeping otherwise idle staff is important, even when profit is sacrificed; many organizations are loathe to dismantle talented teams that have taken years to assemble and train. And "investing" in an important new client is another rationale for selling design services below cost; one commission can lead to years of repeat business that could more than compensate for the initial loss.

Yet the overall impact of fee cutting is disastrous to both individual firms and the design profession as a whole. It's obviously bad business to deliver services at no profit or a loss; sooner or later the firms that play this game may come to grief, particularly if the anticipated change orders, special services, or reopened contract negotiations fail to cover the shortfall. Even more, it's discrediting to all architects and interior designers to devalue design services in the eyes of the public; for all the schooling, problem solving and responsibility involved in design projects, practitioners are paid little enough as it is.

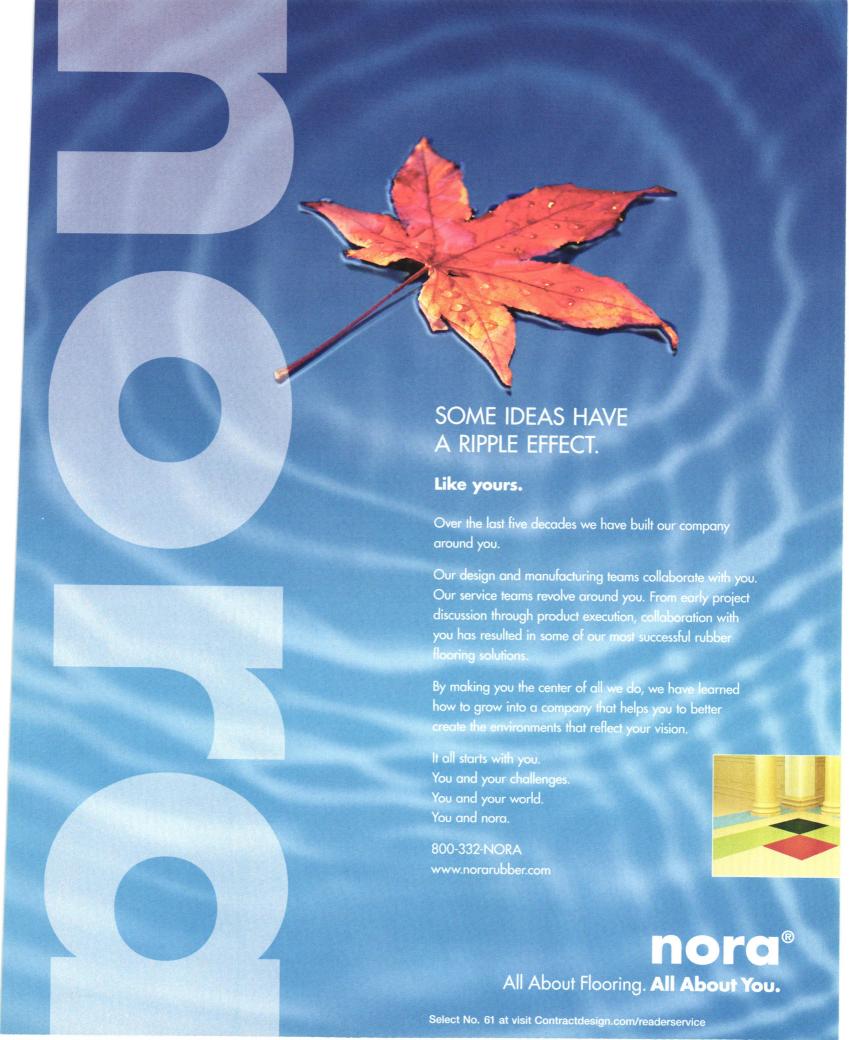
Ultimately, architects and interior designers would have much more to gain by educating society about the true value of design in our lives—and receive a fair days wage for a day's design work.



Roger Yee, Editor-in-Chief



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a romp through history, contract style

By Jennifer Thiele Busch

n this industry, pictures speak volumes. So when *Contract's* editors spent weeks perusing decades of archives to capture the story of our past, we ultimately decided that the richness of our content over 50 years' time is best expressed by a visual history. What follows, then, is a photographic essay that begins in 1961 (the first issue of the magazine was actually published in November 1960) and traces the development of commercial interior design up through the present (May 2009, to be more precise).

Over the years, *Contract* has covered some the most significant and forward-thinking design projects of the times, many of which are depicted here and arranged according to the month and year in which they were published (not necessarily the year in which they were completed). What this visual continuum shows is not only the fascinating evolution of design trends and the influential design firms that helped establish them, but also the evolving and ever important mission of the magazine to cover commercial design in a broad range of industries and across a wide geographic spectrum.

In November 1960, Contract was introduced to the A&D community as, "A magazine devoted to the planning, design, logistics, and maintenance of furnishings for commercial and institutional facilities of all types, published every month for firms and individuals who specify, design, buy, or replace contract furnishings." In truth, the magazine became so much more. Under the successive leadership of its longest-serving editors in chief, Len Corlin, Roger Yee, and myself, Contract was transformed into a design publication with a unique business focus: to equate good design with good business. Which is cause and which is effect is hard to say. But according to the Contractian history we have accumulated here, interior designers and architects clearly have played an integral role in the evolution of American business culture as we know it today.







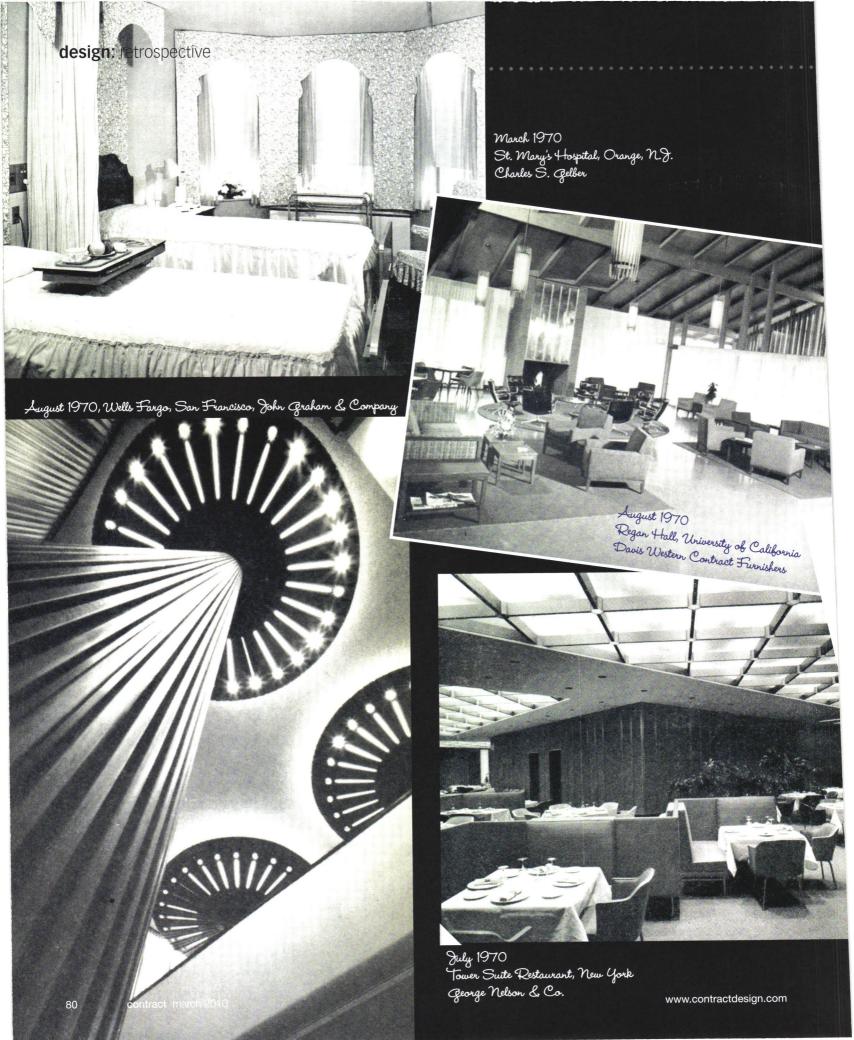


July 1971 T. Jones, Los Angeles Saphier, Lerner, Schindler Max Rinc ptember 1964 enyon & Eckhardt, Pan Am Build ew York, The Space Design Group Lugust 1970
Bank of America World Headquarters, San Francisco
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill May 1970 won & Boules, New York The Space Day Group

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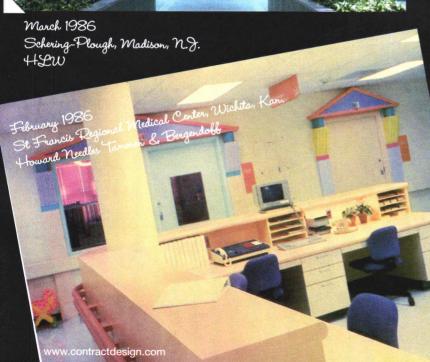


