



## Dwelling Futures and Lived Experiences: Transforming Interior Spaces

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To cite this article: Tiiu Poldma (2008) Dwelling Futures and Lived Experiences: Transforming Interior Spaces, Design Philosophy Papers, 6:2, 141-155

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/144871308X13968666267437>



Published online: 29 Apr 2015.



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# Dwelling Futures and Lived Experiences

## Transforming Interior Spaces

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What help is it, to solve philosophical problems, if [one] cannot settle the most chief, most important thing – how to live a good and happy life? , ‘Live well!’ is the supreme philosophical commandment.

Ludwig Wittgenstein<sup>1</sup>

Wittgenstein has suggested that the ultimate goal of philosophical thinking is to solve problems with intent to live better. But what is it to live a good and happy life? How can designers help people to realize a good and happy life?

In considering concepts such as dwelling, I suggest that we, as interior designers, must use our design knowledge to create spaces for dwelling that help people actualize their lived experiences as dwelling, whether at home, at work or at play.

There is a dichotomy between the idea of the current designed interior environment and the reality of lived experiences bounded by the realities of everyday life. Interior spaces are more often designed for beauty and

aesthetic pleasure or as cultural symbols, rather than as responses to people in their actual, lived state where experiences and needs drive how they dwell. As a spatial practice, interior design has been firmly situated in Cartesian notions of time and space; interior designed spaces are mostly static responses to primarily visual concepts of beauty.

As Cameron Tonkinwise suggests, ‘we call beautiful what we each believe everyone should acknowledge as perfect, complete’.<sup>2</sup> This view of beauty is pervasive in interior design, and limits interior design practices to physical attributes such as surface finishes and an overemphasis of beauty over other, more sensual and necessary transformative possibilities.

In this paper, living and dwelling will be considered in relation to Martin Heidegger’s idea of dwelling and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s view of spatial perception.

Consideration will be given to the ways that concepts of dwelling have become fractured in contemporary society. Global marketplaces and the movement of people, ideas and goods across borders (both physical and virtual) are leading to increased homogeneity in lifestyles and modes of consumption. For those who can afford them, mobile, digital and other new technologies pervade all aspects of life; spaces become flexible and media increasingly drives experiences. This is affecting the ways that people work, play, live and interact. These new technologies are shifting the very nature of dwelling, creating new ways of understanding interior space as grounded in temporal processes and making it more fluid. And while this type of global world becomes complex, consumer-driven and more accessible for some, for others this world is becoming more menacing and distant.

If interior designers allowed activities and lived experiences to drive their design thinking (rather than the reverse) then the interior design of spaces could be transformed to become a means by which the engaged and changing activities of dwelling could be expressed both functionally and aesthetically.

If designed interior environments can encompass that which is dwelling, then interior design thinking can shift towards a more sustainable understanding, where interior space becomes the backdrop for activities supporting both aesthetic and functional meanings of real, lived experiences. Interior designers must shape interior spaces considering both the purpose and identity of dwelling through the meanings people attach to the objects and space within which they live, work or play, and this within alternative ideas of aesthetic experience as bound by how people actually live.<sup>3</sup>

### **About Designing Interiors in Contemporary Society**

In the world of interior design (and interior architecture), and in particular in practice and education, we ask students to design

interior space or objects for people in their lived environments. This has usually meant adding to interior spaces by providing forms, materials and objects. We tell students that through design elements such as form and colour, or the feeling of materials, we can create a spatial envelope where people can live, work or play. However, usually the results are not quite what we intended and often people appropriate the space differently or completely independent of the designer's intention. While I suggest that people must and should appropriate space in their own way, more often young designers go out into practice wanting to mould people to their way of thinking. These designers then fail, often because they do not consider (or grasp) the lived human experiences that guide the ways that people appropriate space and objects. We have been taught to judge the aesthetic form of the environment or object as the primary value we must convey, rather than understand the ways that people might actually use the object or space when they experience it, as we do when we design a restaurant or public space. Too often user needs and activities as real people in real environments are sacrificed for the primacy of the visual.

