

THE EUROPEAN CHARTER OF

INTERIOR
ARCHITECT
training
2020

THE 2025 ILLUSTRATED EDITION

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The European Charter of Interior Architect Training 2020



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A note on the wording

This Charter uses the terms 'Interior Architect' and 'Interior Architecture' as it is the most common description the profession Europe for. In some European countries the title 'Interior Architect' is regulated. In these countries the profession is registered, and there are specific chambers for this registration.

Some other countries restrict the use of the title 'Architect', including all prefixes. In those countries the general description for the profession is 'Interior Design', and where applicable 'Interior Architect(ure)' should be read as 'Interior Design(er)' or vice versa.

For the sake of readability this document uses gender-neutral forms where possible. Any masculine reference shall also apply to females and transgender readers and any feminine reference shall also apply to males and transgender readers.

About this book

The European Charter of Interior Architect Training 2020 was first published as an A4 document with some explanatory diagrams. Now, five years later, the ECIA has issued this book with the intention of making the information more accessible, easier to read and we have used pictures and photos to communicate the information in a way that is more true to the roots of our profession.

In some places words have added words or altered sentences, but only to make the information more clear, no new research has been done since 2020.

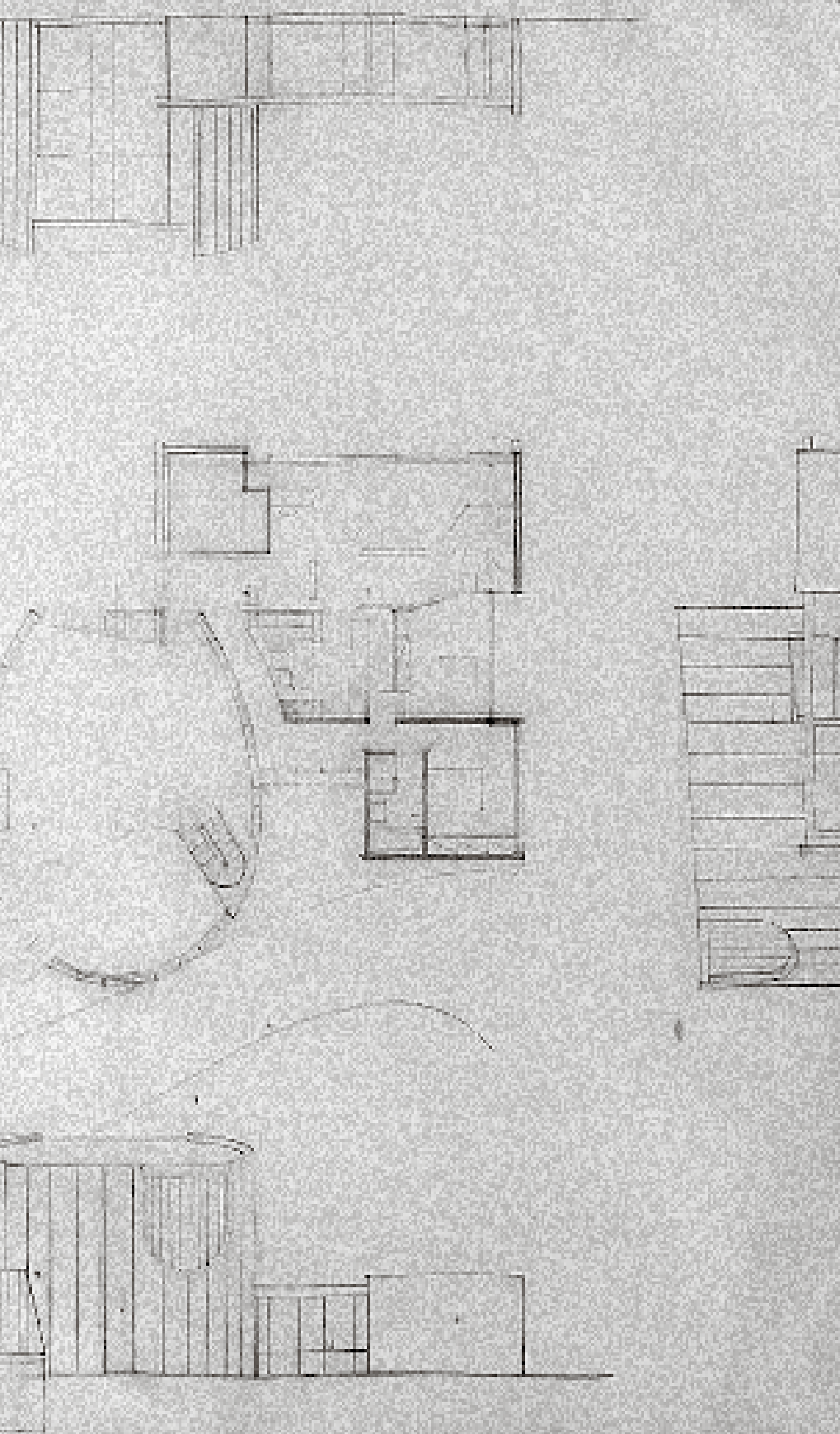
The only exception to this is the "Afterword" which we have added just to draw attention to some of the important things that have emerged since the 2020 revision.

This book will be issued on the ECIA website and we ask for comments, ammendments and information about new directions so the book will become a living document that is continually under revision.

We look forward to your interaction.

Jeremy Williams MNIL





← Plan Eileen Gray

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In this chapter we look at the background for the work on the 2020 Charter, we introduce the interior architects in the working group that revised the charter and the second peer review group who read the first draft and gave us feed back on the contents. We also explain the two main additions that were made to the 2013 revision.



<

The working group in Venice 30th October 2021.

From left to right:
Prof.Dr. Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla, Rene Pier, Marianne Dæpp, Professor Jeremy Williams, Dr Albert Fuster Marti.

At the 2018 General Assembly in Antwerp the ECIA National Organisations (NO-s) agreed to make a review of the **2013 European Charter of Interior Architecture Training**. The agreement was based on commissioning a series of workshops where the task was to question and re-define the ECIA's role in the development of Interior Architectural training.

The main purpose of the revision was to clarify the requirements for the training of an Interior Architect from the perspective of practice, check if these were appropriately pictured and ensure that changes in society were reflected in the necessary qualifications, as described in a revised charter.

The **European Charter of Interior Architecture Training** has 25 years of history. The first version of this document was signed and published in 2000. The document has been periodically updated throughout the following years. After the European countries agreed to the 1999 Bologna process, the charter was restructured in accordance with the new lines of agreement for bachelor and master programmes.

The original objective of the European Charter of Interior Architecture Training was to describe the entry level to the profession. This has not changed, but in addition the charter can be used for national discussions on education politics, curricula development in educational institutions and recognition processes in the individual national organisations.

In 2019 the ECIA board established a working group for education. One of the most important tasks for the 2019 working group was to clarify and make a clear presentation of both practice and academic education in the training of an interior Architect.

THE 2020 CHARTER WORKING GROUP

The working group consisted of three ECIA boardmembers and external experts from both practice and education.

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NORWAY

RENE PIER



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PROF.DR. TUUNE VAIKLA



ESTONIA

MARIANNE DAEPP



SWITZERLAND

DR. ALBERT FUSTER MARTI



SPAIN

THE 2020 CHARTER SOUNDING BOARD

The first draft of the Charter was sent to an external panel of interior architects from a wide range of european countries. The sounding board consisted of external experts from both practice and education. Their feed back was, where possible, integrated in the final draft

RÒSA DOGG
INTERIOR ARCHITECT FHI



ICELAND

PROF. GRAEME BROOKER
HEAD OF PROGRAM RCA



ENGLAND

DR INGE SOMERS
UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP



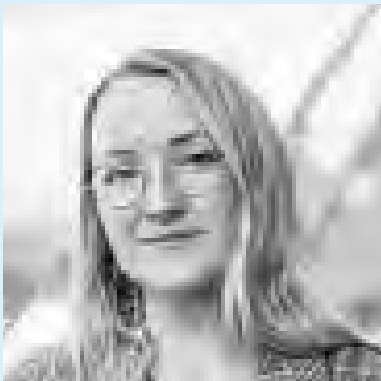
BELGIUM

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SWEDEN

TACO HYLKEMA
ARCHITECT MARCH / AADIP



NETHERLAND

The 2020 Charter Revision

Human relation to space is the main focus of the profession of Interior Architecture. Since 2013 there have been several important developments in society, education, technology and the profession itself. The most significant changes are the need to design with an awareness of environmental issues, increased social responsibility and also the use of digital technology. The definition of the profession of Interior Architect used in the 2013 charter has been re-worked and expanded in the 2020 charter to better reflect the work and position of the profession today.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES



TECHNOLOGY



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Two major changes

The working group made two major changes in their re-working of the 2013 Charter. The first change was that our training should have a sensory and experiential element. We identified a phenomenological approach to training and leaned on philosophy and other theoretical texts to support this.