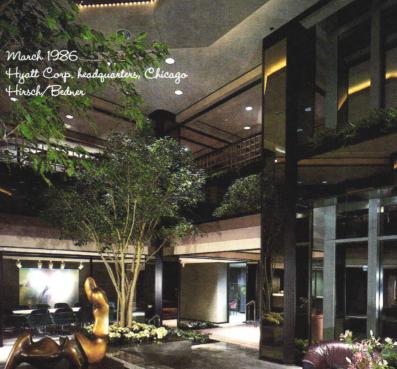


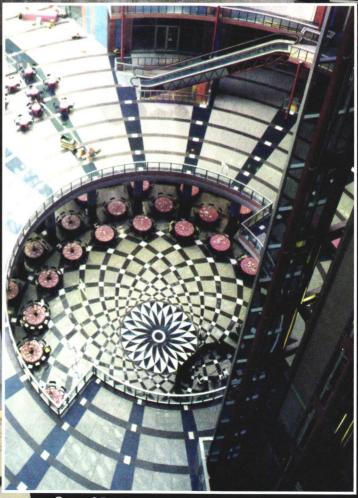


design: retrospective April 1985, Atwaters, Portland, Ore., Zimmer Gunsul Frasca March 1985 National Geographic headquarters, Washington, D.C. Skidmore, Owings & Mervill September 1981 Monterey Conference Center, Monterey, Calif. VBN Corporation June 1986, Prudential-Bache Securities, New York, Swanke Hayden Connell www.contractdesign.com 84 contract march 2010