For design to be meaningful for everyday living, we must understand the impact of our design decisions being as much value-oriented as aesthetically based. Interior spaces should be temporally experienced and appropriated, meaning that we appropriate the space as we require and desire, change it to suit our personal needs and appropriate the space for both our use and our idealizations. Stephen Willats suggests that '... the domestic interior 'living space' has become an important agent for our culture to symbolize its idealisations...' <sup>14</sup> However, too often these idealizations have become out of sync with lived experiences. The emphasis on aesthetic beauty in design theory and practice means a de-emphasis on social needs and the needs of the people within their lived states. As Malnar & Vodvarka note '... design theory has historically emphasized buildings' exterior aspects, not their interiors. And this approach, essentially sculptural, has often had a less than beneficial effect on buildings' occupants.' <sup>15</sup> We spend a lot of time designing form, symbol and the arrangement of forms (in the static, Cartesian manner) and less often considering people's actual activities or their needs as bound by the values or meanings they attach to the spaces and things that surround them.

One of the problems in considering the lived experiences of everyday life is that society imposes values that suggest how we should live. Acquiring large homes with multiple rooms and appropriating objects into over-designed environments is part of the value system of consumer-oriented society that is perpetuated by the media. Too often the designed environments of homes are unsustainable, meaning that the interior environments themselves have created habits and needs that have become considered

'normal'. Media and advertising play up these 'needs', as we cannot even consider living without certain household appliances. As Cameron Tonkinwise asks "how is it that things just seem to build up in our households? And then in storage spaces that we rent to keep all the things that we do not need on a daily basis?"<sup>6</sup> Oversized homes are constantly being constructed that are supposedly responding to perceived 'needs' such as multiple bathrooms, formal living spaces that are under-used, or oversized spa bathrooms that are used perhaps for a quick shower in the daily cleansing routine, while systematically we fill these spaces with manufactured 'consumables' and 'durables' that generate waste in their manufacture, use and disposal.

And while these values are promoted for what is considered the 'good life', others live in vulnerable situations within housing complexes that rob the person of their sense of dwelling. Values have become fractured within the increasingly complex world we live in. We forget about people and their perceptions as we design for immediate physical, visual response or for current cultural or consumer appeal. We forget that people hold values attached to both the objects and the ways in which they inhabit their dwellings. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton suggest that,

.....a home is much more than a shelter; it is a world in which a person can create a material environment that embodies what he or she considers significant. In this sense the home becomes the most powerful sign of the self of the inhabitant who dwells within.<sup>7</sup>

When interior designers do actually design for human use and need, they can design spaces that become the backdrop for social relations to be played out personally, socially at home, or in the workplace, or in the larger framework of society. Designing for the everyday experiences of people becomes real and pragmatic when responding to the functional needs that people have, to visual and sensual responses, and to the subjective inter-relationships of people with one another within interior spaces. This is essentially a phenomenological, pragmatic philosophical approach, in which interior designers understand space as a transformational place where actual, lived experiences are supported by a designed environment that becomes a place that sustains the user wherever and whenever they deem necessary, desired or useful. For example, when considering North American suburban homes, Adrienne Rewi quotes architect Susan Saranka, who '...argues against the "bigger is better" formula and asks why we are still building homes with formal living rooms and dining rooms that may get used once or twice a year. She suggests that the money involved in building them would be better spent on improving the character of the spaces that are used everyday.'<sup>8</sup>

## The Changing Character of Dwelling and the Changing Nature of the Material World

Taking this thought further, not only should we think about the spaces used everyday, but think about them differently altogether. Interior designers concerned with dwelling understand space as transformational, as temporal and as a place where activities are supported and dwelling occurs on different levels. Dholakia and Zwick write about this transformational concept of space evolving from what was once a Cartesian stance, when they suggest that:

In the age of new media and mobile communication, we have thus moved from spatialized time, where the nature of activities was predominantly governed by the structuring logic of one place (one reads in a library, one studies in a classroom, one eats in a restaurant, etc.) to temporalized space, where the nature of the activities of its inhabitants define the space (a restaurant becomes a playground, a coffee house becomes an electronic unit, a train becomes a work station, etc.)<sup>9</sup>

Spatial experiences are increasingly bound, not by the physical environment, but rather by the activities and dwelling people create for themselves. Thus designing interior space means integrating ideas about dwelling, identity and activity and challenging current design practices that promote over-consumption.