The second change was that education in Interior Architecture should be completed with a third post-master cycle. This academic research element could be a PhD or a period of practical mentoring in practice – practice based research.

1 THAT THE TRAINING IS BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPACE.

Fundamental studies of space conducted by philosophers, where human existence is connected primarily to space, appeared in the 1960s when the first English translations were published: G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (1958), O. F. Bollnow, *Human Space* (1963), chapter on space M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), preceded by M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1962). Juhani Pallasmaa's *The Eyes of the Skin – Architecture and the Senses* (1996) developed out of the collected work *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture* (1994) and has become a basic text for the phenomenological treatment of architecture. Also Lefebvres *The Production of Space* from 1974 (English Translation 1991)



2 THE 2020 CHARTER EXTENDS THE RANGE OF 'TRAINING' BY OPENING A POST MASTER LEVEL THAT IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS:



Do Ho Suh– "Homes" rominstallasjon
at Kistefoss Museum August 2022.
Photo by Jeremy Williams

Part one

A recommendation for a two-year period of professional traineeship or practice experience supervised by a qualified mentor and documented to reflect this experience. This is a **requirement** in those countries where the profession is registered and follows the 5 + 2 year model of the 2013 charter.

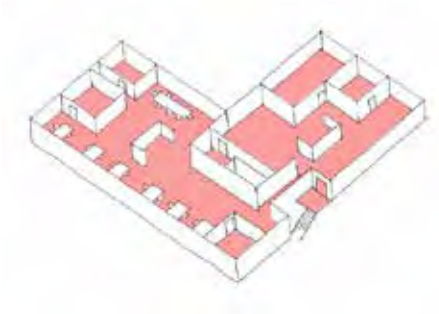
Part two

A level of research beyond the entry level to the profession. This third level follows the structure of the Bologna Agreement, where the aim is to contribute to new knowledge within the profession. It should result in a documented form that can be peer-reviewed and lead to profound expertise in the field of Interior Architecture. This could either be carried out in a university as a PhD or as practice-based research.

It is important to point out that the requirements for awarding a doctorate varies from country to country, thus entry levels should be checked by the PhD applicant in the country in which the application is made.

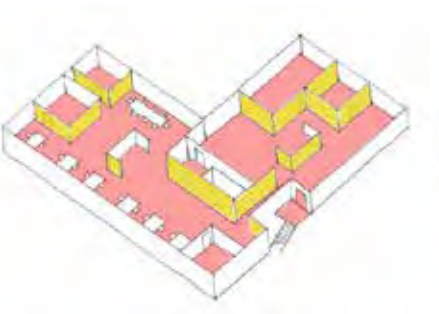


Research Fellow Birgitte Appeløng MNIL
Picture from her Norwegian Artist Research
Program Oslo National Academy of the Arts
PhD "Lights in Rooms - Light Scenarios
to describe surfaces"



The Bachelor degree gives the student relevant knowledge skills and competancies

A basic knowledge of sustainable design practices has become one of the basic skills needed in the training of Interior Architects at bachelor level.



The Master degree builds on the knowledge and skills iand competencies in the bachelor and has an element of new thinking and innovation and research.

Design and research in places for people with special needs has become a popular theme for master diplomas. Biofilic design, homes for the elderly and re-use are typical areas of research at master level

< From Helen & Hards installation at the Architecture Biennale in Venice 2021. Photos by Jeremy Williams >

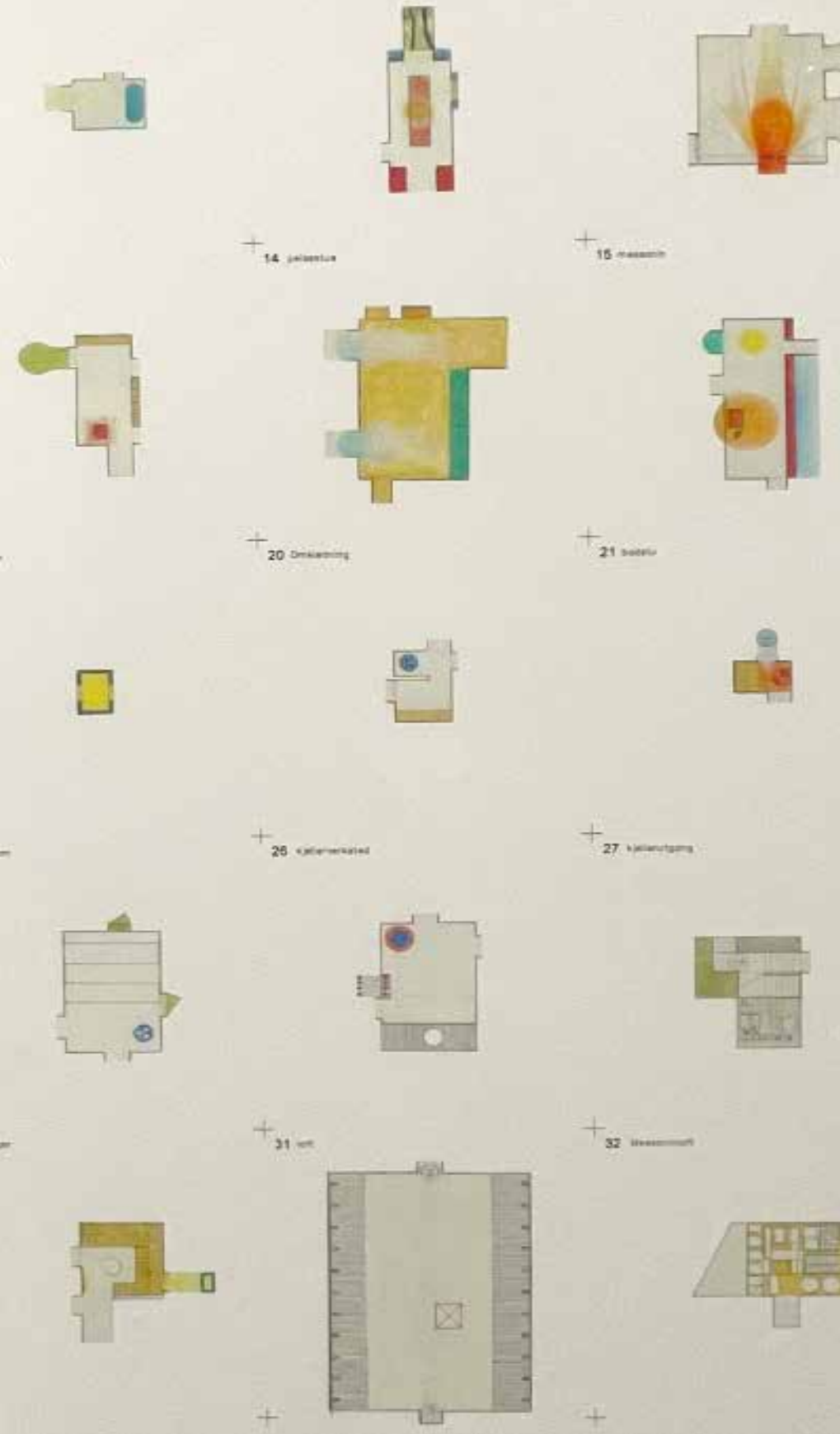


The PhD student can consider the need to take initiative for re-search to create innovation, can convey research and development work through national and international publications

Transferring knowledge through visual communication and not only written texts is emerging as a way to articulate research projects within the creative professions.



