

DARK SPACE_the interior

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Since its inception in 1999, the IDEA Journal has enabled high quality publication of discipline specific research. During this time, the journal has been published by IDEA (Interior Design Interior Architecture Educators Association), and distributed as a limited edition high quality hardcopy. Each edition has also been available for free access via the IDEA website, <http://idea-edu.com/journal/>. The objective of the *IDEA JOURNAL* is to encourage, support, publish and disseminate peer reviewed interior design/interior architecture research, thereby contributing to discipline knowledge and expertise.

Therefore, it is the intention of this iteration of the IDEA Journal, now published as an Open Access Journal, to expand across disciplines, geographies and methodologies; to encourage experimentation; and to engage broader participation, expanding the discourse.

Following a review of the role of the IDEA Journal, the IDEA Board has agreed to a rolling publication, releasing a series of published manuscripts during the latter end of each year.

This edition of the *IDEA Journal: DARK SPACE_the interior* called for interdisciplinary collaborative discourse examining built or unbuilt projects/speculations/theoretical inquiry/design inquiry, positioned as:

- Disruption to the realities and perceptions of (interior?) space
- Interiors that catalyse symbioses (interior exterior)
- Extreme interiors that confront the human sensorium, e.g. confined environments, isolated environments, highly sensuous environments
- Experimental Interiors that manipulate the human sensorium
- Historical precedents of Interiors that engage the

human sensorium

- Future projections of Interiors that are affecting/shifting changing the human sensorium
- Physiological and or psychological analyses of Interiors that affect symbioses (interior exterior)

Inspired by a reading of Junichiro Tanizaki's highly evocative essay *In Praise of Shadows* (1977), the provocation for *DARK SPACE_the interior* aims to focus on the effect of 'switching on' more of the body's physiological and psychological sensibilities. Tanizaki writes, for example, of listening to the sound of rain softly falling from the trees and seeping into the earth. He is listening from a dimly lit toilet, where raw materials add to his aesthetic pleasure. This kind of place, he imagines, is where, over the ages, haiku poets have contemplated enigmas. Tanizaki prefers the 'soft voice,' the understatement.¹ He writes of Orientals' love for 'grime' and 'soot'² and the 'peace and repose'³ that comes to those who occupy old houses with old objects. And of Westerners' love for bright light and white surfaces. Tanizaki laments the brightness and whiteness of Western hospitals or dental surgeries, and believes that these places would be far less stressful were they muted in colour. He writes of the pleasure of being served soup in a lidded, dark coloured lacquered bowl, then removing the lid, and in the darkness, being unable to see the soup, but instead, feeling the gentle sway of the liquid, sensing the tantalising release of the vapour and anticipating the taste. Tanizaki writes of the ethereal quality of gold leaf, where in a dark room, gold will attract and reflect the faintest glimmer of light, casting a slight glow, slowly revealing its presence. Slowly the human eye adjusts to the darkness of the room to find the golden glow.

Much of Tanizaki's essay generates universal resonance. We are lured by his gentle evocation of those moments, when our

bodies are tuned-in to deeper layers of existence: an awareness of the self in the place of nature, time, the patina of accumulated dirt, the modesty of darkness, and the richness of light, glimpsed; time, articulated through fragrance, texture, sound, temperature and vista; and space, articulated through ritual.

For this edition of the *IDEA Journal* the authors' responses to the provocation inspired by Tanizaki were unexpected; in particular, a number of essays have the reader wait, offering a slower release of information than that to which we are normalised. Others require us to find, or to contemplate – to linger longer. Unexpected also are the pleasures found when waiting or finding, as orchestrated by the authors' subduing or domination of time: that time is at once disappeared, and in its absence a void is felt as penetrating.

In *Sensing the night between us: Benjamin's amorous wanderings through dark space*, Kris Pint reminds us of something we all know as both pleasure and terror, that 'fictionality and non-linear temporality are important aspects of the experience of dark space.' Sensing is different in the dark. As sighted people who ordinarily see many layers of elements and complexities in the spatial compositions we inhabit, we see little in darkness – darkness appears as an absence of these elements. Pint reminds us that in darkness we sense reality and temporality differently.

The visual essay *Until I see your dream in dark skies: About spaces and intentions, bodies real and virtual*, is positioned by authors Remco Roes and Peter Snowdon as 'neither commentary nor analysis in images or in words, but a form of resonance between interiority as a sensory practice, and the exposed surfaces of the always-provisional artistic work.' Here the reader enters the darkness alone; we find our own way through, revisiting the previous image, going forward to the next, looking to find what is being shown. Through this work we experience the creative generative processes catalyzed by being in the dark. We read that for the artist there were connections within and throughout the works, and that of course these drew from the artist's broader life. Then as readers, our experience of this visual essay seems analogous of the artist's own methodology, moving between experiences, making connections, calling on findings from the

past, placing them in new contexts. He, the artist (Camiel Van Breedam) is looking, we're looking.

Beyond these two manuscripts, this edition of the *IDEA Journal* expands the boundaries of academic research by experimenting with substitute methods of communication. It moves from the deeply intimate to the public, from the human to beyond anthropocentric. The resultant entity, *DARK SPACE_the interior*, is a composition of manuscripts offering a series of accounts of human experience made explicit: allusion, love, power; physical remnants, sex, objects, and encounters with the interior made explicit via fiction, (theory and history). Throughout, the authors' are tapping into those intimate relationships we have with the spaces we occupy. (real and imagined)

Over the next several weeks a number of published manuscripts will be rolled out via Open Access. For this edition of the IDEA Journal, as Executive Editor, I call for and look forward to your responses, to receiving feedback from our readers.

Please email me, Lynn Churchill l.churchill@curtin.edu.au subject line 'reader feedback IDEA journal_17 DARK SPACE_the interior.'

NOTES

1. Tanizaki, Jun'ichiro. 1977. *In Praise of Shadows*. Translated by Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker. USA: Leete's Island Books inc. https://www.edu.artcenter.edu/mertzel/spatial_scenography_1/Class%20Files/resources/In%20Praise%20of%20Shadows.pdf P.9
2. Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, p.11.
3. Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, p.12.

BIOGRAPHY

As Head of Discipline Interior Architecture Curtin University, Lynn's research, teaching and practice lie in the physical and psychical relationship between (interior) architecture and the human body in the context of dynamic, rapid changes catalysed by the domination of technology: the impact of technologies on the history, politics and economics of human occupation – how and where we live and work. Lynn is currently building an interdisciplinary research project including an exhibition of design propositions investigating Australian housing: 'Re-imagining the Great Australian Dream.'