The impact of global marketplaces on the production of and the speed of goods acquisition accelerates changing notions of space and time. C. T. Mitchell positioned this shift in terms of design processes almost fifteen years ago:

Over the past few decades, the industrial age has been giving away to a post-industrial era. This transition has profound consequences, throwing into question most traditional notions of what design is and what designers do. New technological developments, for example, make it possible for design to become much more responsive to the cultural, social and personal needs of design users than had been the case in the industrial era. The distinguishing characteristics of the emerging postindustrial tasks are that designing is more focused on the dynamic processes of user experience than on physical form.<sup>10</sup>

However, while for some, this global world becomes virtually accessible and materially realized through dwelling and via designed objects such as mobile technologies and global inter-connectedness, this same environment is becoming a distant world for the vulnerable, the infirm and the socially disadvantaged.<sup>11</sup> Strains on non-renewable resources; inadequate housing for the homeless in crisis or the urban poor; lack of appropriate housing for the growing aged population worldwide – these are just a few examples of increasing worldwide pressures that are being ignored.

So how do we understand the idea of dwelling in this fractured and ever-changing society? I now turn towards a discussion of the concepts of dwelling from the philosophical perspective of Martin Heidegger.

### **Heidegger and his Concepts of Dwelling and Home**

In his seminal book, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Heidegger first considers the apparent dichotomy between dwelling and the concept of home through the philosophical consideration of what it means “to dwell”. Heidegger suggests that the consideration of ‘building as dwelling’ negates the very heart of what it means for people to dwell and links this to our very experience of being in the world:

When we speak of dwelling we usually think of an activity that man performs alongside many other activities. We work here and dwell there. We do merely dwell-...we practice a profession, we do business, we travel and lodge on the way, now here, now there..... The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan*, is dwelling.... here building... is a constructing.... Building as dwelling, that is, being on the earth, however, remains for man’s everyday experience that which is from the outset ‘habitual’ – we inhabit it...<sup>12</sup>

As Heidegger suggests here, building is constructing the idea of dwelling, of staying in a place. In this sense, Heidegger gets at the heart of what it means to dwell, with a certain care and respect of the Earth. Heidegger also develops the secondary idea that the interrelationship of building and dwelling creates spaces and places, when he says that,

Man’s relation to locations, and through location to spaces, inheres in his dwelling. The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling, strictly spoken<sup>13</sup>

If our personal and social self is bound by our concept of dwelling, and if we attach meanings to our everyday lived experiences within the spaces that we live or work in, then what does this mean for our relationships with our things and the people with whom we interact? As Heidegger infers, the dwelling does not create the meanings in and of itself. Rather, Heidegger takes this concept further, suggesting that for example, in a house, spaces are created from location, when he suggests that ‘...this is why building, by virtue of constructed locations, is a founding and joining of spaces...’<sup>14</sup> Heidegger continues on to define the notion of building as dwelling and laments how we, as ‘mortals’ do not capture this dwelling well. He suggests that the ‘...real plight of dwelling lies in this, that mortals ever search for the nature of dwelling that they must ever learn to dwell.’<sup>15</sup> Not only do we ‘dwell’ through living itself; we search for the means to live well through how we dwell.

## **Transforming Lived Interior Spaces**

When we consider interior space, not as a place for things but rather, as the support for lived experiences, then dwelling becomes supported by an aesthetic that is philosophically connected to living well rather than purely as one that resides in values such as beauty. Interior designers create public spaces such as restaurants and hotels as places for dwelling to occur, whether this means satisfying the enhancing activities using aesthetic means or satisfying particular sensual needs and desires through the creation of manipulative spatial experiences, all the while allowing people to create their own experiences through dwelling as they eat, converse and carry on their particular activities. In temporal spaces such as bars, cafés or workplaces, the predominant mode of identification is increasingly through the experience of time in fragments as this relates to our need to complete certain activities. We experience interior space as a transformational place where we dwell in different ways, depending on our lived situation. As we move from this spatialized time (a room as a room for a single activity) towards a more temporalized space (spaces for multiple uses simultaneously), we can reconsider space differently and change it as we need it. Spaces can, for example become smaller and more compressed, less concerned with consumption while transforming for us as we need through the aesthetic and functional design choices we make. We need less space when we can work at home, play at work and move between physical and virtual realms, and interior designers can help people understand this through their work.

## **Recognizing the Social Construction of Space and Place as Ethical**

Transforming the space to our needs and understanding space as temporal are not concepts that are common in residential living in many places, especially where consumer pressures are there. We look for meaning in our dwellings, and some hire architects and designers to actualize their values spatially. And yet Heidegger suggests that there is no guarantee that we actually dwell in these spaces, or, in fact, have a connection with dwelling as dwelling. People need to appropriate their spaces in their own way, and many do not know how to do so. The meanings of home and house have become lost in the quest to dwell, and the quest for dwelling has become lost in the acquisition of more goods and cultural symbols of that same house and home in a given society.