From an installation by Thor Magnus Tangerås at the Exhibition "Hist" – Kristanania University of Applied Sciences 2022



CHAPTER 2

The Discipline and Profession

The **discipline of Interior Architecture** interacts within the field of design, art and the applied arts, and operates in the field of Architecture

The **profession of Interior Architect** acts as an agent in creating the world around us and specializes in producing aesthetically appropriate, compelling and successful spaces. The field of practise is to understand human needs and wills in relation to atmosphere, security and well-being with the responsibility for the future of the environment.

← From the Exhibition
"Hånd og maskin.
Arkitektoniske
Tegninger" –
The National
Museum in Oslo
2024.
Photo by Jeremy
Williams



↑ From the Carlo Scarpas Olivetti Office
in Venice. Photo by Jeremy Williams



24 The Interior Architect: Scope of activities



Cultural, social and environmental awareness and research are the fundamental competencies for the practice of Interior Architecture.

Interior Architects create relevant **environments for human activities**. The methodology of adding to, interacting with, and making incremental adjustments, are tools for developing a concept and testing form.

The practice of Interior Architecture often engages in work on already existing buildings, where **adaptive re-use** and a knowledge of architectural strategies are necessary for re-designing existing space.

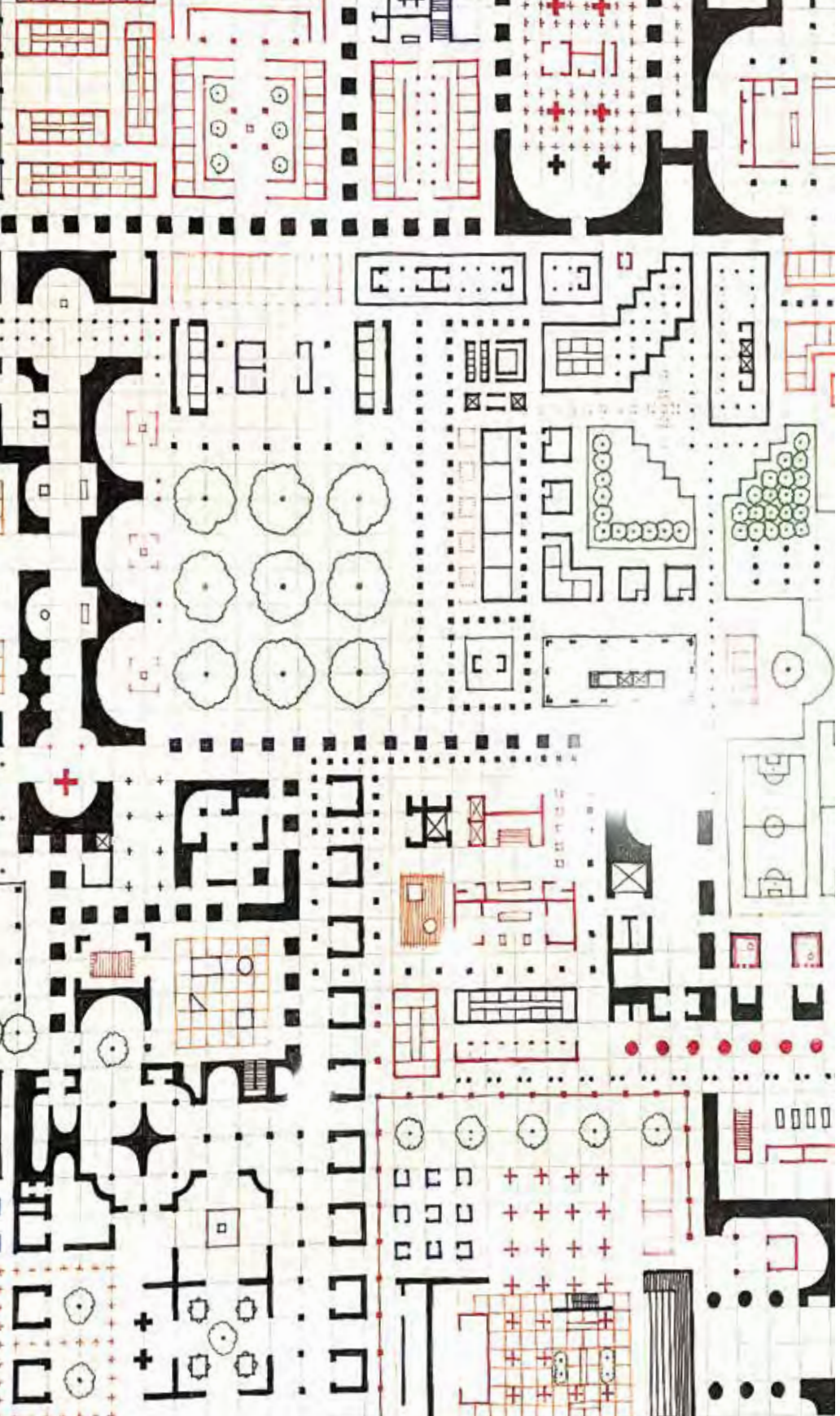
Interior Architecture projects are also often part of new buildings, and here the ability to **work in a cross professional team** is essential.

The process of design in Interior Architecture is based on **critical thinking through design**, the creative process and rethinking what has previously been understood.

It is understood that **creativity** relates to an underlying set of competences present in several aspects of the interior architect profession.



^ From the Scandinavian pavillion at the Venice Architecture Biennial 2021 – Architect Sverre Fehn
Photo by Jeremy Williams



CHAPTER 3

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

In this chapter we give a give a short description of the aims and objectives of the 2020 charter revision and the structure of the revision, grouping the training and practice of the profession under Lefebvre's three categories of Physical space, Mental space and Social space. We also mention Blooms taxonomy as a visual reference for educational objectives.

Aims and Objectives for the Charter

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS AND ATTITUDE

The aims and objectives of the 2020 ECIA Charter of Interior Architecture Training are to **define the training** (knowledge, skills and attitudes) necessary for a qualified practitioner to fully understand the concept of spatial research and engage in the practice with a scientific, humanistic and academic (studying) approach to the discipline.

Interior Architecture training should ensure that qualified practitioners have **proper professional competence** in the field, including knowledge of technical systems and requirements and the ability to seek a balance between health, safety and ecology.

They should also promote the cultural, intellectual, historical, social, economic and environmental context of interior architecture and comprehend their **role and responsibility in society**.

One of the challenges in revising the European Charter for Interior Architecture Training 2020 was the differences between the ECIA member countries and their requirements for entry to the profession. On the one hand, it is important to use, wherever regulation is possible, the standard and level for the profession that is described in the EU and implemented by the individual countries (for example, Germany). On the other hand, this level should also be used to encourage those countries where the profession is less regulated to adopt this standard. In this revision we use the last amendment of the EU directive as a reference.

The Structure of the Charter

The structure for listing the areas of work within the profession for the 2020 Charter revision is borrowed from Henri Lefebvre "The Production of Space"¹

The first step in creating an upgraded model for Interior Architectural training was to sort the areas of work under one of Lefebvre's 3 categories of Space:

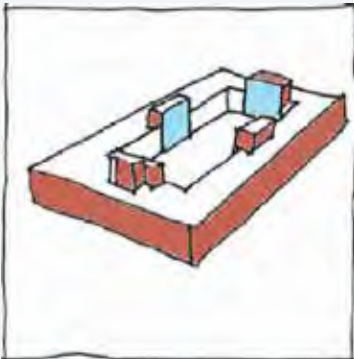
- 1 Physical space – the perceived environment
- 2 Mental space – imagined, designed & planned
- 3 Social space – human activities & communication

¹ Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*

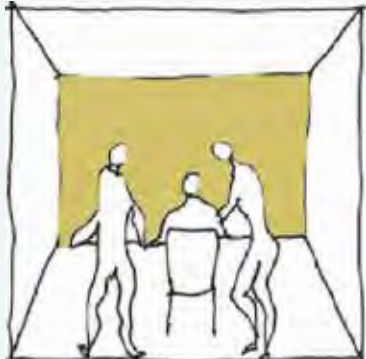
HENRE LEFEBRVE'S DEVISION OF SPACE



PHYSICAL SPACE
THE PERCEIVED ENVIRONMENT



MENTAL SPACE
IMAGINED DESIGNED AND PLANNED



SOCIAL SPACE
ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATION

Blooms Taxonomy



The ECIA charter refers to “a Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing. A Revision of **Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives**”². This taxonomy provides a framework for determining and clarifying learning objectives.

