



Chapter 11

Performing a New Agenda for a First-Year Interior Architecture Studio: Theatre Space

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ABSTRACT

Considering the content and complex structure of design education, it is important to include the making, body, and movement in design pedagogy. In this context, thinking design with theatre opens to an aggregation of opportunities for thinking holistically and creatively about the character, elements, functioning, and the outcomes of the first-year design studio. This chapter presents a pedagogical approach for the first-year design studio through a final project, Theatre Space, which was devised as an integrated seven-week process of comprehending, interpreting, designing, fabricating, and performing Samuel Beckett's Quad 1+2, with all its components such as stage and décor, costume, accessories, makeup, light, sound, and performance. Students from the Departments of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Industrial Design had a chance to display how they internalised and applied basic principles of design in their drawings, sketches, diagrams, writings, and collages, as well as the final physical products in 1/1 scale within a performative exhibition: Anti-Quad.

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INTRODUCTION

By its very nature, first-year design studios come with challenges, ambiguities, and unknowns that both students and teachers deal with. On one hand, today's design education is still conducted under the epistemological paradigm of positivism that is central to the university model of education (Findeli, 2001), which was named as the "banking model" by Freire (2000), and is grounded on a strategy of depositing ready knowledge into students. But on the other hand, changing paradigms in the field of design curriculum trigger new approaches to bring about and equip students with strategic themes, methods, and skills to design habitats of the future. Old or new, notions like critical thinking, creativity, conceptual thinking, learning by doing/making (Schön, 1987), interactivity, co-working, transdisciplinary, computation, digital fabrication (re)appear as the vigorous driving forces in today's first-year design studios. They not only serve to welcome students (who mostly come with different socio-cultural backgrounds to the realm of "design thinking"), but also to teach them to equip themselves with prospective competences. From a contextual perspective, it is clear that the way a design studio internalises the notions above, directly determines the very quality of both the process and the outcomes. Therefore, discussions about the "whatness" of a design studio should also be accompanied by discussions about the "how-ness" of it. Turning the question of "what" to "how", can also help to demystify the inner logic of a design studio, since it takes the focus from a fragmented ontology of varying design issues to a more concrete area, where reasoning about the studio mechanism itself, without neglecting the very relation between student and design milieu is possible. Questioning the crucial characteristics and the working principles of the milieu of a first-year design studio which relies on the purpose of teaching how to learn design, is the main discussion framework of this chapter.

This study focuses on the final group project of students in the system called the Foundation Studio, consisting of the first-year students from the departments of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Industrial Design. From the perspective of an Interior Architecture pedagogy, students are offered challenges with different aspects of design. Interior Architecture emphasises on comprehending internal spaces through its geometry, functionality, materiality, economics, as well as its semantics, spatial experience, and socio-cultural qualities. Considering the large number of elements used for the design of interior spaces, this scope becomes quite broader and significantly complex. It also has a practice-based aspect specifically regarding architecture, design and art disciplines; so it has a mixed structure in terms of design methods and pedagogy. Within the wide scale of architecture, ranging from city-scale to human ergonomics, it deals with the life scenario of the users. Since Interior Architecture is essentially based on the use and reuse of the space and its elements, proposing this agenda provides students with a trans-scale co-working opportunity. It should not be forgotten that, increasing, different occupations work in support and cooperation with each other, rather than in opposition. Therefore, a variety of discourse, definitions, and methods for architecture and industrial design contain some basic elements that are also valid for the fields of interior architecture and education. Considering this interdisciplinary aspect, the authors prefer to use design as an umbrella expression.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

This study aims to evaluate a performance-oriented studio environment and learning style, and to investigate the contribution of this approach to space design. The concept of performance, as realised during

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