Interior designers can facilitate change through an ethical design of spaces that responds to the actual, lived needs of users. This requires rethinking the nature of design as ethical, in Heidegger's sense. Designers can and must understand how the design of interior space is also a social construction of values and relations.<sup>16</sup> The social construction of space and place create the social roles



and relations that govern how we live work and play. Spatial designs create an envelope that formalizes these relations, in particular in the public domain.<sup>17</sup>

Cameron Tonkinwise suggests that this type of thinking requires an understanding of an ethics of things as an ethos, wherein an ethical way of living includes an ethical way of designing, understanding how design directs human behaviour and living:

‘...If we are dependant upon what we design to live, and what we have designed is ethical, that is, designs ethical ways of being, then we are consequently ethical in how we live....’<sup>18</sup>

Although Tonkinwise refers to products, this concept can also be applied to the design of interior environments. In recognizing, for example, the inherent social structure of relations within interior spaces, interior designers can create environments that are supportive and responsive of people and that sustain them within the social structures that may exist in a particular society.

### **Dwelling as Intimate and the Nature of ‘Home’**

When we consider ethical ways of designing interior space, the notion of intimacy deserves to be considered. Roberto Rengel suggests that interior designers do shape interior space understanding how to align dwelling with the mind and body. Here Rengel discusses Christian Norberg-Schultz’ idea of identity and environment with regards to house and home:

‘... The house represents the very center of human existence. It gives man a place to be, a place in which to stay and spend time in safety and comfort .... it is this type of support we design for – to help people find their comfort in spaces designed for their needs and uses. ... Proper dwelling requires the proper alignment of interior self, body and exterior world. The interaction between internal and external things can be tricky to decipher. Christian Norberg-Shultz believes that the identities of man and environment feed off each other. He explains’... identity ... consist of an interiorization of understood things, and ... growing up therefore depends on being open to what surrounds us. Although the world is immediately given, it has to be interpreted and understood, and although man is part of the world, he has to concretize the belonging to feel at home.’<sup>19</sup>

Thus, dwelling becomes the essence of seeking identity and sense of self. However, the concept of ‘home’ is today situated within the societal idea of home as an acquired commodity, a physical concretization that occurs through building.

Alternatively, Tony Fry proposes that ‘in discussing homelessness, we need, first of all, to be clear about what we evoke when we call up the idea of home’; he suggests the concept

of 'home' be viewed from the perspective of homelessness. While 'home' is evoked by Heidegger as situated in location, Fry suggests that:

'Homes, as places of anchorage and return, enable journeying.....being homeless is far more than lacking shelter, for it is also the loss of the possibility, or potentiality, of being sustained and sustaining. This means that people with homes that fail to sustain, can effectively be regarded as homeless'.<sup>20</sup>

If we look at housing as an example, this sense of dwelling is precisely what has become defragmented, due in part to the design of the buildings themselves. As Fry suggests, Malnar & Vodvarka state that perhaps Heidegger's idea of space by virtue of location means more than just identifying location itself:

To summarize Heidegger's position: the desire/need to dwell produces a built form, which becomes a location expressed in spaces. "*Accordingly, dwellings receive their being from locations and not from space*"... The spaces we daily occupy then are informed by their sense of location, which takes meaning from human dwelling. ...Heidegger's approach to dwellings as profound locations helps explain the failure of housing projects designed in the complete absence of any sense of place.<sup>21</sup>

Failure in housing projects comes also from a complete absence of understanding the needs of those dwelling in the spaces as users, as personal and social beings, or as people who must be sustained.