To reflect the **complexity of an interior architect’s training**, the three dimensional model of Bloom’s Taxonomy is used to show the hierarchy of training activities. The model visualises the area and depth of knowledge, as well as the skills and competences graded from remember, to create.

The process of improving is more a matter of adding layers and increasing the depth of the cognitive process than simply learning new things.

² REVISED BLOOM’S TAXONOMY:
Churches, A. 2012. Bloom’s Digital Taxonomy.
<http://burtonslifelearning.pbworks.com/f/BloomDigitalTaxonomy2001.pdf> <https://www.niallmcnulty.com/2017/11/blooms-digital-taxonomy/> [https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/ef-fective-t achingpractices/revised-blooms-taxo-nomy/](https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teachingpractices/revised-blooms-taxonomy/) Site visited on 12.05.2020

Create discussion

The intention is that the 2020 Charter will be used to stimulate discussion in the professional practice.

In the discipline of Interior Architecture, it is necessary to foster discussion and reflection on the profession’s theoretical corpus.

The 2020 charter extended the description of requirements for higher education to a **third level of education and research where new theoretical and practical knowledge can be created and discussed**, with the intention that this will filter down to practice.

Relevant areas of research are: sustainable design, the role of the interior architect within the wider profession of architecture, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, the use of digital technology and A.I. in Interior Architecture and social responsibility

ECIA round table conference.
General assembly 2023 in Stockholm.





CHAPTER 4

ENTRY LEVEL TO THE PROFESSION OF INTERIOR ARCHITECT



In this chapter we describe the recommended academic and practical level of entry to the profession of interior architecture.

First we outline the 6 basic areas of knowledge and skill needed in the practice of interior architecture. Then we go on to describe a more detailed list of 15 specific areas of knowledge and skills that training of interior architects should include. We group these with 3 colours representing Lefebvre's Physical Space, Mental Space and Social Space.

SIX AREAS

The training of an Interior Architect focuses on the human relation to space. It must ensure at a minimum the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the following six areas:

ACTING AND DESIGN →	Design and communication of interior space.
RESEARCH →	Use of design methodology in the research process.
CONTEXT →	Understanding architecture in an aesthetic and cultural context.
HUMAN AND SOCIAL →	Understanding design from a human and social perspective.
ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT →	Understanding the management and economic requirements of an interior project.
TECHNOLOGY → AND REGULATIONS	Insight into building technology and building regulations.

This list of competences are areas of competence that professional practice considers important to the training of an Interior Architect. At the same time it is also understood that it is unlikely that any single student will become fully competent in all of these areas. The intention is for individual universities to choose which of these areas they will have most focus when planning their bachelor's and master's degrees.



FIFTEEN POINTS

Under these 6 headings a more detailed list of 15 points was then made detailing and further describing the areas of skills and knowledge required in the practice of interior Architecture. These 15 points are grouped with colour under Lefebvre 3 categories of Space – Physical Space, Mental Space and Social Space: **Green** – Physical Space. **Orange** - Mental space and **Blue** Social Space.

1

An ability to think critically about **design principles** and express them through media and also verbal communication (Gestaltungskompetenz). These skills can include crafting, sculpting, drawing, painting etc.



The training of Interior Architects must ensure the acquisition of the following 15 areas of knowledge and skills:

2

An awareness of the social and ethical responsibility in the profession of Interior Architecture. Under this point a knowledge of the **UNs 17 Sustainable Development Goals** is essential.

The following goals are particularly relevant to the profession of interior architecture: **Goals 3, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17**

3

Familiarity with critical reflection and the practice of a **designerly way of thinking.**

4

Knowledge of the **principles of building processes.**

5

Familiarity with **research methods** for everyday design problem and knowledge of the differences within scientific research methods.

10

Familiarity with social and anthropological models used to create **user centred projects.**

11

Basic knowledge of the processes in projects and buildings and familiarity with management, **project leadership, finances** and their organisation.

6

Knowledge of the A critical understanding of the **history, theory and aesthetics of Interior Architecture, Architecture** and related arts.

7

Knowledge of the principles of **Interior Architecture theory.**

12

An understanding of the technical demands and **technology of constructions.**

13

A basic understanding of **building laws and regulations.**

8

Familiarity with the **code of ethics and environmental ethics** in the area of activity in the profession.

9

A basic knowledge of ergonomic principles, **inclusive architecture** and user related design.

14

The ability to **characterise and distinguish different types of buildings.**

15

The ability to **characterise spaces, building structures, materials and their lifecycles in ecological and economic factors.**



CHAPTER 5

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING

In this chapter we look at the admission requirements recommended by the ECIA in accepting students in Universities offering courses in training of Interior Architects.

We use the degree structure of 3 cycles; bachelor, master and PhD. as outlined by the 1999 Bologna Agreement on higher education. We then go on to outline the importance of "life long learning" for practicing interior architects and lastly we make a note about the need for quality control in Universities when training interior architects.

Admission Requirements



Universities offering course in Interior Architecture recruit candidates with university admission.

Students must have the minimum academic level required by the school to enter a bachelor (1. Level) study.

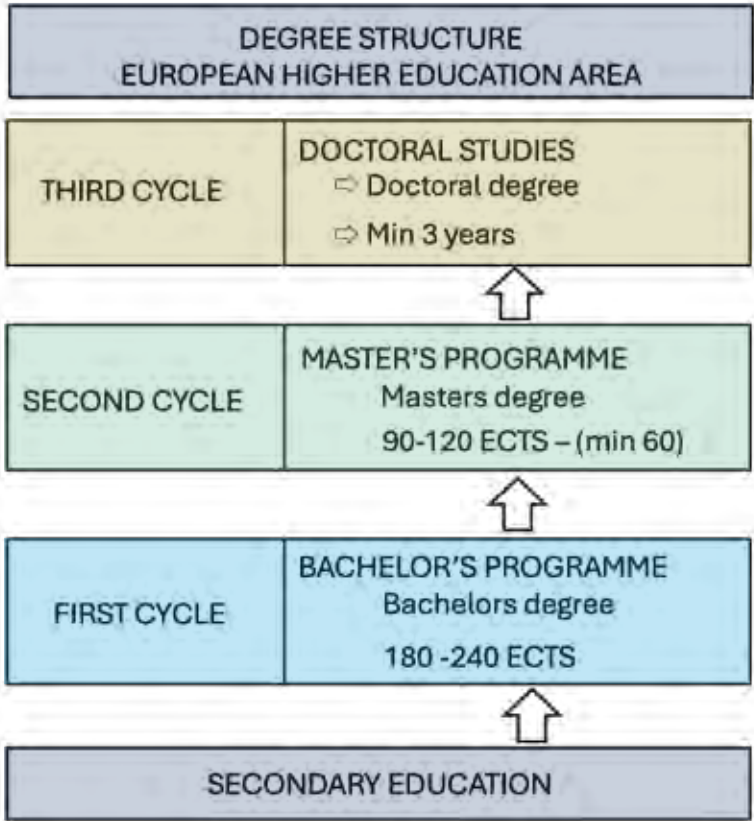
Admission of candidates is subject to an evaluation based on the level of general education, as well as motivation and specific aptitudes for the practice of Interior Architecture.

This evaluation may take place upon entrance to the educational institutions and/or during the first year of study. It is up to the schools to define this evaluation.



STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION AND PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

The Bologna agreement



The ECIA as a professional organisation does not define learning objectives but rather thresholds for the entry to the profession.

