

INTERIOR WOR(L)DS. This publication wants to outline, in one single narrations made of various contributions, the complex scenery of contemporary Interiors by means of words that best characterize them. Words denominate things, words tell stories, word open to other worlds and to different ways of thinking. We also wish to understand, discuss, and compare everyone's notes without any need of traditional classification. While going around, words spread ideas and stimulate images. In a steady process of self-reinvention, words are never definitive and fixed, on the contrary free and open to change. Words represent things and things can be an instrument to create new stories and ideas. As words transform with time in any society, country or economy we should look for the "key words" of Interiors: we will freeze-frame certain ideas, by clarifying and asserting them – always remembering they belong to an open panorama of thought.

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INTERIOR WOR(L)DS \*

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APPROPRI-ACTION  
BEHAVIOUR  
CAMP VERSATILY  
CONTAMINATION CONNECTIVITY  
PATTERNS HAPTIC  
TRANSFORMABILITY DECOR.ACTION  
INFRA-MALL IN-BETWEEN  
LANDSCAPES MEMORIALISED  
EPHEMERAL NATURE  
PLACES PERFORMATIVITY  
THEATRICALITY PROSTHESIS  
NEARNESS TRANSGRESSIVE  
HOMELY CITY INSIDE  
LAYERS VISTA  
ASSEMBLAGE NETWORK  
THRESHOLD CON·NO·TA·TION  
WORDS ELEGANCE  
INTERACTION TRANSITION  
FETISH HYBRID  
INTERIORITY INHABITING  
OPENING BOUNDARIES  
PERFORMANCE CONFIGURATION  
PROGRAMS SHELTER  
CONTEXTILE MONTAGE  
UNITY PERMEABLE  
POETRY PAPERSPACE  
REPRESENTATION SURFACE  
TEMPORALITY PATHS  
EXPERIENCE TRANSFORMATION  
CROSSING OBJECT  
TRADITION STRUCTURE  
COLOURS RE-FUNCTION  
HOME PRIVACY

INTERIOR WOR(L)DS \*

ATMOSPHERE  
BODY LIGHT  
EXPERIMENTATION HOSPITALITY  
COMPOSITION MEMORY  
INCLUSION PROPORTION  
FLEXIBILITY SKIN  
MEETING TECHNOLOGY  
ARTIFICE MOVEMENT  
DEPTH SUSTAINABLE  
PERCEPTION RE-USE

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# Hybrid

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## Space of flows and space of places versus hybrid space

Today, media networks are influencing and interacting with real places. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is radically changing the way we live, interact and perceive our world. Politics, economics, warfare, culture are increasingly taking place in the spaces of information-communication, media networks. Manuel Castells describes in his book *The Rise of the Network Society* the immense impact ICT will have on our society. According to Castells the “space of flows”, these spaces of information-communication networks transform the “space of places”, our physical environments.

Castells juxtaposes these “space of flows” of information and communication, of services and capital (media spaces and information-communication networks) against the “space of places”, the local urban space.

Interesting as it is to consider architectural space and the space of information-communications networks as competing, even mutually exclusive frameworks of social interaction, it will be more fruitful to recognize the emerging interweaving of physical space and informational space and the fusions of analog space and digital networks. (1)

The term “Hybrid Space” stands for this combination and fusion of media and physical space. Hybrid space is the product of alliances between physical objects and information-communication networks, between architectural and media space.

More interesting than the juxtaposition and polarisation, than the distinction in media networks and urban places, is the interplay of media and architectural space. The concept of Hybrid Space sees the physical environment in the context of and in correlation with the networks which it belongs to and interacts with.

This distinguishes the Hybrid Space approach from the methodology which urban sociologist Manuel Castells introduced with his notion of the “space of flows”.

(1) Castells 1996, 376-428.

## Hybrid space

We can find fusions of analog and digital space, the so-called “hybrid” networked spaces all around us. Such different environments as the trading floor of the stock exchange or the (dance) club with its disc-jockeys and video-jockeys are both hybrid spaces.

Examples of hybrid (combined media and physical) space can be found everywhere in our daily lives. With mobile telephony in urban open spaces private and public space intermingles. Mobile devices with, for example, Augmented Reality applications superimpose media information layers on our physical environments. In monitored environments cameras keep watch over open urban areas. We are increasingly dealing today with these fuzzy mixes of the analog and the digital, as for instance with miniaturized digital communication devices integrated in wearables as watches or safety coats.