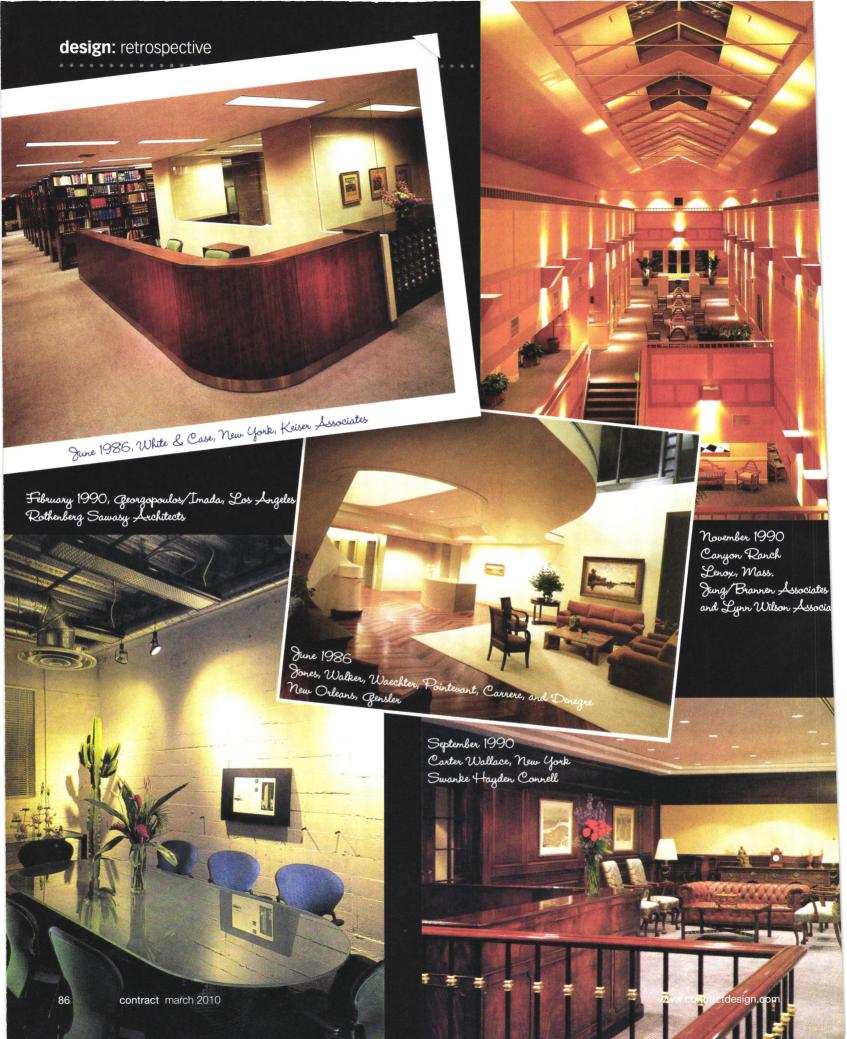




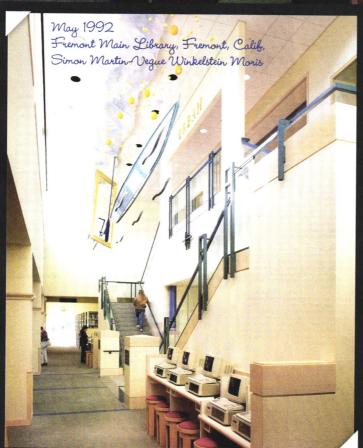


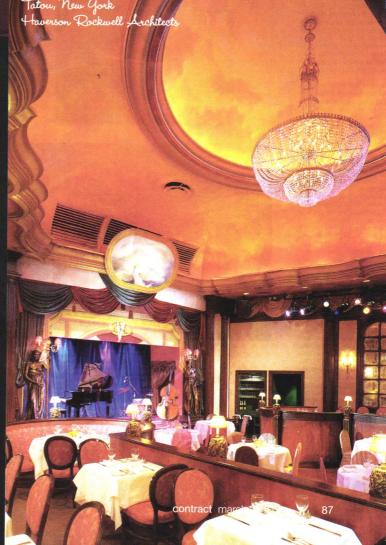


June 1985 State of Illinois Center, Chicago VOL



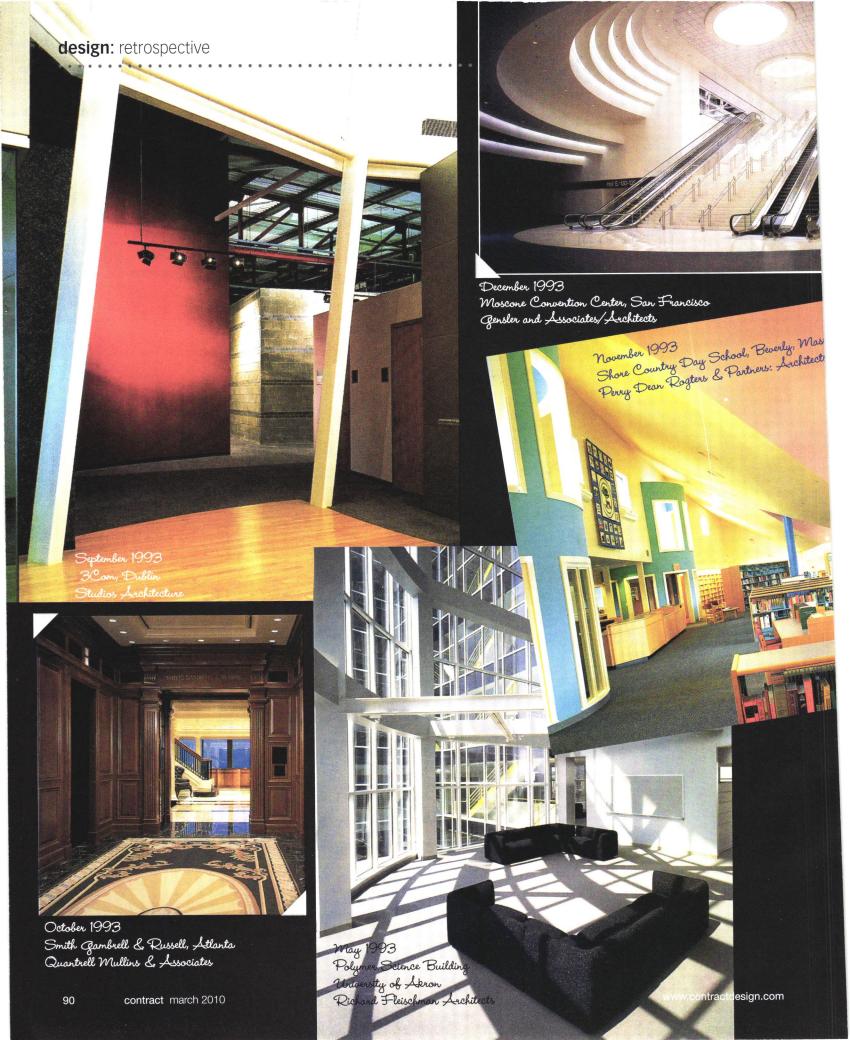














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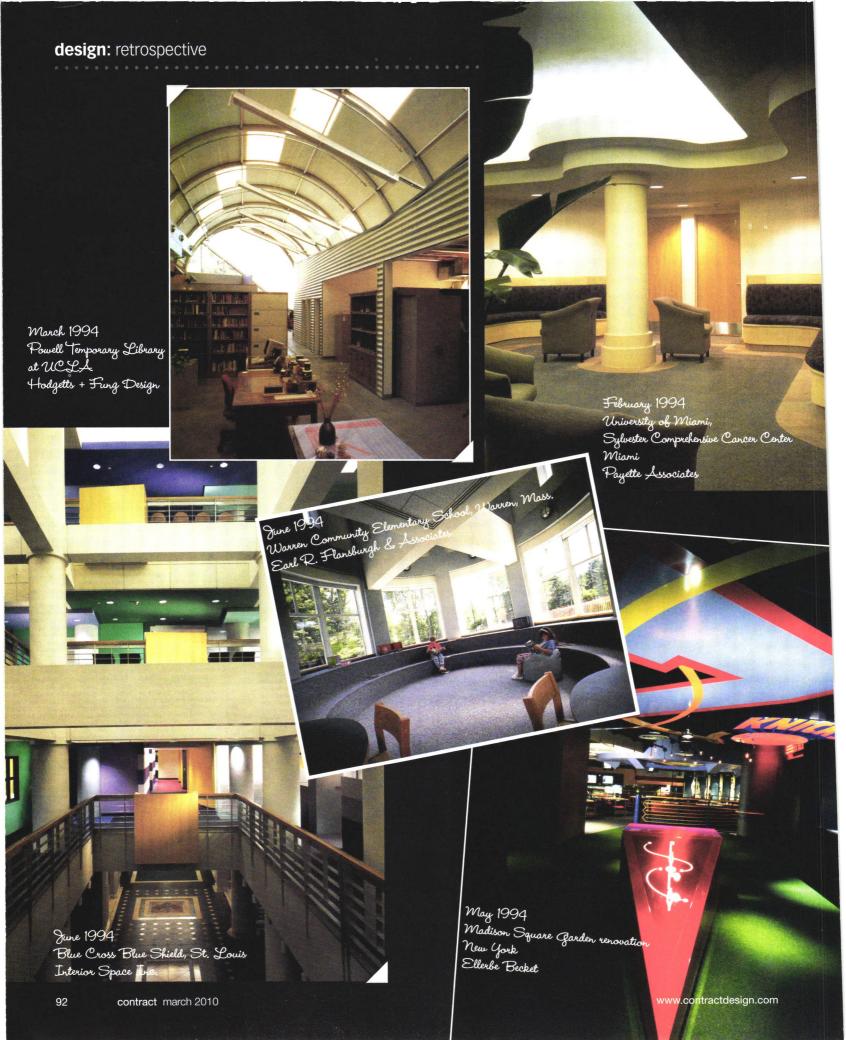
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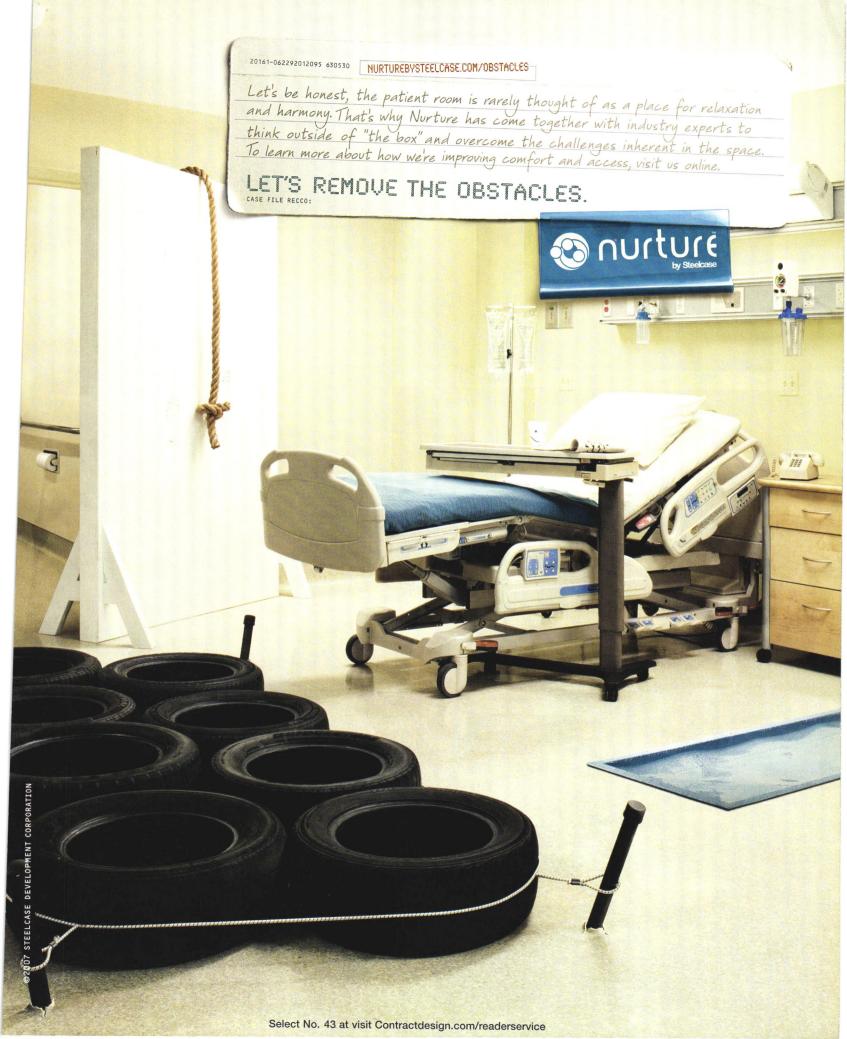
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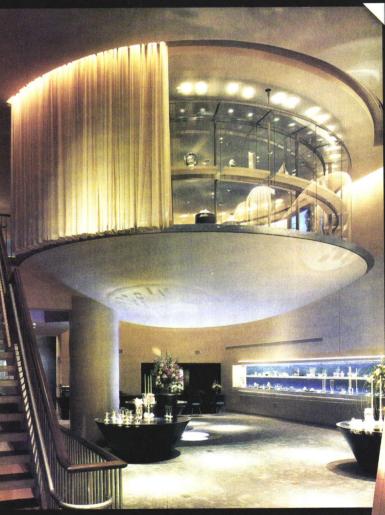




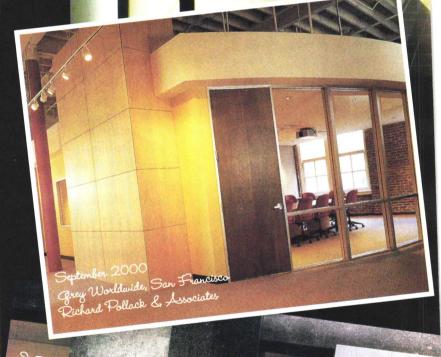
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March 2000 Intech Construction, Philadelphia, The Hillier Group



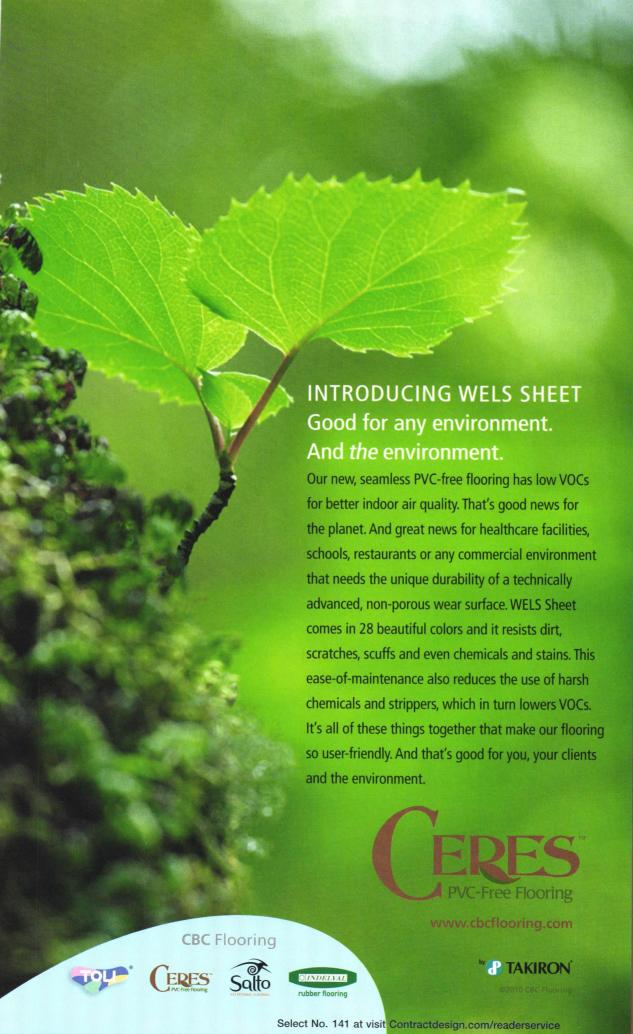


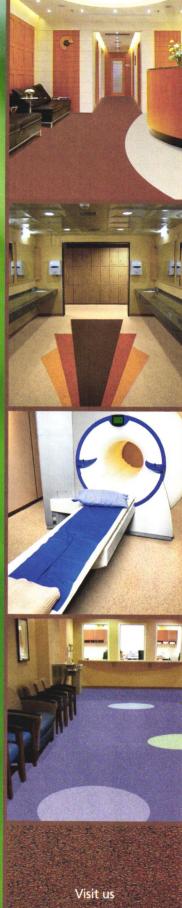
December 2000, Steuben Madison Lvenue, New York Ralph Appelbaum Lisociates



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### design: retrospective

May 2002 MasterCard Global Technology and Operations Center St. Louis, HOK



October 2005 Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Karlsberger & Associates



April 2004 Gengyme, Boston Behnisch, Behnisch & Partner February 2006 Arigona State University, Tempe, Arig. Interdisciplinary Science + Technology Building richärd + bauer

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## more happiness, less stuff

By Ray C. Anderson



Ray C. Anderson Chairman and Founder, Interface, Inc., and author of Confessions of a Radical Industrialist

ore happiness, less stuff. It's the conclusion I've been drawing lately on the speaking circuit, as I describe my reworking of a famous equation by Paul and Anne Ehrlich from their book *The Population Bomb*—the environmental impact equation. It is a mathematical depiction of the negative impact of population, affluence, and technology on the environment. As I work through to a new solution, I make the case for minimizing negative technologies and maximizing beneficial technologies. We wind up with less affluence (less stuff), but more happiness. This always gets a big reaction – audiences love the idea of more happiness, less stuff. So why do we find ourselves in the mess that we're in, environmentally and socially speaking?

