

embodiment modernity rationalisation soft commodity ideal ritual margins
consumption vacuum thing culture status love collection vernacular margins
soft promotion craft ephemeral corporation commerce domesticity knowledge
dissemination text practice manufacture translation taste interaction text
practice co-ordination commodity avant-garde knowledge dissemination
industrial comfort concept space meeting love synthesis stuff domesticity
nation soft ephemeral marketplace origination change fashion luxury
commerce domesticity time rationalisation soft commodity ideal concept space
marketplace origination change fashion ritual margins consumption vacuum
thing dissemination industrial margins soft promotion craft ephemeral
corporation synthesis stuff domesticity nation soft ephemeral marketplace
origination change fashion luxury commerce domesticity time organisation
marketplace craft **Representing Design – 1400 to the present day**
soft promotion craft avant-garde interaction text practice co-ordination
commodity avant-garde **The annual Design History Society conference hosted by**
synthesis **the Royal College of Art and the Victoria & Albert Museum London**
industrial comfort concept space meeting synthesis **20–22 September 2001**
domesticity nation soft ephemeral game organisation marketplace craft
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ABSTRACTS

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domesticity knowledge dissemination text practice manufacture translation
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The *Dispersed Dwelling* (Förster, 2009) is an exploration of the predicament of the house in the UK. A German researcher (with the voice of Yveta Gerson) returns from a 20-year absence to the Arctic to find that, despite the UK is one of the most advanced of the advanced economies, its houses are the most dispersed in western Europe. The film includes archive footage of Buckminster Fuller, Constant, Archigram and other futurists, and interviews with Martin Peckley, Susan Sontag, Doreen Massey, Claire Price and others.

A few years ago, it occurred to me to explore the predicament of the house in advanced economies. At the time, this seemed an unshakable subject. The definitive experience of modernity, or post-modernity, was to leave a movement. To stay at home (as, for various reasons, I was increasingly inclined to do) seemed to be to marginalise oneself, despite the home's being increasingly a place of work, and increasingly well-served by electronic communications. The physical fabric of the house was even more problematic, in the UK, as of consumer items – food, domestic appliances, cars and so on – had become cheaper, either as a result of global technology, or of shifting production to lower-wage economies, or both, but the cost of housing was skyrocketing. The housing stock was ageing and not generally in very good condition. New houses were comparatively few, and were mostly reduced versions of the houses of fifty or a hundred years ago. Was contemporary world innovation about to challenge this, or is there a kind of opposition between the house and globally-developed technologies?

PLEASE NOTE

Due to recent events in the United States, some overseas speakers at this year's Design History Society conference have understandably not been able to travel to London during these difficult times. As you will appreciate, there may be some last minute changes to the programme. For up to date information please ask at the Registration/Conference Information Desk.

Speakers who have been contacted and confirmed they are unable to attend the conference have been highlighted in both the Timetable and List of Abstracts.

The Dilapidated Dwelling (Channel 4) 2000
Patrick Keiller (independent film maker)

The Dilapidated Dwelling (78mins, beta sx, 2000) is an examination of the predicament of *the house* in the UK. A fictional researcher (with the voice of Tilda Swinton) returns from a 20-year absence in the Arctic to find that, though the UK is one of the most electronic of the advanced economies, its houses are the most dilapidated in western Europe. The film includes archive footage of Buckminster Fuller, Constant, Archigram and Walter Segal, and interviews with Martin Pawley, Saskia Sassen, Doreen Massey, Cedric Price and others.

"A few years ago, it occurred to me to explore the predicament of *the house* in advanced economies. At the time, this seemed an unfashionable subject. The definitive experiences of modernity, or post-modernity, seemed to involve movement. To stay at home (as, for various reasons, I was increasingly inclined to do) seemed to be to marginalise oneself, despite the home's being increasingly a place of work, and increasingly open to electronic communications. The physical fabric of *the house* was even more problematic. In the UK, most consumer items – food, domestic appliances, cars and so on – had become cheaper, either as a result of new technology, or of shifting production to lower-wage economies, or both, but the cost of housing went on increasing. The housing stock was ageing and not generally in very good condition. New houses were comparatively few, and were mostly reduced versions of the houses of fifty or a hundred years ago. Was some consumerist innovation about to challenge this, or is there a kind of opposition between *the house* and present-day developed economies?"

Representing the Domestic Interior in Europe and America, 1850 to the present
 Part I
 Convened by Jeremy Aynsley (Royal College of Art)

Paper 1

Glessner House: One Family's Search for the Arts & Crafts Ideal**Joan M. Hansen (independent scholar, Chicago)**

In 1870 John Jacob Glessner (1843-1936), a partner in a farm machinery firm, moved from Ohio with his wife Frances Macbeth Glessner (1848-1932) to open the company's Chicago office. The young couple became very active in the city's civic, cultural and social life. As they furnished their home, they began a pattern of self-education in the arts that enabled them to translate their beliefs about the ideal home into a reality. Concerned about the negative effects of industrialization on the design and manufacture of home furnishings, they familiarized themselves with British reform ideas and took to heart the belief that everyday objects could be artistic and beautifully crafted. The Glessners were unusual in the amount of time, thought and attention devoted to furnishing their home as a moral and cultural environment for their family. In 1886 they commissioned noted architect Henry Hobson Richardson to design a new home more in keeping with the Arts and Crafts ideas they came to espouse. Building on their family heirlooms and American-made Modern Gothic and Aesthetic furniture, they added furnishings designed by William Morris, William de Morgan, Lewis F. Day, and other figures in the Arts and Crafts Movement. The Glessners kept a remarkable household journal from 1879-1921 and took photographs of their rooms. Along with 'Story of A House', written by John Glessner, these sources provide a visual and verbal text for understanding how their taste evolved. This paper explores how the Glessners' domestic interior reflected their interpretation of British ideas within an American cultural and social context.