More examples can be found in our private environments, as our homes become “smart” and our cars become networked spaces with, amongst others, Global Positioning System GPS navigation. “Intelligent” home devices such as refrigerators networked via your personal portable information-communication system will in the near future tell you that you haven’t any milk left and, if you don’t want to teleshop, your car will guide you to the next shop where you can buy milk. Networked wall-paper, carpets and doors, as integral elements of the system of the “smart” house, will recognize the owner of the house and process the patterns of his habits. “Intelligent”, networked materials and objects will be everywhere.

Physical space and objects should not be looked at in isolation. Instead, they should be considered in the context of and in relation to the networked systems to which they belong. We therefore focus on the hybrid ambivalent spaces, analogue and digital, virtual and material, local and global, tactile and abstract, in which we live and interact.

## Hybrid as a paradigm

Considering these combined media and physical spaces in their layering and stratifications, in their changing densities and discontinuities leads to a spatial concept with a high level of hybridity – **reflecting a cultural shift away from a mindset based on clear – cut** categories towards a flexible approach based on intermixtures and interconnections.

“Hybrid” is an ancient Greek word. In the times of the Aristotelian categories, the notion of the “hybrid”, the crossbreed, had a negative connotation. Today the notion of the “hybrid” is everywhere. Hybridization is becoming an increasingly important issue in the

cultural field. Look at the attention paid to world literature. The new production and communication tool of the networked computer provides a common working instrument for a broad range of creative professions, paving the way for a series of hybrid professional fields. Today, you have hybrid cars, hybrid businesses, hybrid securities, hybrid plastics, hybrid plants, hybrid pigs.

The clear-cut antinomy and the excluding logics of Castells' "space of flows" *versus* "space of places" does not correspond to the cross-breed character of the hybrid space all around us – in all its variations of combined physical space and media networks. While Castells' "space of flows" would be placeless – thus continuous – the hybrid space approach considers our environment in its discontinuities, its fluctuating connectivity to a multiplicity of media networks, in its changing densities of layered communication spaces.

#### Inversions of privacy

Today's hybrid urban realities require a more differentiated approach that considers their density and stratification changes. In this context traditional spatial categories, such as private space versus public space are dissolving. Today one can observe an inversion of privacy as public and private environments are becoming intermingled in the fusion of media and "real" space. We see this in the hybrid spaces of the publicly broadcast (inverted) privacies of reality TV or the "Big Brothers" and in the explosion of social media, in the media presence of war intruding our living rooms and in **the islands of private (communication) space** of mobile telephony within public urban space.

In his phenomenological analysis of lived space, *La poétique de l'espace*, the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard develops a "dialectics of inside and outside", contrasting the intimate felicitous space, the comforting private enclosure, with the space of the "outside". According to Bachelard, "[the house] is an instrument with which to confront the cosmos." (2) Architecture provides, in a dynamic interplay between an active mind and its surrounding space, such structures for organizing our experiences and fantasies, helping us construct (us in) our world. The notion of "privy chamber", emerging in English literature of the 17th century, describes not only the new private physical spaces as the introduction of the corridor layout in the English interiors of the 17th century but it enabled the development of the "private quarters". "Privy chamber" is used also metaphorically for the "soul". "Privy chamber" is the container of (private) identity. As John Lucaks writes "Domesticity, privacy, comfort, the concept of the home and of the family (...) are, literally, principal achievements of the Bourgeois Age." (3)

(2) Bachelard 1969, 46.

(3) Lukacs 1970, 620-621.

Within the traditional – **bourgeois** – **concept of privacy, identity is** based on private individuality. Today's changes concerning privacy are influencing the way we form our identity. **The formally exclusive and** contrasting concepts of “inside versus outside”, of private versus public space, are intermingling and blurring. This has implications on today's constructions of subjectivity and identity concepts.