The **Bologna Declaration (1999)** defines **three consecutive cycles in higher education**³. These are used in the entry level to the profession as described in Chapter 4 of this charter.

CYCLE 1 qualifies as a **Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts** in Interior Architecture.

CYCLE 2 builds consecutively on the first level and qualifies as a **Master of Science or a Master of Arts** in Interior Architecture.

There can be an intermediate stage in acceptance to the profession of a two year period of professional traineeship or practice experience supervised by a qualified mentor and documented to reflect this experience. This is a requirement in the countries where the profession is registered and follows the 5 + 2 year model of the 2013 Charter.

In Britain and Ireland a BA Hons carrying 240 ECTS is accepted as the minimum academic requirement for entry to the profession. Here it is recommended that the missing years of education are supplemented with documented practice.

CYCLE 3 follows the structure of the Bologna Agreement where the aim is to contribute to new knowledge within the profession and should result in a documented form that can be peer reviewed and should lead to profound expertise in the field of Interior Architecture. This could either be carried out in a university as a **PhD** or as **research** within practice of a practical nature.

3 On strategic management of higher education: <https://jrllanes.wordpress.com/2010/08/26/the-three-cycles-of-bologna> visited 27.11.23

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THREE CYCLES

CYCLE 1
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE OR BACHELOR OF ARTS
EQUIVALENT TO 180 ECTS

CYCLE 1 is built as the base of a three level consecutive education in Interior Architecture. At least three years on a full-time basis, at a university or comparable educational institution.
The curriculum, of which Interior Architecture is the principal component, must maintain a balance between theoretical and practical aspects of Interior Architecture.
A professional of Interior Architect is aware of the core of the profession, the human relation to space and can distinguish mental, social and physical space and orientate their work in these fields.
Level 1 leads to the first formal qualification in the profession

CYCLE 2 builds consecutively on level 1 and consists of two years study on a full-time basis at a university or comparable educational institution.
The curriculum must maintain a balance between theoretical and practical aspects of Interior Architecture and guarantee the acquisition of the knowledge and skills as set forth in chapter 6 of this Charter.
A professional Interior Architect is aware of the core of the profession, the human relation to space and can analyse and critique mental, social and physical space and orientate their theoretical and practical work in these fields.
Cycle 2 leads to a formal qualification in the profession. The intention of the charter is that level 2 is required for the title of Interior Architect.

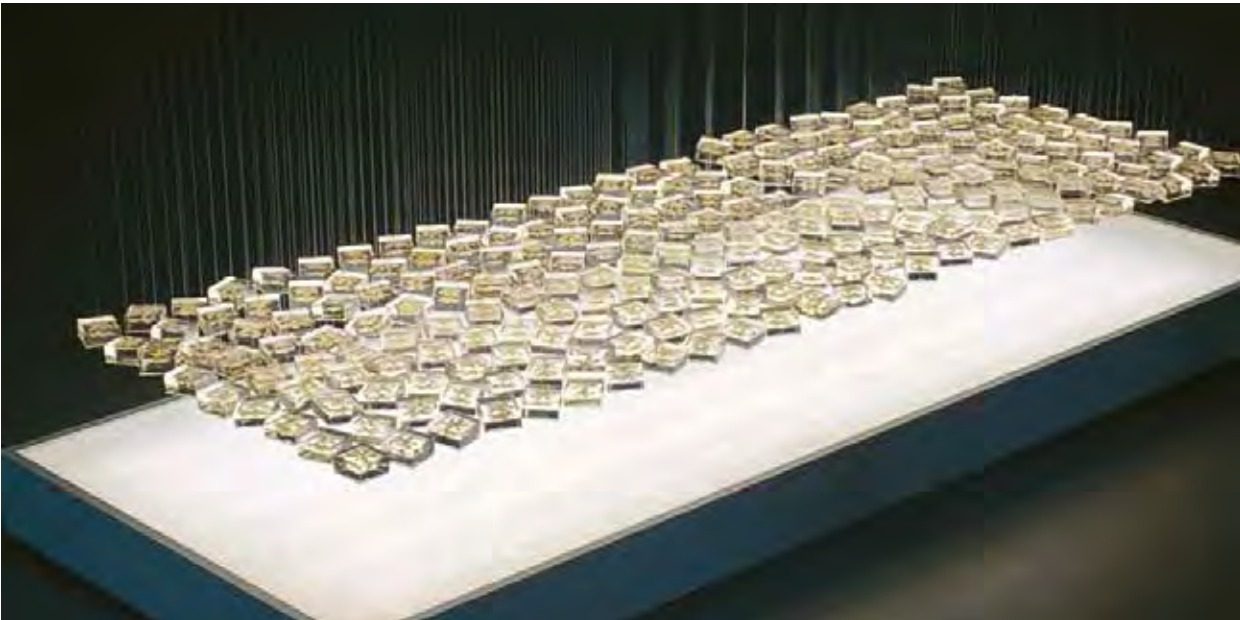
CYCLE 2
MASTER OF SCIENCE OR A MASTER OF ARTS
EQUIVALENT TO 300 (180+120) ECTS

In some European countries supplementary practical training is needed to maintain membership in the national organisation of Interior Architects.

CYCLE 3 PHD OR RESEARCH WITHIN PRACTICE

CYCLE 3 is an academic path that includes theory and research as postgraduate study and leads to the possibility of a PhD. This level can also be carried out within practice.

The work should include a social dimension, gather knowledge and add something new to the existing knowledge in the profession and make it available and transferable to others within and outside the profession. The practitioner should be able to reflect independently in this work. The work should have a creative element and must be able to be explained.



Light installation "Memories" by Jarle Fotland
From the research project in October 2022 "Hist"
Kristiania University College



Life long learning

Interior Architecture training should never be considered as a finished process; Interior Architects should participate in the practice of life-long learning. Here we refer to the European Qualifications Framework EQF 4.

The aim of life-long learning is for an interior architect to continuously expand the knowledge, skills and competences in the three areas of the human relation to space (mental space, social space and physical space). Life-long learning is absolutely critical and should be understood as a part of their continuous training.

ECIA encourages the member organisations to advocate continuing professional development as a prerequisite for continued membership in the professional body. Continuing professional development does not refer to formal education that leads to a more advanced degree but to a life-long learning process that maintains, enhances, or increases the knowledge and skills of Interior Architects.

The post-graduate market for education has increased in the last 10 years and is an integral and important part of the available educational courses. It is also important for the further development of the Interior Architecture discipline.

Quality control

To assure the standard of the study programmes, the educational institution must have accredited their courses to include a system of continuous quality control. This should have a formal status and be transparent to staff and students as well as other relevant stakeholders. The quality control system should include a 'right of complaint'. To ensure the quality of the Interior Architects programme, ECIA can recommend experts and peers for accreditation processes in all European countries.

4 European Qualifications Framework EQF
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUri.do?uri=COM:2001:0678:FIN:EN:PDF>



CHAPTER 6

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

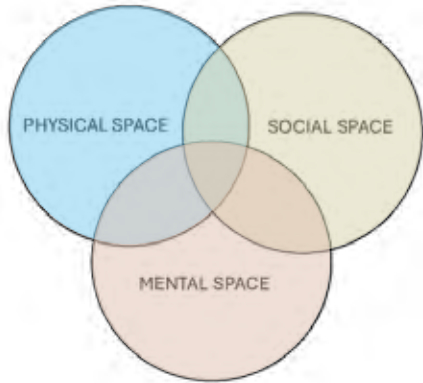
17

In this chapter we identify the knowledge, skills and competencies that are needed in the training of interior architects. These areas of competence are shown as here as diagrams; ***Building, Business, Human and Social, Context, Research and Acting and Design*** we then repeat the 15 activities grouped under these 6 headings as already shown in Chapter 4. We then list the tasks that we recommend should be carried under these 15 points at the 3 levels of higher Education; Bachelor, Master and PhD levels.

← "The Twist" Pavillion at Kistefos Museum Norway. Architect BIG.

Photo by Jeremy Williams

DIAGRAM 1
SHOWS LEFEBVRES THREE
TYPES OF SPACE.