Industrialism—the industrial system of which we are each a part—developed in a different world from the one in which we live today: fewer people, more plentiful natural resources, simpler lifestyles, less stuff. It made perfect sense to exploit nature to increase human productivity—300 years ago! These days, with people overly abundant and nature scarce and diminishing, industry moves, mines, extracts, shovels, burns, wastes, pumps, and disposes of four million pounds of material to provide one average, middle class American family its needs for a year. With the whole world aspiring to the American standard of living, that cannot go on in a finite Earth. And it is finite. You can see it from space; that's all there is, and there isn't any more. The rate of material throughput—the metabolism of the industrial system—is now endangering prosperity, as much as enhancing it, and the toxicity of some of that stuff is really endangering the biosphere, thus everyone's health—ours and that of the 30 million other species that share the biosphere with us. Clearly, it is manifestly the wrong thing to do.

When you talk of viewing environmental destruction as the "wrong thing to do," you're talking about what I see as a shifting mind-set, a growing sense of ethics. This growing sense of ethics might be the push we need to find our way out of the mess that we're in.

In the final analysis, the ethical thing—the right thing to do—is driven by enlightened self interest. The study of ecology tells us we are part of nature, not above or outside it. It also tells us that what we do to the web of life we do to ourselves. Industrial ecology tells us the industrial system, as it operates today, simply cannot continue on taking, making, wasting—abusing the web of life. The industrial system takes too much, extracting and frittering away Earth's natural capital on wants, not needs. It wastes too much. It abuses too much. It takes stuff and makes stuff that very quickly ends up in landfills or incinerators—more waste, more abuse, more pollution. I'm told that less than 3 percent of the throughput of the entire industrial system has any value six

months afterward. We industrialists operate a waste-making machine. Each of us is part of the problem—either as producer, specifier, user, or consumer.

I believe that a sustainable society depends totally and absolutely on a new mind shift to deeply embrace ethical values—values that, along with an enlightened self-interest, drive us to make new decisions. I also believe that It doesn't happen quickly. It happens one mind at a time, one organization at a time, one building, one company, one community, one region, one new, clean technology, one industry, one supply chain at a time—until the entire industrial system has been transformed into a sustainable system existing ethically in balance with Earth's natural systems, upon which every living thing is utterly dependent. Again, what we do to the web of life, we do to ourselves.

"We industrialists operate a wastemaking machine. Each of us is part of the problem, either as producer, specifier, user, or consumer...what we do to the web of life, we do to ourselves."

So what about this sacred shrine of growth and affluence, the one that fuels the extractive, abusive, and linear technologies upon which we are so dependent? How do we make the shift? How do we decide, if we are moving toward a sustainable society, what should grow? What should not grow?

Here are some thoughts to stimulate your thinking: The lowest impact technologies, those that are beneficial, should grow. The abusive technologies should shrink and eventually disappear. The sale of services should grow. The sale of products should shrink. Applied brainpower should grow. Applied brute force should shrink. Market shares for the sustainable companies should grow. For companies that are not sustainable, market shares should shrink—to zero.

Each of us has a role to play, each of us has power. The power to vote, with our dollar and our ballot. The power to shape commerce, with what we buy and don't buy. We have power as individuals and collectively as a community. We each make choices, large and small, every day, that translate into power—power to change the paradigm.

To get where we need to go requires a vast mind shift that leads to a cumulative and collective mandate: Less stuff, more happiness. Will we get there in time?  $\blacksquare$ 

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# the social aspect of social responsibility

By John Cary



Ahead is a magnet for youth and teens. It's not a Juicy Couture or Abercrombie & Fitch clothier, nor a movie theater, arcade, or any of the other usual suspects. This, instead, is the dazzling new home of a chapter of non-profit Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, a more than 100-year-old youth mentoring organization.

Through a mix of color, playfulness, and restraint, this is a space that dignifies. Fully integrating the staff and youth spaces, rather than separating them, the design uniquely blurs the line between the server and the served. It is not patronizing for its young and sometimes too-cool visitors. Nor does it understate the commitment that the organization's staff members make to their chosen cause. None of this happened by accident; it was a deliberate act.

# Social responsibility must not subsist as a by-product of our down economy, where doing good and feeling good have become stand-ins for big budgets and other measures of success.

This project is a prime example of socially responsible design, and not just because it recently clinched one of the top prizes in *Contract's* second annual Inspirations Awards; rather, because it literally transformed a blighted corner and a vacant building into state-of-the-art headquarters for an organization that changes lives. This project exemplifies that good causes deserve good spaces. It is at once an example of socially responsible design and a model for design generally.

The project was undertaken by Perkins+Will, which in 2008 launched a first-of-its-kind, firm-wide Social Responsibility Initiative (SRI). The initiative places social responsibility alongside the firm's stated commitments to design excellence, practice excellence, and excellence in sustainable design, providing a platform for no-fee and reduced-fee services, the latter of which made the Big Brothers Big Sisters space possible.



John Cary Executive Director, Public Architecture, and editor of *The Power of Pro Bono:* 40 Stories by Clients and Their Architects (Fall 2010; Metropolis Books)

To forecast the future of social responsibility in the design fields, we can look to the present efforts of both large firms like Perkins+Will as well as smaller practices. The main gathering space for this cross-section of firms is "The 1%" pro bono program of Public Architecture. If more than 750 design firms and an estimated \$25 million in pro bono design services represent the present, or the status quo, we can have high hopes for the future of social responsibility. We can look ahead to the day that the quantities expressed in those aforementioned and growing numbers are outpaced by a focus on quality.

Social responsibility is arguably the most feel-good but least sexy of the five topics discussed in the future essays presented in these pages. It is difficult to pinpoint a sense of "responsibility" as being a significant motivator for this type of work, but not at all difficult to understand the social aspects that fuel this kind of work. Indeed, in a recent survey of more than 500 design firms by Harvard Business School, an overwhelming majority of respondents cited giving back to one's community, social relevance, and personal satisfaction as primary motivators of respondents' social responsibility work.

The key, if it is to shape the future of practice, is for social responsibility to draw on the same tried-and-true practices that designers employ to realize their fee-generating projects. It avoids positioning design "for good" outside of or separate from design excellence, as has been the case over time.

The late, great architect Samuel Mockbee once said, "If architecture is going to nudge, cajole, and inspire a community to challenge the status quo into making responsible changes, it will take the subversive leadership of academics and practitioners who keep reminding us of the profession's responsibilities." Assuming Mockbee's proclamation extends to all forms of design, we are arguably beyond the need for subversion.

A glance at some past Designers of the Year provides some insight. Whether a high design firm like GRAFT rounding up world-renowned designers to work beside them in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, or David Rockwell's firm designing both the Oscars stage set and libraries for under-resourced public schools throughout New York City, it is no wonder that social responsibility has risen to a status deemed on par with these other four topics identified by *Contract* as shaping the future of practice.

Social responsibility must not, however, subsist as little more than a by-product of our down economy, where doing good and feeling good have become stand-ins for big budgets and other measures of success. Instead, it must be celebrated, critiqued, and the centerpiece of all design practices, now and into the future.

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## leading in the global market



Ross Donaldson Group Managing Director Woods Bagot, Hong Kong office

By Ross Donaldson, RAIA

fter a devastating year of layoffs, furloughs, and closures, businesses are repositioning for the post-great recession economy. What will this new economic landscape look like? While leading economists may debate how slow the pace of recovery will be, there is little debate that the response to dramatic changes in the global economy will be key. For companies involved in commercial interior design and architecture, these changes have implications for how we work and the types of environments our clients will need.

#### What's Ahead

"Two-speed economy" is a term we will hear more often. This characterizes the disparity between growth projections for advanced economies in the West and for the world's major developing countries—in particular, Brazil, Russia, India, and China, also known as the BRIC economies. Although it shows a definite improvement over the GDP losses of 2009, the International Monetary Fund's 2010 forecast indicates very slow growth in the United States (2.7 percent) and Europe (1.0 percent). In contrast, the IMF expects China and India to surge ahead with 10 percent and 7.7 percent growth, respectively, with more modest growth anticipated for Brazil and Russia. While some questions remain about the underlying structural strength of Russia's economy, this dual-speed growth is a long-term trend expected to shape the global economy over the next decade.

Debt is another key issue. In dramatic contrast to the United States and Europe, India and China have no real debt. In fact they have massive surpluses and savings—household, business, and government. It is a potent combination. The recent bank bailouts alone equaled 50 percent of Europe's GDP, while in the United States the figure was in the range of 18 percent of GDP.

China's reserves will figure significantly in its post-recession strategy. Before the recession, exports comprised about 65 percent of China's economy. To sustain its GDP growth, economists like Paul Krugman believe China will invest heavily in domestic markets.

These statistics provide an opportunity for innovative A&D firms that have the flexibility to respond to this dramatically altered landscape of the marketplace. Strong growth in China, India, Brazil, and perhaps Russia means demand will continue for international expertise and consulting services in those markets, but there are many ramifications.

#### The New Global Design Practice

Gary Hamel, the London School of Business professor recently named the world's most influential business thinker by the *Wall Street Journal*, speaks emphatically about the need for companies to "change as fast as change itself." This idea can seem daunting to a profession that has pretty institutionalized ways of working, but it is essential to participating in the global market.

While being responsive always has been a basic tenet of good business, responsiveness is now a more complex proposition. It includes a range of factors—from having the flexibility to deliver the best expertise wherever in the world it is needed, to offering innovative products and services, to integrating new technologies that bridge the geographic distance.

Perhaps more challenging are the organizational implications. Global businesses need an organizational structure that provides the ability to act strategically in both local and global markets. A strong, distributed leadership team that can effectively make decisions about the whole company also is critical. Companies that are inflexible and operate in geographic or organizational silos will be less able to change in meaningful ways to relate to the rapidly evolving marketplace.