### **Examples of Dwelling in Housing**

Two examples come to mind here: social housing such as lower income rental apartments and suburban housing developments. In the first, Stephen Willats, in his treatise *Between Buildings and People*, unfolds the argument that a more philosophical understanding grounded in the subjectivity of the user must occur if buildings are to be designed to really suit human need. Willats examines the social housing projects such as the rental apartments in high density urban areas in Great Britain, housing projects built in the Modernist style in the 1950s, and later, in and around London in the 1980s and 1990s. He explores the human relationships that are thrust together in social housing projects, presenting the participants' points of view as they construct their social spaces and how this is prescribed by people who do not live in the subsequent spaces that are created. He states:

It is a significant factor in contemporary living that during the past fifty years our conceptions of, and expectations from, the everyday world have become more pre-determined and at the same time more complex.... There is an obvious, basic division

between the minority who determine the topology of urban living, and the majority who are forced to passively accept its form in their daily lives.<sup>22</sup>

The large institutional apartment blocks he studies are built for cheap, high-density living and although economical in construction, they bring with them a host of social and human dilemmas. On a personal, psychological and philosophical level, the living (as dwelling) that occurs in these buildings cannot be divorced from, and is always affected by, 'building'. Willats examines the ways that social housing complexes influence our sense of self, our identity and our feelings of powerlessness.<sup>23</sup> He provides poignant accounts of people living in apartment blocks, specifically from the working class, and how these influence their sense of self, through the very concept of building both as structure and in the material sense. This thoroughly non-scientific study of people and their interior environments, although anecdotal in nature, touches on the social and personal aspects of design and the ways that an institutional design negates the very essence of what it does to affect people in their lived environment. As Willats suggests:

The building and architecture of any street is also an expression of the ideology driving society. In their physical form and fabric, buildings contain both the idealizations and the pragmatics, as well as the consciousness that exists between people themselves and the conventions that govern the way that those exchanges happen. Even the material fabric of the building that contains my behaviour exerts an influence over me... The walls of the room I sit in contain a very different message if they made of wood as opposed to concrete. But the message of the buildings is inescapably institutional, and as such, reflected the determinism inherent in the role of the institution in providing order and certainty...<sup>24</sup>

As an artist, Willats' interest is in the expression of the daily lives of people in these Modernist apartment blocks and the meanings of the things and ways people use to change and appropriate the space as their own. He expresses the aesthetic aspect of dwelling as tied to the feel of the material as much as the sense of dwelling in terms of living.<sup>25</sup>

In the second example, William Kunstler (28) looks at the deteriorating urban fabric in the United States in his book *'Home from Nowhere'*.<sup>26</sup> He criticizes suburban housing developments for creating deadness in the public realm, and suggests that 'the everyday environments of our time, the places where we live and work, are composed of dead patterns'. He argues that there is a persistent human need to experience the relative 'aliveness' of things, and how the form and function of designed spaces and

buildings offers the means by which people can identify with house and home through dwelling. He also suggests how 'a window in a house is the relationship between the inside of the house and the outside world. It transmits light and air, and it affords glimpses between the public and private realm'.<sup>27</sup> Kunstler suggests that we need living patterns, relationships between our private and public world, and that this helps to create dwelling in a human, aesthetic sense as invoked by both Wittgenstein and as expressed by Heidegger.

In considering the sense of self through the house as home, it is inevitable that we consider the importance of the things that people surround themselves with, and ways that people perceive the spaces that surround them. In Willats' example, the cold, institutional environment of the social housing block challenges people's ability to create a personal or social identity. Not only do we live within this space, we see others living lavishly in places that are purely identified as rich or of another social class. This is not a purely North American phenomenon, as in many cultures worldwide, the acquisition of wealth is demonstrated through the acquisition of goods. And yet, do we not dwell when we surround ourselves with the things that we love and the people we enjoy within the spaces that we call home, regardless of place? Witness the victims of disasters as they rummage through the remains of destruction, usually looking for photographs or objects that recall the memories of the lost dwelling that was done in the appropriation of the spaces called home.

### **Phenomenological Approaches to Experienced Interior Space**

In terms of space, we perceive and integrate our perceptions of space as part of our appropriation of the objects within the space. If we understand that '...where we are affects how we feel...',<sup>28</sup> then our perceptions of place and home become entwined with how we feel about, and appropriate, the spaces and what lies within.

When we move around within spaces, we see and perceive time and space immediately. The user of a space has a particular stance that is influenced from the meaning-making that the person does when experiencing space.<sup>29</sup> In considering our perceptions of interior space, we need to connect the concepts of identity with perceptions of space in a more direct manner. Maurice Merleau-Ponty discusses how we perceive space in his seminal book, *Phenomenology of Perception*. He proposes:

Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism. When I walk around my flat, the various aspects in which it presents itself to be, could not possibly appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each of them represents the flat as seen from one spot or another.<sup>30</sup>