To acquire the entry level to the profession as described in Chapter 4 of this charter subsequent steps in academic and practical training are required. Educational institutions in Europe offer a broad range of Interior Architecture courses, with different content, length and degree levels.

This chapter describes the competences necessary for Interior Architects to play an independent and self-assured role in their distinct field of the architectural and design professions.

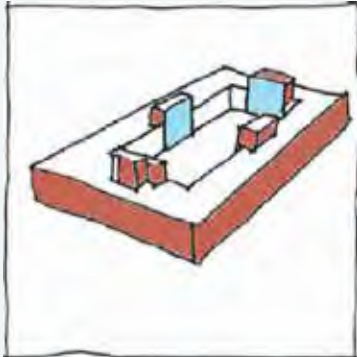
The approach of the 2020 revision is from the perspective of professional practice, and the intention is that each educational institution will use these required competences to ensure that the student has the training and knowledge that enables Interior Architects to enter the profession and continue studies after the completion of obligatory training.

In this revision of the charter the field of Interior Architecture is categorized in a series of sets and subsets.

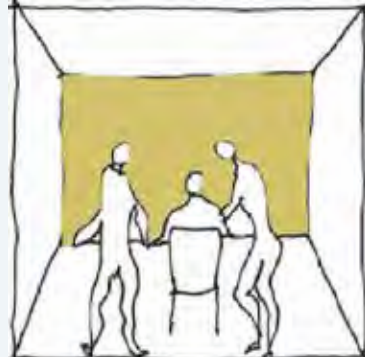
The whole field of the profession is understood as the human relation to space. This field space can then be divided into three categories: **physical space** (perceived environment), **mental space** (imagined, designed & planned) and **social space** (human activities & communication). These categories are not clearly separated but the understanding of these three areas of space gives room for a wider interpretation of the profession.



PHYSICAL SPACE
THE PERCEIVED ENVIRONMENT



MENTAL SPACE
IMAGINED DESIGNED AND PLANNED



SOCIAL SPACE
ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATION

AREAS OF STUDY AND PRACTICE IN THE PROFESSION

The six main sub-areas of study
and practice in the profession
of Interior Architecture:

A // ACTING AND DESIGN

- Design environments, ability to design, decision making, expression, to question.
- Professional ethics, social responsibility and communication.
- Critical reflection, designerly way of thinking.
- Craft and hacking – small incremental changes or adaptations to change the system or the whole.

B // RESEARCH

- Design methodology, difference between abstraction and concretization.

C // CONTEXT

- (Aesthetics and Culture)
- Architecture and related arts, history and aesthetics.
- Interior architecture theory
- Code of ethics and environmental ethics.

D // HUMAN AND SOCIAL

- Safety, health and well-being, inclusive architecture, user related design.
- Understand social and anthropological models to create user space

E // BUSINESS

- (Economics and Management)
- Management, finance and organization.

F // BUILDING

- (Technology and Regulation)
- Technology and technical demands

DIAGRAM 2 SHOWS LEFEBRVE'S THREE TYPES OF SPACE WITH THE 6 AREAS OF STUDY AND PRACTICE IN THE PROFESSION OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE.

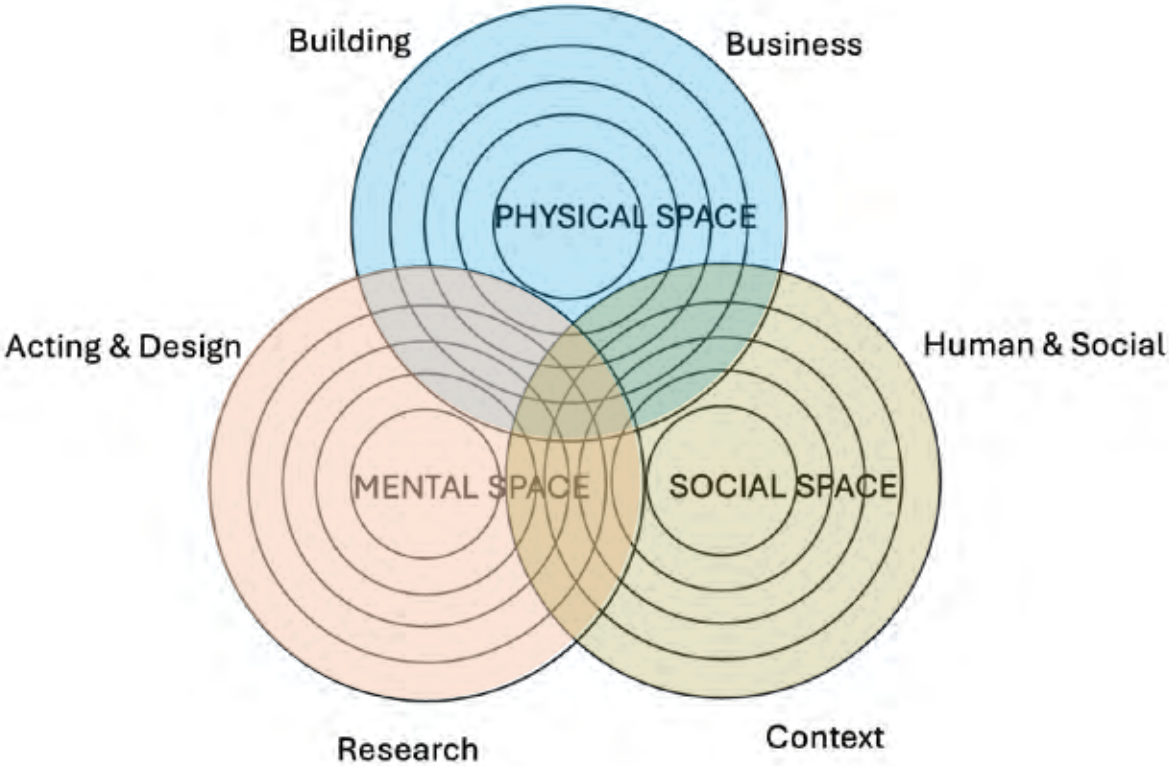
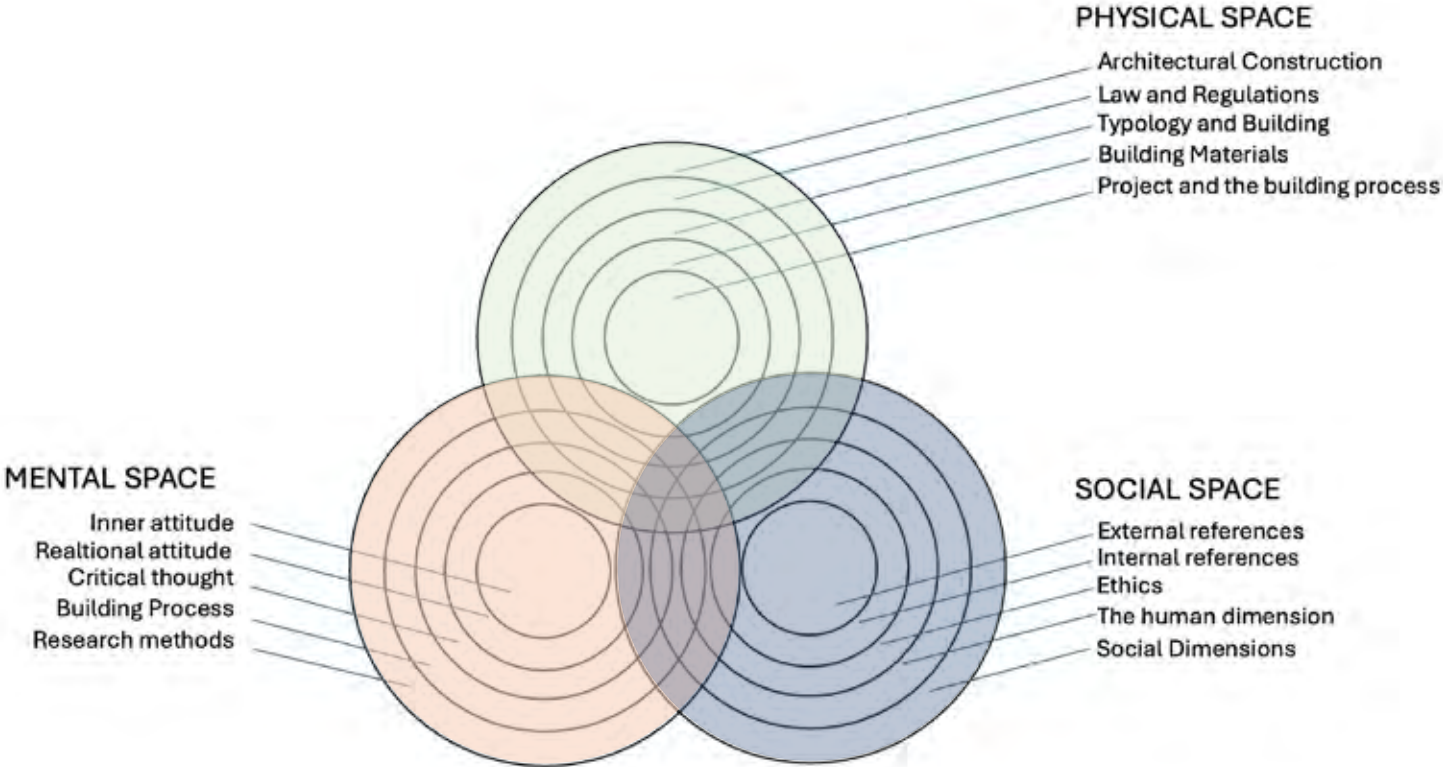