From a design perspective, architects will need to address workplaces and corporate campuses more holistically and less formally—as a series of integrated systems rather than a traditional design problem, recognizing that rapidly evolving work practices require radical approaches to planning interiors and, consequently, base buildings. Trends towards less hierarchical and more fluid workspaces will continue as companies seek to gain efficiency—in terms of both physical space and operations—and to meet the imperatives for mobility and agility.

#### Leading a Sustainable Future

This systems approach circles back to another important global trend: sustainability. Last year's Copenhagen Climate Conference may not have reached an overtly successful political outcome, but the reality of what's

## "Global businesses need an organizational structure that provides the ability to act strategically in both local and global markets."

behind it—the real need for a zero-carbon economy by 2050, to avoid the climate change "tipping point" of a two-degree Celsius increase in the earth's temperature—is reflected in a recent ground shift. In April 2009, the European Parliament resolved that beginning in 2019 all new buildings in the European Union would meet zero-energy standards. For public buildings the policy would take effect by 2016. China followed in November with a commitment to reducing carbon emissions by 40 to 45 percent by 2020, relative to 2005 levels.

The business community has moved on this agenda as well. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development—an organization that promotes the business case for sustainable practices such as developing zero-energy buildings—now boasts more than 200 members including DuPont, Philips, Coca-Cola, and Toyota.

Future successful design firms will match this ground shift with a commitment to zero-emissions architecture, as well as leadership that moves the industry ahead of LEED and BREEAM. Again, having the flexibility to quickly integrate new expertise or forge new modes of collaboration will be key to achieving this goal.

Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch has written that inventing the future is a defining aspect of leadership. As professionals who bridge creativity and business, architects and designers are uniquely positioned to lead change in an increasingly global economy,ww rather than follow it.

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Cathryn Barrett, AIA, LEED AP Designer WRNS Studio, San Francisco

## technology trends: changing the way designers work

By Cathryn Barrett for Contract

echnology has come a long way since the first CAD programs of the 1980s when young designers often were hired simply to translate handmade drawings into bits and pixels, while the more experienced staff members clung to their pencils for the truly creative work. Today, technology has become much more pervasive at all levels of experience, changing the way we approach the very practice of design.

#### **Laser Cutters**

Model-making laser cutters have been around for a long time as a tool of professional model makers who cranked out finished products rather than design studies. With the introduction of laser cutters into design schools, recent graduates are as facile using them as my generation was with an X-Acto knife. Today, if you can draw a planar construct in CAD, you can cut it nearly as fast as you can plot it. We now have the luxury of developing multiple design iterations in-house before committing to a solution. One also can take a form modeled in a 3-D program and with unfolding tools, flatten it into a 2-D drawing that can be cut by the laser cutter, and then folded like origami to create an actual model. We use the laser on a variety of tasks, from investigating patterns of openings to creating full-scale mock-ups of components like signage or making color and material boards with beautifully engraved labels.

Smartphones

While mobile phones are ubiquitous, not everyone takes full advantage of the smartphone. With the iPhone, I can navigate (to Web sites or job sites), calculate (fees, hours, area, or costs), translate (dimensions or languages), investigate (products and services), and coordinate (meetings and drawings) on the fly. Many apps recapture time for design by supporting mundane office drudgery regarding travel, expense reports, timesheets, and invoicing. We now can leave the tape measure, camera, video camera, voice recorder, calculator, GPS, pocket dictionary, laser pointer, and appointment book at the office. The phone allows us to talk while accessing other information, which avoids those "let me get back to you" delays.

When encountering an issue on the job site that needs quick resolution, designers can photograph issues, immediately e-mail or text the photos, and conference call multiple parties to resolve the issue. "I'm not a frequent user of computer technologies, but I'm a complete convert to the Motorola Droid smartphone," says Mark Harbick, AIA, Contract's 2006 Designer of the Year and now an independent design consultant in Manhattan. "I use it to stay in touch with clients and team members while I'm on the road—sending e-mails, answering calls, taking photos, and figuring out where I am with Google maps." In the future he'll be probably be able to Web conference from his phone.

Today, technology has become much more pervasive at all levels of experience, changing the way we approach the very practice of design.

#### **Video Conferencing**

Video teleconferencing improves teaming and coordination while saving time, money, and carbon emissions. Now Web-based systems like Skype and iChat have brought this formerly expensive propriety technology to the masses. Since designers and architects tend to be visual communicators, the ability to screen-share is key. These conferences are even more effective with new viewer software that allows parties to view and spin 3-D models without requiring an expensive license. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some firms are making use of very high-tech solutions. "HOK has invested in PolyVision's Thunder technology, which allows people in multiple locations to see and work on the same design or technical documents or a simple flip chart at the same time," says Clark Davis, vice chairman of HOK. "We have coupled that with the Cisco TelePresence videoconferencing system in rooms that we call 'Advanced Collaboration Rooms' in many of HOK's office locations. That saves a lot of trouble, costs, and carbon."

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#### **Google Products**

When I participated in the Pilot Phase of LEED-CI, I actually had to send staff into the field to document the heights of adjacent buildings to calculate the obvious—that our project was in a dense urban environment. With the aid of Google Earth and Google Street View, this previously time-consuming documentation now can happen almost instantaneously from one's computer. Likewise, many LEED sustainable site or regional material points can be documented using Google Earth features. SketchUp is another Google product that has dramatically changed our work practice, enabling quick 3-D visualization of concepts that clients can move through.

#### **Building Information Modeling**

Three-dimensional modeling once was discrete from documentation. Now, early adopters of BIM are reaping the rewards, and those late to convert likely are feeling the pressure to move to an integrated 3-D design and documentation tool. "It has transformed the way we work," says Robin Donaldson, AIA, principal of Shubin + Donaldson Architects. "It forces you to make decisions earlier in the design process. If you use it in schematic design, you need to make critical decisions about the materials, mechanical systems, and structural systems. That's good, because you can't delay critical decisions—BIM forces you to conceptualize more rigorously."

#### De-silo-izing the tools

Beyond the discrete tools, tremendous power lies in knowing how to integrate them, and this is what really defines the cutting edge. Once, there were distinct tools for designing work (trace and AutoCAD) and others for presenting work (models, perspective renderings, or a computer model), and they would be executed sequentially in isolation using an analog interface.

These days, interiors projects often begin with an AutoCAD file of the building supplied by the owner. One designer might use it to create a Revit base model. Another designer might be using the same AutoCAD file in SketchUp to generate conceptual ideas. These ideas would be incorporated into the Revit model to make them more precise and to interface with other disciplines. If a study model is needed, the Revit files are saved to use as plot files for the laser cutter. For a quick progress presentation, the Revit model could be imported back to SketchUp to apply materials, add furniture from Google 3-D Warehouse or manufacturers, study daylighting, or add Google Earth views for context. Illustrator, Photoshop, and PowerPoint help with the creation and presentation of the product. Without clear lines between where one technology stops and the next begins, this kind of "digital collage" is perhaps the model of 21st-century design.



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Michael Berens Director of Research and Knowledge Resources, American Society of Interior Designers

### inadmissible evidence

By Michael Berens

esearch has become a hot topic lately in interior design, mostly due to the desire on the part of both designers and clients to substantiate claims of performance, especially in the arenas of sustainability, healthcare, and workplace environments. Clients are looking beyond "bang for the buck" to "triple bottom line" indicators of desired economic, social and environmental outcomes. How much energy will they save? How much more productive and creative will their workers be? How much faster will patients heal?

Designers to a large extent have responded to these demands by Googling. When designers talk about doing research for projects, usually they mean they are looking up information, searching for products, or doing programming. Some turn to clearinghouses like InformeDesign and Design Research Connections to gather findings from engineers, ergonomists, behavioral scientists, gerontologists, and others that they can use in developing their solutions. Most designers, however, are not trained in the use of secondary research and thus tend to cherry pick those studies that are easily accessible or confirm their intuitions.

A study published last year in the *Journal of Interior Design* found that most interior design educators do not engage in research, and most interior design programs do not offer courses in research methods, at least not at the undergraduate level. Although nearly all the educators in the study said they believe research adds value to design practice, many perceive that the ability to conduct good research is not valued in design firms. There are several reasons, I think, why this is so.

"Interior design is very pragmatic. It draws upon the knowledge of a plethora of disciplines but lacks a theoretical foundation of its own to provide a framework for that knowledge"

Designers first and foremost think of themselves as problem solvers. And almost exclusively, the problems they seek to solve are those given to them by their clients. Interior design is very pragmatic. It draws upon the knowledge of a plethora of disciplines but lacks a theoretical foundation of its own to provide

a framework for that knowledge. Designers will work and rework a solution to make it the very best it can be, but in my experience, designers do not spend a lot of time thinking about design itself. Take a look at the program for just about any design conference, and you will see what I mean. Most sessions are about marketing and other business issues, new products and technologies, and case studies. Research presentations, if there are any, are usually delivered by an industry company or a professional from a related field.

Furthermore, designers are learning on the run. Client schedules and budgets leave little opportunity for pre- and post-occupancy evaluations, prototyping, or in-depth analysis of alternative solutions. In many cases, designers never know how well their designs have performed and thus have little incentive to reflect on what could have made them better. Consequently, interior designers often fall prey to what we might call the "effective fallacy," attributing outcomes to a design based on how it is intended to perform rather than on objective observation and criteria gathered over a period of use.

For years designers have been telling clients that investing in good design is a wise decision, because design is good for business. Well-designed spaces have been shown to increase productivity, boost sales, improve occupancy rates, fill seats, promote healing, and transform a location into a destination. All these claims are legitimate to some degree, but they are difficult to measure or quantify. Although documented, they often derive from intuitive, deductive, and subjective conclusions.