## Identity and density

In the last year of the 20th century, “Big Brother” (with its networked container), the notorious “reality-soap” was first launched in Holland and was cloned and copied all over the planet. What in the meantime, with the proliferation of Reality TV is an everyday reality, was then new and shocking – **and was discussed all over the media, from the** popular talk shows to the scholarly journals (“Is this the End of Our Civilization?”). What shocked was the broadcasting (the inverting) of privacy. What shocked was that the participants of the soap defined their identity not in the “privy chamber” but in the public networked character of the broadcasting-container. The ENDEMOL soap was an interactive environment (the television public had democratic rights, influencing developments). The captives in the container/networks witnessed their existence in the “Real Virtuality” (4) of their media presence. They witnessed their identity within the densities of the (communication) channels. In the same year, 1999, a big campaign was launched in Holland: on most billboards in major or minor cities, men and women, youngsters and the elderly – **the average Dutch person** – **were declaring “ik ben Ben”**. This was not the mass expression of an identity crisis, but an advertising campaign for the introduction of the new GSM company called “Ben”, targeting the public at large. The advertising slogan was based on a simple play on words, “ben” meaning in Dutch “I am” and “Ben” being a common male name as well as the name of the mobile phone company. But what makes this slogan such an interesting expression of our times is its definition of identity (I am: *Ik ben*) as connectivity (“Ben” being the network provider), the identity of the urbanite being defined as the density of the (superimposed media/”real”) communication spaces.

## Identity

Within these new hybrid cityscapes traditional categories for analyzing space are becoming obsolete. A new field combining architecture and design with information-communication networks and media spaces is emerging that requires new tools and new research categories.

(4) Castells 1996, 327-375.

(5) Our survey was published online on the websites of Infodrome (2000), “DISP-Plus” of ETH Zürich (2001), the Center for Urban Research of New York University (2001), the Technical University of Athens/Greece (2002), the Global Development Research Centre/GDRC (2003), in the magazine *Space and Culture: International Journal of Social Spaces*, Ottawa (2004), in the *Sociology/Social Science discussion forum* – University of Abertay Dundee UK (2004), on *Planum – the European journal of planning* (2004). Our survey was also published in Dutch as *Ruimtegebruik in het informatie-communicatietijdperk. Verwerking van het onplanbare* on the website of Infodrome (2000), in the book *De burger als spin in het web. Essays over het verdwijnen van plaats en afstand in de informatiesamenleving*, editor Rick van der Ploeg (former Dutch State Secretary of Culture), Den Haag 2001 and in a summary form in the book *Controle nemen of geven – een politieke agenda voor de informatiesamenleving*, editor Rick van der Ploeg (former Dutch State Secretary of Culture), Den Haag 2001.

To help us understand this fusion, this superimposition and the interaction of media and “real” physical spaces, in 1999 we introduced – within the framework of our survey *The Use of Space in the Information/Communication Age – Processing the Unplannable* of the Think Tank of the Dutch government Infodrome, 1999-2002 – (5) a new term: “*Idensity*” does not differentiate between information communication networks and architectural environments and offers an integrated model for dealing with hybrid space today.

It is a composite term, combining the word “density” – of real (urban) and “virtual” (media) communication spaces (density of connections) – and the word “identity.” “*Idensity*” integrates the concept of “density” (density of connections, of physical and digital infrastructure, of communication spaces) with the concept of “identity” (image policies, brands). “*Idensity*” addresses therefore the logics of today’s expanding economy of attention.

But it is not a mere summation of the concepts of “density” and “identity.” It is a fusion, as it inverts “identity,” linking it to communication, “identity” being defined by connectivity.

Therefore, it does not just address the “clear-cut identity, the particularity, the individuality of the traditional places or sites” but also the layered *idensities* of the “*non-lieux*” (6) – “non-places” – of today’s generic cities, which are to be found especially in the realms of mobility and consumption (airports, hotels, shopping malls, motorway rest areas, etc.). It does not refer only to object-qualities but describes a field of superimposed (communication) spaces: the branded space of the chain-shop, the symbolic space of the traditional building the shop is located in, the media space of mobile augmented reality applications integrating teleshopping... *Idensity* is a conceptual tool for researching and developing space today.

(6) Augé 1992.

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They are founders of Hybrid Space Lab, a r&d and design practice focusing on the hybrid fields that are emerging through the combination of environments, objects and services in the information/communication age. They have worked as consultants to the Dutch government on “the use of space in the information/communication age”. In 1998 at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne Frans founded the first Department of Hybrid Space worldwide.

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