DIAGRAM 3 SHOWS LEFEBRVE'S THREE TYPES OF SPACE WITH THE 15 POINTS OF COMPETENCE IN INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE PLACED IN THE DIAGRAM.



In the following pages these 15 points of competence are described in more detail for each of the three levels of training for the profession of Interior Architecture; **Bachelor, Master and Research/PhD.**



Presentation plan The old Munch museum, Bachelor student project, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences, Oslo. Oda Birgitte hansen 2022

LEVEL 1 BACHELOR

POINT 1 – INNER ATTITUDE

- Design objects using knowledge of design principles and with understanding of the profession's architectural tools.
- Express ideas visually and communicate form.
- Use a sensory approach to materials and surfaces where haptics and auditive and olfactory senses are important additions to the visual sense.

POINT 2 – RELATIONAL ATTITUDE

- Have knowledge of professional ethical communication both within the profession and with other actors in the building industry.
- Have knowledge of visual communication and architectural conventions in the production and presentation of drawings plans and tender documents.

POINT 3 – CRITICAL THOUGHT IN DESIGN

- Use the principles of a designly way of thinking and critical reflection in the development of conceptual and practical design projects.
- Have basic knowledge of critical thinking in a design process to classify, define and understand interior architecture as a profession

POINT 4 – BUILDING PROCESS

- Identify the basic skills needed to conceptualise, visualise and present an interior architecture project. Have basic knowledge of the structure and development of an interior architecture project.

POINT 5 – RESEARCH METHODS

- Understand and apply design methods to achieve a project brief or find a solution for the project. In addition to the scientific research methods, be able to use competently the profession's classic research methods such as sketching, drawing, painting and sculpting.

POINT 6 – EXTERNAL REFERENCES

- Have knowledge of professional ethical communication both within the profession and with other actors in the building industry.
- Have knowledge of visual communication and architectural conventions in the production and presentation of drawings plans and tender documents.

POINT 7 – INTERNAL REFERENCES

- Understand interior architecture theory and identify and discuss theory in relation to a specific project. Use current interior architecture and design theory as a reference for personal design projects.

POINT 8 – ETHICS

- Have knowledge of the applicable code of ethics. Identify and discuss theory in relation to a specific project. Have basic knowledge of the principles of sustainable design and how this can be recognised in the design process.
- Have knowledge of social and economic guidelines regarding the work of an interior architect.

POINT 9 – THE HUMAN DIMENSION

- Understand anthropometry and implement this to create good spaces for the activities that the areas are designed for. Understand universal design and inclusive architecture for all users and ages and be able to implement these in an interior architecture project.
- Understand and implement ergonomic principles in an interior architecture project.

POINT 10 – SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

- Understand an interior architect’s responsibility for creating a contemporary and appropriate built and social environment.
- Have knowledge of the UN’s 17 sustainable development goals and be able to implement these goals in architectural projects.
- Understand and be able to implement the principles of relevant design to create appropriate spaces for liveable social interaction.

POINT 11 – PROJECTS AND THE BUILDING PROCESS

- Understand the financial constraints of a building project.
- Understand the complexity and organisation of the many stakeholders involved in a building project. Understand and be able to identify the organisation and management of an interior architecture project.

POINT 12 – ARCHITECTURAL CONSTRUCTION

- Understand the construction systems, techniques and processes of a building. Have basic knowledge of building technology.
- Understand the technical demands of a building’s different layers(-site, structure, skin, services).

POINT 13 – LAWS AND REGULATIONS

- Have basic knowledge of national regulations and standards within the area of interior architecture. Apply basic building laws and regulations to a building project.
- Understand and locate up to date information relating to national building regulations.

POINT 14 – TYPOLOGY AND BUILDING

- Recognise and describe basic typological building characteristics.
- Understand and classify the basic characteristics of different building typologies and apply these in the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

POINT 15 – BUILDING MATERIALS

- Understand the life cycle of materials and composition of materials and be able to identify, classify and select suitable materials and suitable treatment of materials for an interior architecture project.
- Analyse, select and use materials to achieve expected goals in relation to function, economics, aesthetics, maintenance and environmental impact.

MASTER LEVEL

Helene Adams Sculpture
"Kirkebenk" 2024 →



LEVEL 2 MASTER

POINT 1 – INNER ATTITUDE

- Apply and combine design principles to create new ideas.
- Relate to design and develop new concepts using experiments, iteration and prototypes. Investigate, construct and create new ideas using the collective knowledge of design.

POINT 2 – RELATIONAL ATTITUDE

- Use visual and verbal communication at an advanced level to describe ideas and technical solutions.
- Evaluate and relate ethical responsibility in work with clients and other stake holders in the building industry. Use a sensory approach to materials and surfaces where haptics and auditive and olfactory senses are important additions to the visual sense.

POINT 3 – CRITICAL THOUGHT IN DESIGN

- Analyse and critically reflect on the design process in relation to a project and create new connections between different positions in the field.
- Argue for new ideas with reference to established thinking within the profession.

POINT 4 – BUILDING PROCESS

- Have advanced knowledge to implement the practical skills needed to execute the functional and aesthetic ideas behind an interior architecture project.
- Implement the wider field of crafts and skills used to plan and present an interior project. Combine skills from other fields (historical epochs and geographical areas) to create new insights within the field of interior architecture.

POINT 5 – RESEARCH METHODS

- Differentiate, abstract and concretise inputs and outputs in complex design processes. Determine, operate and even transform design methods.
- Apply scientific research methods.
- In addition to the scientific research methods, be able to develop and research the profession's classic research methods such as sketching, drawing, painting and sculpting.

POINT 6 – EXTERNAL REFERENCES

- Analyse the broader field of art and design and architecture theory to judge and evaluate the built environment.
- Critique and appraise personal projects from the wider perspective of architecture and design theory.

POINT 7 – INTERNAL REFERENCES

- Analyse, contrast and critique interior architecture theory.
- Experiment with interior architecture theory when developing a project. Create new spaces that challenge current interior architectural theory.

POINT 8 – ETHICS

- Use and interpret the ethical guidelines of the profession in architectural and design projects.
- Create new functional and ethical solutions to interior projects from the perspective of environmentally responsible design.
- Work in a multi-professional team with environmental design as the main focus to create change. Develop real and theoretical projects with ethical and environmental values as the main driving force to create systemic change.

POINT 9 – THE HUMAN DIMENSION

- Evaluate the principles of design and user functionality in complex architectural and design projects. Analyse, examine and test new ideas with regard to health and safety and inclusive architecture.