The widespread adoption of LEED and the growing interest in evidence-based design suggest that, in some fields at least, designers are beginning to recognize a need for more understanding and documentation of the causal links between design choices and desired outcomes. Dr. Caren Martin, the director of InformeDesign, has argued that it is just good business sense for firms to invest in training designers to become good consumers of research, because research stimulates designers to be more creative and responsive to the needs of the client.

Interior designers might take a page from the product designers' playbook. Doing more of the same will not make better designs or better designers. It turns design into a commodity and lowers its value, as has become evident in the current economy. Research drives inquiry, which contributes new knowledge, which drives innovation, which lays the foundation for future developments. As they face a shrinking and more competitive marketplace, the best way for designers to generate more work is to create a demand for better design. For that, they will need real evidence to give their clients.



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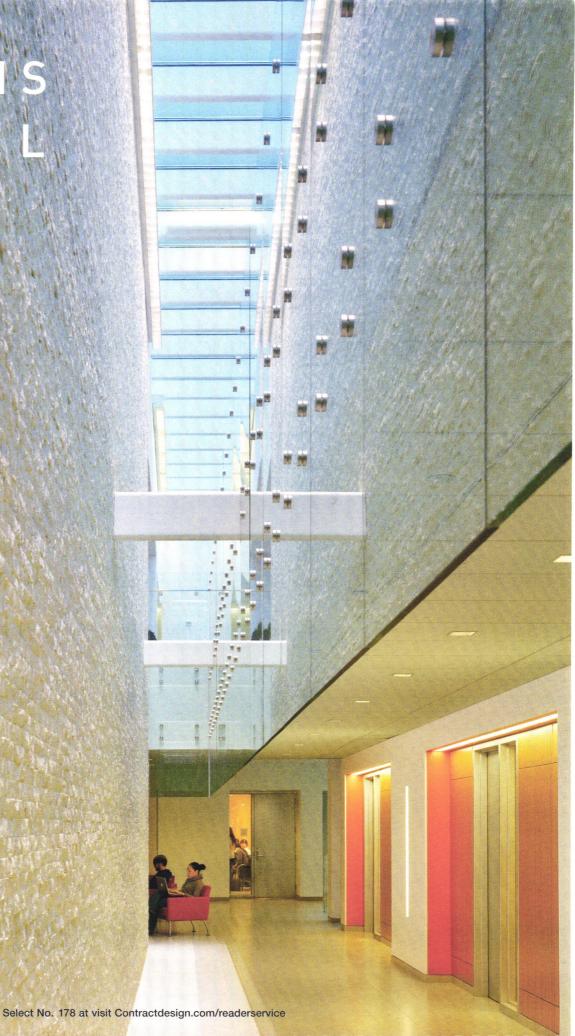
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e know we're living in a "new reality" when even our totemic prognosticators—Ouija Boards, Magic Eight Balls, and tarot cards—are iPhone apps. It's a reality where cherished fundamentals feel antiquated and predictions feel quaint. In this economy, the design industry is feeling the shock of obsolete processes and protocols, and a clear picture of the eventual outcome is elusive. Many remember recessions of the recent past, but this one feels more intractable and consequential. There's a sense that this time the profession may emerge a very different animal than it was just a year and a half ago.

streamlining their operations and targeting active sectors and markets. They're also strategically courting new kinds of clients and partners as well as striking out into unfamiliar sectors and services. Even though there's no higher education work on the horizon locally, the Los Angeles architecture firm Pugh + Scarpa is reaching out to this market with the goal of building relationships for when that sector picks up. This strategy has served the firm well—its affordable housing expertise, developed during the last recession, is one area that is busy now.

## reading the tea leaves

As alliances and collaborations combine with more frequency, and technological possibilities accelerate, how designers work and what the profession will look like will change profoundly

By Jan Lakin

A renewed buoyant economy a few years down the line might restore a more familiar landscape, but some of these conditions are here to stay. Designers who succeed in the long term will be those willing to embrace radical changes occurring within the practice and to actualize the expanded role it offers the profession. This emerging reality includes a fundamental shift from linear to concurrent design processes, a wider array of partners and collaborators, and increased use of technology for designing and communicating.

Disorienting as it is, the new reality comes with some explicit givens. Designers are having to produce work faster than ever before, are required to be more virtual, mobile, and flexible, and feel challenged to expand their expertise beyond their comfort zones. There are more competitors for work nationally and internationally, and allied businesses such real estate developers and manufacturers are competing for design services. All while fees continue to shrink.

And the bar is higher. Strategies and approaches that differentiated designers just a few years ago are now status quo. Sustainable design is becoming standard practice, and multidisciplinary capabilities as well as expertise in multiple industry sectors—a saviour for firms during the last recession—are considered "best practices."

Not surprisingly, to manage and thrive right now, designers from firms of all sizes are Many designers are expanding into strategic planning opportunities. Mergers and acquisitions and the new entities emerging from bankruptcies are creating a bewildering jumble of properties for large corporations that designers can help assess and reconfigure. To capitalize on this, Gensler has shifted personnel from its slow aviation practice to its consulting services. Building repositioning work has stepped up as well, with developers and building owners recasting newly acquired properties or struggling to attract tenants to existing buildings. Washington, D.C.-based design strategy firm Lehman Smith McLeish has seen a big increase in this work, which comprises 35 to 40 percent of the firm's current activity.

To presage our future, many designers look East. The Hong Kong-based workplace strategy firm, M Moser has honed its ability to deliver corporate interiors quickly via its experience in Asian markets such as Delhi, Beijing, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur. "The fast pace of things in that part of the world has driven us to figure out how to keep doing things more quickly," says Bill Bouchey, design director of the New York office of M Moser. By providing clients a comprehensive range of services from design, engineering, and construction management, the firm is able to overlap phases and compress design and building cycles. Far from limiting a project's creative potential, Bouchey feels this approach, also known as "Integrated Project Delivery" (IPD), allows the designer greater control and flexibility

over the entire process and schedule. This in turn allows the designer to allocate time to design elements that matter. IPD interiors projects are much less common in the United States, but M Moser currently has three such projects in New York, and its efficiencies are likely to drive an expansion stateside.

The design-build approach is also gaining popularity in this economy, also among designers who are less likely to snub these opportunities. Pugh + Scarpa, a practice with many design awards under its belt, including the AIA's 2010 Firm of the Year. is picking up more design-build work. "I think it is going to be more of a way that people are going to have to practice," says principal Larry Scarpa. The design-bid-build sequence is feeling more and more like a relic. For larger firms especially, concurrent design, engineering, specification. and construction phases for big projects are becoming realities both abroad and in the United States. Undoubtedly, the increased prevalence of Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology is helping to drive that. Due to its investment in Revit about three years ago, HOK was able to deliver the 6.5-million-sq.-ft., 26-building campus for King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia in a remarkably condensed 2.5 years. Revit, virtual meeting technology, and proprietary software for interior specifications, enabled the firm to simultaneously execute processes that traditionally occurred sequentially, such as programming and architectural design.

Sustainable design is yet another accelerator of BIM adoption. LMN, an 81-person urban design, architecture and interiors practice in Seattle.

Are all designers embracing BIM? IIDA Board member Steve McCollom feels, "In the short term, larger firms with resources to fully implement BIM might squeeze out smaller ones." But, he notes, "It will be like the old days with CAD. Eventually everyone catches up." Until then, what's the fate of smaller practices? Lisa Henry, ASID president-elect, feels that small firms have a competitive advantage with less overhead costs, more flexibility, and experienced designers who are more accessible to clients. Additionally, it may be argued that the small firm or independent consultant will benefit from greater technological adoption, since it can make it easier and cheaper for separate entities to work together.

Similarly, technology might foster specialization. Pam Light, senior vice president in HOK's Los Angeles office, says, "Virtual meeting capabilities support more experts who can be made available to the rest of the firm." She also finds that Revit helps create teams with more breadth.

Ray Clark, managing director of Perkins + Will's Chicago office, is passionate about the role of "project integrator," essentially a project manager who is responsible for pulling together a range of capabilities for a project at the front end of complex projects. Strategic planning, branded environments, urban design, facility master planning, and architecture are all potentially relevant to a healthcare or education project, for example. While he concedes that bundling services is by no means new to the profession, he feels technology makes bringing synergies among different disciplines easier to bear on a project. "It is more of a reality now," Clark says.

Disorienting as it is, the new reality comes with some explicit givens. Designers are having to produce work faster than ever before, are required to be more virtual, mobile, and flexible, and feel challenged to expand their expertise beyond their comfort zones.

uses green BIM early in design to analyze the environmental results of design solutions and concepts. "Using technology to hone sustainable features of our design is a strong focus for us," says Wendy Pautz, partner, at LMN. "We're also using it as a documentation tool and are actively looking at ways to leverage it as an integral part of the design process," say Pautz.

Just as firms are aiming to gather experts internally, designers are collaborating with their competitors and disparate industry partners with greater frequency. Lehman Smith McLeish has worked with its own coterie of consultants for a while, such as mechanical engineers and implementers, but these relationships have increased with their volume of European and Asian work. "We try to keep the team cohesive, and we supplement the

team where required so that we aren't starting from scratch in any one location," says Lehman-Smith. Perkins + Will pursues public/private partnerships, teaming opportunities on design competitions, and design/build competitions. "These are usually consortiums of architects, contractors, and even real estate developers," says Clark.

It's hard to imagine these complex alliances existing without BIM technology. But BIM adoption hasn't been an easy path. The technology requires complete transparency and sharing of the design model by all partners, and the profession is struggling to resolve ownership and liability issues. Clark, however, is optimistic that these problems will resolve themselves over the next few years.