Paper 2

The House in Good Taste: Decoding the Illustrations of Interiors in the Publication by Elsie de Wolfe**Professor Penny Sparke (Kingston University)**

The American interior decorator, Elsie de Wolfe, published her book 'The House in Good Taste' in 1913. It was written with the help of a ghost-writer, Ruby Ross Goodrow, and had been published in instalments over the previous two years in 'The Delineator' and 'Good Housekeeping'. The book was aimed at a mass market and set out to popularise the interior decorating ideas of de Wolfe which has characterised her professional practice over the previous eight years since her first commission, the interior of New York's Colony Club. As illustrations of a philosophy of the interior the book's images were undoubtedly revealing. From them the reader could immediately grasp the importance, for de Wolfe, of themes such as domesticity, comfort, historicism, eighteenth-century French taste, the role of chintz and trellis work, the use of antiques, etc. On one level, therefore, they played a key role as illustrations of ideas and ideals and clearly served as a crucial adjunct to Goodrow's text. On a secondary level, however, with the benefit of knowledge acquired by researching the life and work of de Wolfe, the illustrations with their enigmatic captions such as 'Anne Morgan's Boudoir', 'The Dining Room of the Washington Irving House', and 'A Bedroom with a Breton Bed', can be seen to represent and reveal another story which tells us more about the named author of the book than is first apparent. The book is written in the first person, a first for an interior decorating book, following the style of the autobiographical works of famous couturiers of the day. 'The House in Good Taste' is not an autobiography, however, although de Wolfe clearly uses personal experience as a basis for her ideas. In this paper I shall demonstrate how the illustrations are, in fact, depictions of interiors that de Wolfe created, from the mid 1890s onwards, for herself and her female companion, for her close friends and for private commissions for a group of, mostly, female clients. As such they provide clues to more than de Wolfe's aesthetic preoccupations. They also tell us about the way in which, for this interior decorator, the public and private, the personal and the professional, are one and the same thing. In this role they provide an insight into a key stage in the formation of the twentieth-century profession of interior decoration.

Representing the Domestic Interior in Europe and America, 1850 to the present
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Paper 3

Modelling late 19th century Interiors

Stuart Evans (Central Saint Martins) & John Tyrrell (Sunderland University)

We are jointly working on interpreting late C19th interiors, using designer's tools such as drawings and models to understand their spatial and decorative qualities. This is related to the tradition of drawings used to record and analyse buildings, and recent work on computer-based reconstructions, such as that published by Chart. This work focuses on interiors which are no longer extant, or are now incomplete, and particularly those known only from journal illustrations. Analysis of such illustrations can be revealing in itself, and production of plans, elevations, sections, views, and full or part models, can enhance the scope for critical discussion of the interiors. We will have drawings and models of two interiors, possibly three, to show and discuss. The paper is proposed to be in three sections. In the first the circumstances which led to the method being developed are outlined, noting the tradition of drawings to record or 'recreate' structures no longer extant to facilitate analysis and critique, from SPAB through to Virtual Curator. It considers the particular problem with ephemeral and complex interiors where only a minimal record has survived, and the use of designer's tools firstly as a means of more fully understanding and secondly to help communicate findings. Two examples by the Century Guild are discussed. In the second section recent use of drawings, models and computer based virtual reconstructions is considered. Material prepared for the recent Design Museum exhibition on Brunel is introduced to show how these are used curatorially to expand understanding of structures and spaces. A facsimile model of a piece of furniture and a sketch model of a building are compared. Other material is introduced including elevation and sectional drawings and the use of sample boards. In the final section the use of contemporary designers' drawings and photographs as a basis for interpretation is considered with a comparison between the Peacock Room and an asymmetrically disposed interior. It considers how this links to recent discussions of particular schemes and the history of nineteenth century interiors.

Paper 4

Class and social status in representations of interior domesticity: the West End naval theatricals of Ian Hay and Stephen King-Hall

Quintin Colville (Royal College of Art/Victoria & Albert Museum)

The doctoral work from which this paper is drawn argues that a distinction can be drawn between the Royal Navy's professional duties, and the social and cultural lifestyles and identities that it both promoted and protected. My concern has been with this latter dimension of the organisation; and my work has sought to explore the role of design and material culture in constructing the various socio-cultural worlds that existed within this institution. However, in many respects these worlds were far from unique to the navy. Particularly with regard to officers, they were in fact modified reflections of much broader socio-cultural trends. Indeed, during the first half of the twentieth century the naval officer came to stand as a trope - widely disseminated throughout British society - for a certain kind of respectable, conservative, middle class masculine identity. I would suggest that design and material culture lay at the heart of how this identity was both substantiated within the institution, and projected to a wider audience. Ian Hay and Stephen King-Hall's naval plays provide an excellent opportunity for seeing this process in action. The navy's professional activities have no part in them whatsoever; and we are presented, instead, with drawing-room comedy set within a naval context. The paper will focus on two plays in particular: 'The Middle Watch; A Romance of the Navy' (first performed in 1929), and 'Off the Record' (first performed in 1949). Using surviving production photographs and prop lists, my aim will be to examine the ways in which material culture both communicated class and status-related information within the plays, and also enabled the actors to simulate modes of contemporary middle class sociability. Through an exploration of these artificial representations of domesticity, I will hope to demonstrate the role of interiors in entrenching particular socio-cultural values, ideological positions and stereotyped expectations of individual behaviour.