In essence, our perspective is bound by our position in space at a particular point in time; it is constantly in movement, and is driven by our actual lived experience of that space. Understanding the user and the users' experiences in space means understanding these lived experiences in spaces as dynamic, lived and subjectively perceived. The designer must mesh a spatial and visual framework with the meaning-making and life-world of the potential user in a phenomenological sense,<sup>31</sup> while understanding simultaneously the social relations of space and place. Interior designers do this successfully when designing public spaces, inspiring sensual responses in restaurants, hotels and in the public realm. Less evident is how we can do this for people in their lived environments, particularly when, as for example in social housing, constraints are both aesthetic and economical. Sustainability must come from refining what it means to dwell, and changing societal concepts of what it means to live well. When we realize that the meaning of dwelling can reside in the meanings of space and place and the appropriation of objects, then we can facilitate this appropriation through an understanding of space as phenomenologically experienced.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the perception of space is by virtue of the real, actual experiences.<sup>32</sup> He suggests that the complex inter-relationship of our perception with the surroundings affects our view of the world and the nature of what we do in it.<sup>33</sup> The designer must consider these perceptions, and learn to temporarily live the client experience, understanding how the perceptions will affect the ways that people will appropriate the space. To be able to create dwelled interior space, the interior designer dialectically deals with the visual as well as the sensual and the perceptual, and must understand subjectively the experiences that affect the user's sense of the space.<sup>34</sup> Designing interior space thus becomes grounded in what it means to dwell, in Heidegger's ethical sense and as actual, lived experience, in Merleau-Ponty's sense.

### **So What Does Dwelling Become?**

Dwelling thus becomes entrenched in the meanings people hold in both good times and bad, in hard economic times or in different ages and stages of life. An interior space, whatever the shape of the space, is, as Gaston Bachelard suggests, "...a repository of memories..."<sup>35</sup> and no matter what suffering people experience, they long for the sense of comfort of home through dwelling, wherever they are, and whether in public or in private. When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, for example, people were displaced to mobile temporary homes the institution provided, and yet yearned for 'home'. They did not want new houses, they wanted their homes back. People also wanted to have a sense of place, and the bars and restaurants were the first places to offer a meal, a sense of place and community in the midst of desolation and despair.

## Living Well as an Aesthetic Experience

This sense of dwelling is tied to how we must live well in Wittgenstein's sense as quoted above. John Dewey, another philosopher concerned with lived experiences, also promoted the idea of living well in this aesthetic sense, in essence, as an 'art of living'. As Richard Shusterman notes:

The art of living, for Dewey, is 'an art of organization of human activities ... that ultimately aims ... to make our experience more aesthetic, our lives more enjoyable and rich and unified.' (This) is what John Dewey suggests is as important as dwelling - living aesthetically.<sup>36</sup>

How we live is thus supported by where we live and what we do. This needs to be underpinned by an appropriate aesthetic interior space that sustains needs and alternative ways of living. This means understanding interior space as both temporal and sustainable for required human uses and for needs that are sensual, functional, temporal and aesthetic, as much as cultural, social or political. Living and working spaces could be understood differently altogether. As Adrienne Rewi suggests, this might mean reconsidering lived homes in multiple contexts as we:

'...think about sliding, rotating and moving walls that allow spaces to sprout as guest sleeping areas or studies; walls that slide open so the bath is exposed to sunny living spaces; multiple front doors for guests, friends or business visitors; walls that conceal the kitchen; and movable bathroom and sleeping pods that can be plugged into different locations'.<sup>37</sup>

Space thus becomes appropriated and controlled by the user, not the other way around. Identity and appropriation of space reveals the dwelling that occurs in real time and is supportive of user experiences.

As interior designers, we have the know-how and the sensitivity to understand and respond to the idealizations of people, wherever they choose to dwell. We understand space as this dynamic interplay of people, objects and space, as a transformational place where experiences are created and enhanced through the aesthetic and functional choices that we make. When we see space, we see the activity, movement and dynamism of people fulfilling their idealizations. Our role is to transform interior space, to create the conditions for dwelling to occur, in whatever way the user deems necessary or appropriate (and to respond to situations in which increasing numbers of people are becoming homeless and more vulnerable).

Since our sense of self is enveloped with the spaces we inhabit, it is no wonder that we long for home long after home is no longer.

Dwelling and house must go beyond 'planning' and be understood as appropriated space that is multi-dimensional and experienced in the temporal sense that Merleau-Ponty speaks about and in the sense of dwelling that Heidegger indicates.

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