With the speed at which designers are embracing all forms of technology to better communicate internally and externally, Clark may be right. Lehman-Smith says her far-flung teams are constantly working virtually, using Webcasts for meetings with clients and project reviews. Bouchey notes that M Moser is able to overcome the hemispheric distances with programs such as Sketch-up and virtual folders accessible to all offices. HOK has embraced social media in a big way, with an entire community of bloggers and Tweeters. While HOK initiated this program for recruiting, the firm is exploring social media for documenting project work and processes as well.

And designers seem eager for technology's continued evolution. Clark feels we are quickly headed towards Internet-based project processes that will occur in real time. Light is looking forward to Second Life technology, with virtual space for project teams and clients to meet in. McCollom envisions manufacturers of the future producing holographic representations of products that can be "tried out" in a designer's virtual space.

As alliances and collaborations combine with more frequency, and technological possibilities accelerate and designers increasingly adopt them, how designers work and what the profession will look like will change profoundly. At the least, these forces will provide designers with more tools to design with and a broader range of opportunities in which to design. They might also influence the creative process itself in compelling new ways. Hopefully, they will empower the industry to make a greater difference in society. For Clark, these forces present an "ambrosia of opportunities." Now if our iPhone app could only tell us exactly what's on the banquet menu.

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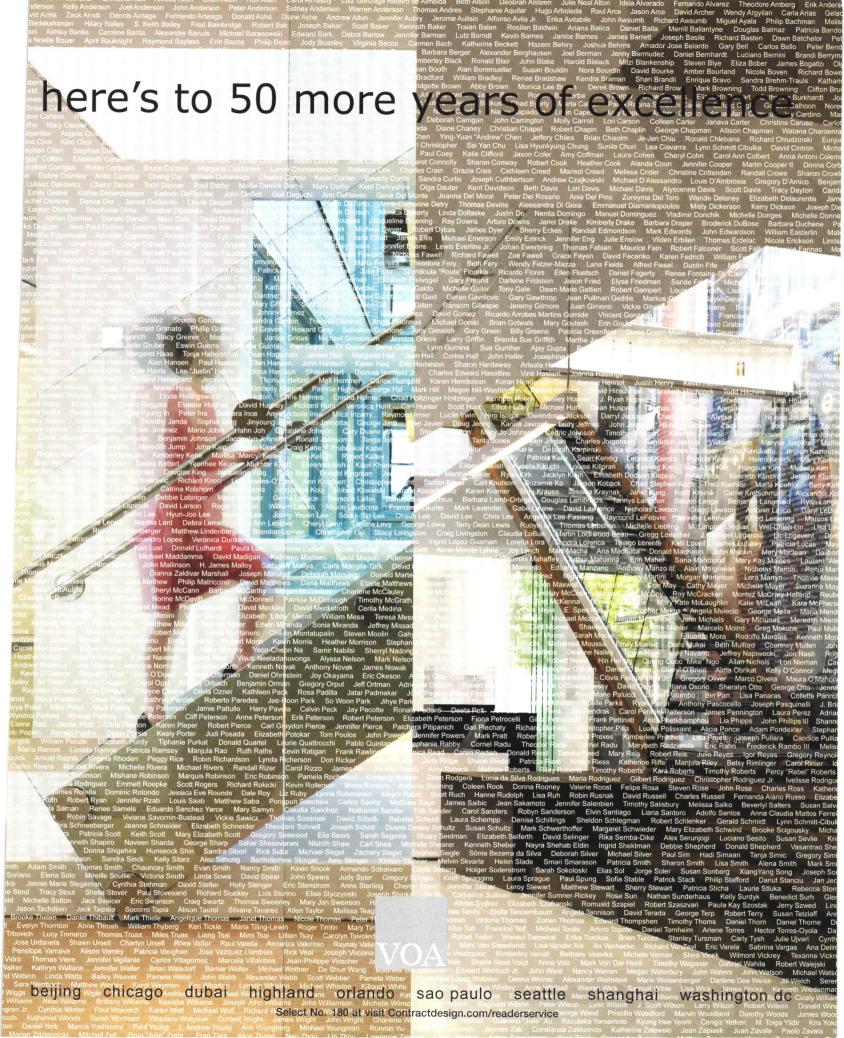
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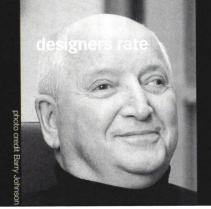
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#### Michael Graves, FAIA

Founder & Principal, Michael Graves & Associates

#### 1. Akari Bamboo Lamp BB2/K1

1951, designed by Isamu Noguchi This lamp is made with an Indian silk shade, bamboo shaft, and cast-iron base in the shape of a rock. The lamp appeals to me because of its timelessness and the fact that it is intrinsically useful.

#### 2. Snow Peak

Bamboo Folding Chair, 1998

This folding chair reminds me of the 1940s butterfly chair, but it provides a dining height rather than lounge. It is surprisingly comfortable, and for those who want to fold it up and put it away, it accomplishes that task splendidly.

#### 3. Renee Desk Lamp

by Michael Graves for Neue Galerie
I couldn't help but include the table
lamp I designed for the Neue Galerie
last year, as it is a product
I am quite proud of and one that I
use daily.

favorite products of the

## LAST 50 YEARS

Contract asks eight designers to name and explain their preferred commercial interior products from the past five decades









Nestor Santa-Cruz, IIDA, LEED AP

Associate and Design Director, Gensler, Washington, D.C.



1962 , designed by Achille Castiglioni and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, produced by Flos

The scale of the lamp and combination of the classical column shaft with the parabolic diffuser is so incredibly chic. The way it works is a technical triumph, and once you place it in a room, it becomes a "light sculpture."

#### 5. PK 54 Table

1963, designed by Poul Kjaerholm, produced by Fritz Hansen
This is the most beautiful and minimal of Modern tables designed in the last 50 years. The juxtaposition of the round and the cube, the detailing of the steel, and most clever and genius solution for a cantilevered extension ring, make this table a work of art.

#### 6. MechoShade, Solar Protection Shade System

1969, MechoShade Systems, Inc.
This unique product was ahead of
its time in terms of energy efficiency
in modern office buildings. It works
with interiors and exteriors alike; this
is in addition to all the technical and
energy-efficiency qualities and benefits
make this product a very special one.



#### **Eva Maddox**

Principal, Perkins+Will | Eva Maddox Branded Environments

#### 7. Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman

1956, designed by Charles and Ray Eames for Herman Miller It is a classic in any setting and wonderfully comfortable.

#### 8. Barcelona Table

1927, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe for Knoll It's always stunning!

#### 9. Eileen Gray Adjustable Table E1027

1927, designed by Eileen Gray, produced by M2L It's perfect, fitting, and compact for all uses.







12.

**Julia Monk,** AIA, IIDA, LEED AP Managing Partner, BBG-BBGM

#### 10. Seura Vanishing LCD TV Mirrors

The technology is terrific; it allows us to have TVs (or not appear to have TVs) in locations limited by depth or exposure to moisture.

#### 11. Eames Molded Plywood Dining Chair (Potato Chip Chair)

1946, designed by Charles and Ray Eames for Herman Miller I'm glad this classic is back in production.

#### 12. Edelman Cavallini European Hair-On Cowhide, Chartreuse

It just makes me happy.



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129



**Lisa Bottom**, LEED AP, Associate AIA, Associate IIDA Principal, Gensler, San Francisco

#### 19. Aeron Chair

1994, designed by Don Chadwick & Bill Stumpf for Herman Miller
Aeron was the game changer for ergonomic seating. Every other chair before it was a variation of a marshmallow on wheels.

#### 20. 40/4 stacking chairs

1964, designed by David Roland for GF (now Howe)

The first seating option that let you store 40 chairs in 4 sq. ft., it was way ahead of its time. And the big idea still resonates—much more utility in much less space.

#### 21. Leaf Light

2006, designed by Yves Behar for Herman Miller

This is an LED task light that is sculptural and beautiful to the point of being—do I dare say—sensual! Not only is it incredibly responsible from the standpoint of energy efficiency, but it is also unashamedly beautiful.





#### 22. The Torso Chaise Lounge

1982, designed by Paolo Deganello for Cassina

In my opinion the most comfortable (and from a seating consideration, versatile) lounge chair of the 20th century. Sensual in form, it can be tasteful and elegant or highly provocative depending on how the designer chooses to dress it up.

#### 23. The Tizio Lamp

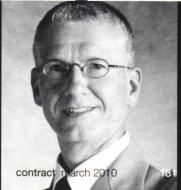
1972, designed by Richard Sapper for Artemide

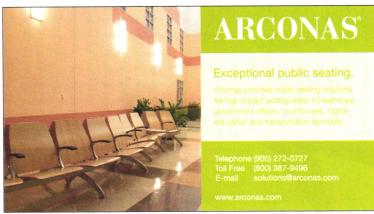
Beside being highly functional and aesthetically an instant classic, the design of the lamp was ingenious in the way power is transmitted to the bulb directly through the metal frame.

#### 24. The Bellini Chair

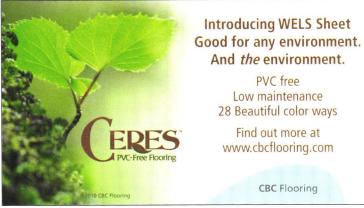
1998, designed by Mario Bellini for Heller

Simple, serene, and quite comfortable for an unupholstered stacking chair, this one brings high design to the masses with its consumer-friendly price point.

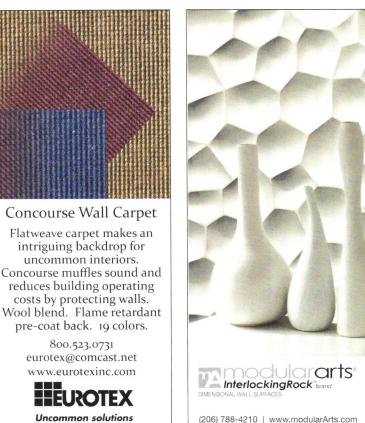




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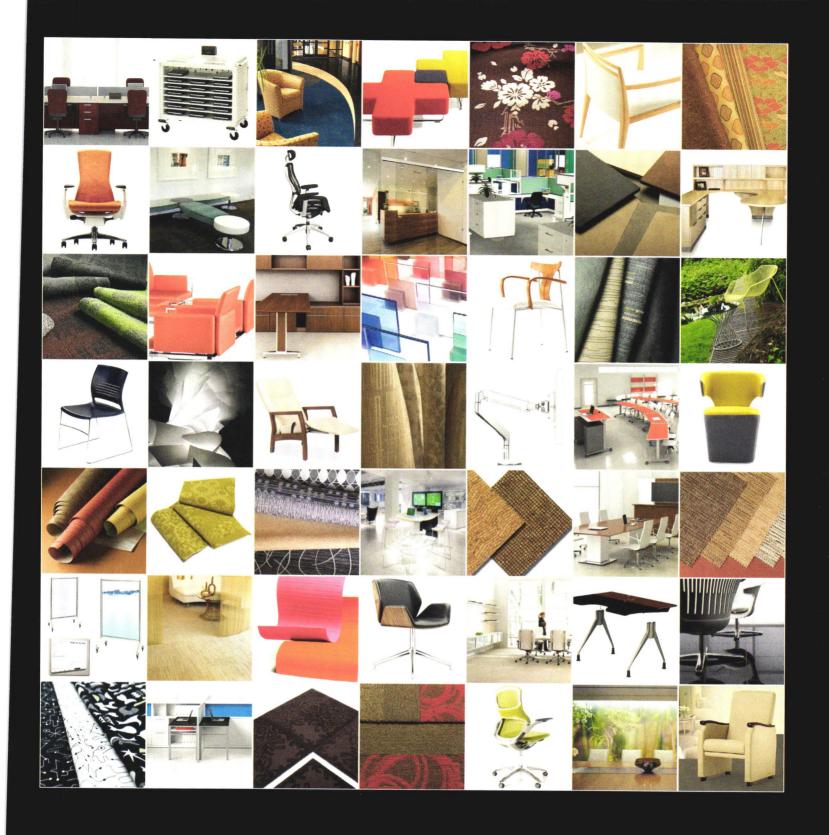


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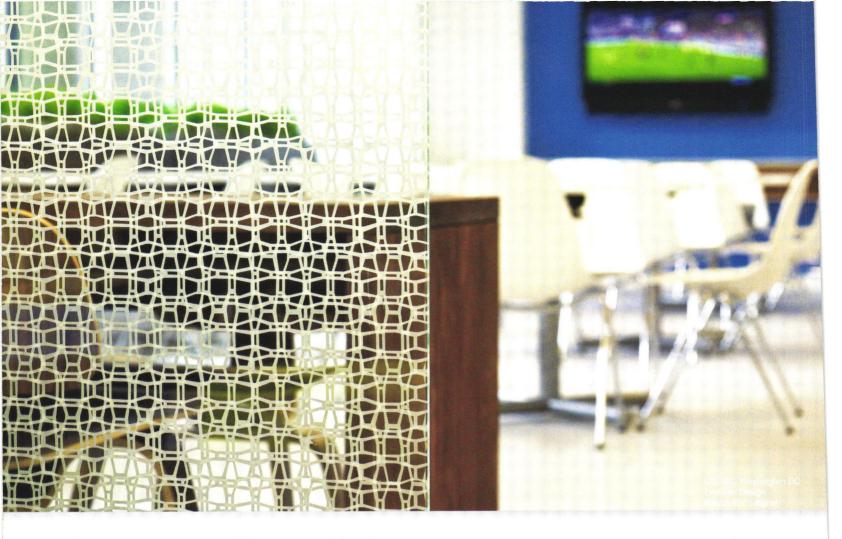


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Suzanne Tick Suzanne Tick, Inc.



Ken Wilson Principal, Envision Design



Charlie Rizzo President, Skyline Design



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In case you missed it the first time, you can now view *Contract* Magazine's webcast, sponsored by Skyline Design and hear renowned textile and materials designer Suzanne Tick and leading environmental designer Ken Wilson of Envision Design discuss the multitude of design possibilities offered by glass and its value to designers as a sustainable building material.

Everyone can appreciate the beauty and transparency for light and views that glass can provide in an interior environment. However, designers may not truly understand how well this age-old material can be adapted and designed for applications ranging from the seriously functional to the purely decorative, and any combination in between. As the A&D community becomes more and more sophisticated in its sustainable building practices, the value of glass as an inherently environmentally-friendly product needs to be better understood.

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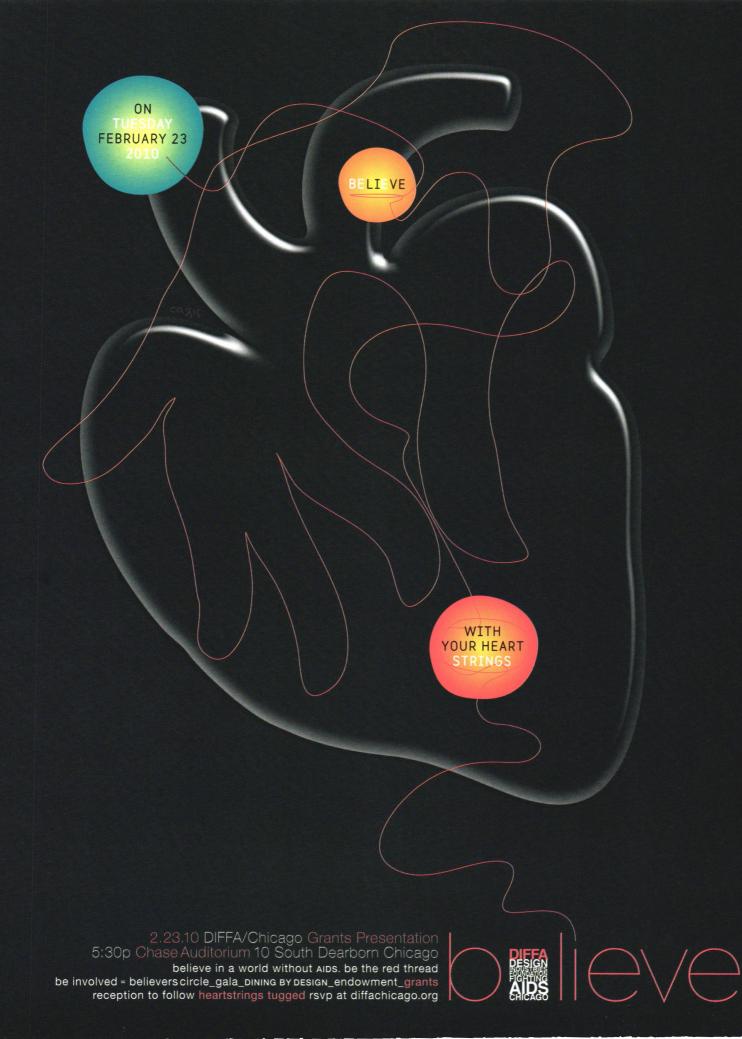
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#### ad index

Manufacturer	Reader Service No.	Page No.			
Arborite	152	91	Hospitality Design Awards	- 15 T	58
Allermuir	77	74	Humanscale	79	41
Antron	170	93	Interior Architects	175	113
Architex	105	15	J+J   Invision	94	65
Arconas	192	132	Johnsonite	153	7
Armourcoat Surface Finishes	9	36	Kimball Office	18	33A-33B
Artemide	114	19	Kitchen & Bath Industry Show 2010	7 1-7 7 7 7	33
Bendheim	34	64	Lonseal	87	11
B & N	88	14	Maharam	136	25
Bradley	73, 191	63, 132	Mannington	104	17
Cannon Design	171	99	Mechoshade	130	40
Cascade Coil	27	62	modularArts®	156, 195	6, 132
CBC Flooring	141, 193	97, 132	The Mohawk Group	66	13
Chemetal	49	72	M. Moser Associates	176	115
Coalesse	138	71	NELSON	177	117
Connectrac	22	50	NeoCon 2010	37	26
Coverings 2010	39	136	Nienkamper	82	27
Crossville	143	cover 3	Nora Systems	61	73
Crypton	76, 86	35, 37	Nurture by Steelcase	43	95
Cumberland	58	cover 2-page 1	The New Patcraft & Designweave	20	61
Daroff Design	185	103	Perkins+Will	178	119
Delta Faucet	159	47	Peter Pepper Products	129	55
DIFFA		135	Shaw Contract Group	110	back cover
Eurotex	111, 194	18, 132	Shaw Contract Group	117	5
Freelon	172	105	Skyline Design	2	12
Gensler	186	107	Smith Group	182	126
Gunlocke	98	89	Studios Architecture	179	121
Halcon	48	8-9	Takeform Architectural Graphics	32	34
Hardwoods Specialty Flooring	65	38	Tandus	181	42
Harmonic Environments	33	10	Teknion	100	39
Haworth	125	21	Trade Commission of Spain	84	2-3
Healthcare Environment Awards	_	54	TVS	183	123
Herman Miller	47	49, 51	Versteel	91	59
HLW	178	109	VOA	180	127
HOK	174	111	Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects	184	126

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