POINT 10 – SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

- Argue and create proposals for good architecture and human space to stimulate interaction between the space's users.
- Evaluate, examine and test the role of interior architecture in a wider social and economic perspective.

POINT 11 – PROJECTS AND THE BUILDING PROCESS

- Schedule, organise and document a design project using the appropriate drawing and design tools. Estimate, compare and balance the costs and benefits of interior architectural interventions.

POINT 12 – ARCHITECTURAL CONSTRUCTION

- Implement the knowledge of building construction to experiment with form and structure in new or existing buildings.
- Evaluate and argue for the use of new technology and materials in an interior architecture project.

POINT 13 – LAWS AND REGULATIONS

- Understand and apply the regulatory steps necessary to achieve planning approval. Understand the roles of related professions (other consultants) whose competence is required to make a successful building application.

POINT 14 – TYPOLOGY AND BUILDING

- Analyse and apply knowledge of building types to create a desired aesthetic or functional effect.
- Imitate building typologies in adaptive re-use of buildings or in new building projects to create new interactive spaces.
- Analyse existing building typologies and combine these in a design process to develop a new understanding of the built environment.

POINT 15 – BUILDING MATERIALS

- Deconstruct and investigate materials' properties to develop new applications and apply these materials in a new context.
- Experiment on and evaluate materials' characteristics and life cycles.
- Be aware of the potentiality of new materials and production processes.

Research project by Ninni
Sørdahl and Siv Stange-
land "Å lytte med streken"
2024 →



LEVEL 3 EXPERTISE AND PHD

POINT 1 – INNER ATTITUDE

- Create new expression, reflect on and develop new ways of communicating form and ideas.
- Carry out critical self - reflection when working on aspects of the profession of interior architecture. Question the discipline and position it in the larger field of science and knowledge.

POINT 2 – RELATIONAL ATTITUDE

- Develop and formulate new areas of social responsibility within the profession.
- Argue for changes in the ethical guidelines for the profession as a result of new knowledge or social change. Reflect on thinking and design and personal creative work from a metacognitive perspective.
- Develop and research a sensory approach to materials and surfaces where haptics and auditive and olfactory senses are important additions to the visual sense.

POINT 3 – CRITICAL THOUGHT IN DESIGN

- Assemble and formulate current thinking within the field of design and use this knowledge to develop new aesthetic and functional form.

POINT 4 – BUILDING PROCESS

- Integrate emerging technology and skills in the process to create new and unexpected outcomes within the profession.

POINT 5 – RESEARCH METHODS

- Create new methods of research and presentation in practice-based research and discipline-based research. Develop the core design methods of sketching, drawing, painting and sculpting as a means of documentation and communication.

POINT 6 – EXTERNAL REFERENCES

- Develop new interior architectural theory that can contribute to the wider debate within the profession. Create new knowledge within the wider fields of arts, aesthetics, architecture and design.

POINT 7 – INTERNAL REFERENCES

- Contribute to new knowledge within the field of interior architecture theory.
- Develop practice-based research to contribute to building interior architecture theory.

POINT 8 – ETHICS

- Formulate arguments based on ethical codes to raise the level of action in the profession in relation to ethical and environmental design.
- Reflect on ethical and environmental issues and personal creative work from a metacognitive perspective.

POINT 9 – THE HUMAN DIMENSION

- Create exemplary interior architecture with health safety and well-being as the main focus.
- Contribute to the field of interior architecture with written and visualised investigations of space with inclusive architecture as the main focus.

POINT 10 – SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

- Construct new social models within an interior architectural context.
- Question, investigate and formulate new approaches to the profession from a current or emerging social perspective

POINT 11 – PROJECTS AND THE BUILDING PROCESS

- Carry out practice-based research and reflect on the nature of interior architecture management and economic issues.

POINT 12 – ARCHITECTURAL CONSTRUCTION

- Deconstruct and investigate on a high level of abstraction in relation to architectural construction and technical demands.
- Evaluate, analyse and implement new technology to create functional and aesthetic investigations and experiments.

POINT 13 – LAWS AND REGULATIONS

- Reflect on thinking and design and personal work in relation to existing regulations from a metacognitive perspective.

POINT 14 – TYPOLOGY AND BUILDING

- Formulate, construct and appraise contemporary buildings with reference to an established understanding of building typology.
- Investigate building typologies from a historical and geographic perspective and use these to develop prototypes for new building typologies.

POINT 15 – BUILDING MATERIALS

- Analyse and investigate the origins, production, treatment and waste management of materials to gain insight into new areas of use.
- Create new materials and design new production processes.



The Prada Foundation Milan 2024. Photo by Jeremy Williams

AFTERWORD

The emerging future for Interior Architecture

In this afterword we have tried to say something about the changes that have taken place since the 2020 charter was first published. For the ECIA the EU funded project Building Connections for a Stronger profession gave the organisations the muscle and economic power to strengthen our profession. But there also larger events, both global and cultural that need to be mentioned when we consider the future of Interior Architecture. Until recently concerns for the environment and the need to avoid global warming have been the most important issues that face our profession. In the few months before this book was finished it seemed that Artificial Intelligence and the changes it will bring to every aspect of our lives will have greater impact on the way we work and some of these are mentioned in this afterword. Finally we have made a small thank you to all who have contributed to our work both with and beyond this book.

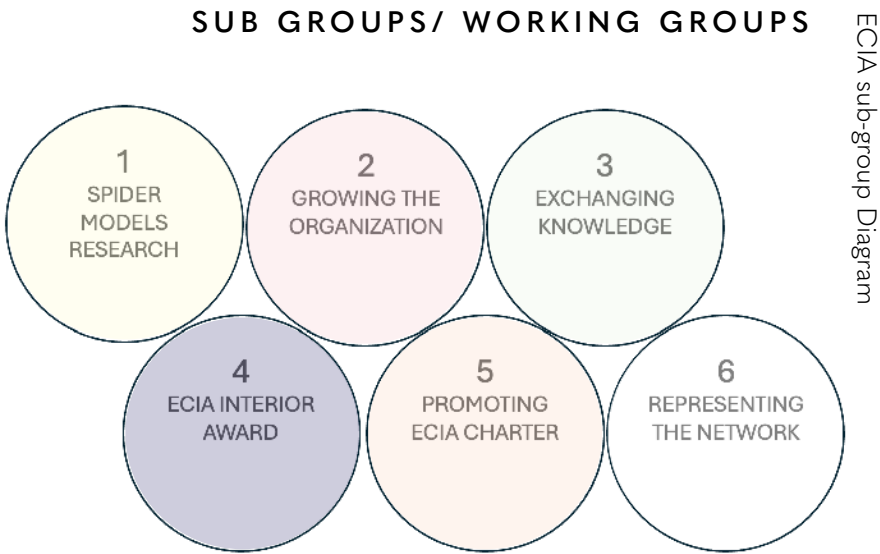
Five years have passed since we published the **2020 Charter for the Training of Interior Architects**. We have worked through a pandemic which changed the way we held meetings, we have become more aware of the necessity to hold global warming under 1,5 degrees and we have become more organized and professional on a European level as a result of the work of the ECIA.

Possibly the greatest change for our profession in the coming years will be artificial intelligence (AI) and how a large amount of our production in practice will be replaced by digital technology. In this afterword we will make a brief update of relevant issues that have come more into focus since 2020 and take a brief look forward to the emerging future for Interior Architects.

Building Connections for a Stronger profession

In 2022 the ECIA received a grant from the **EU Creative Europe** call. The ECIA applied for funding for the project Building Connections for a Stronger Profession (BCSP)

This funding has been both important and successful in creating a more professional and cohesive profile for the profession of Interior Architecture across Europe. The project consists of 6 sub-projects:



1 THE “SPIDER MODELS” research carried out by the University of Antwerp. This research has documented and compared ECIA member countries level of integration on a small number of parameters within the profession, and then quantified how well these parameters are achieved in the different national organizations. This empirical study has given our profession political muscles to help achieve title protection, higher academic levels and will hopefully lead to EU recognition for the profession of Interior Architecture by the EU.

2 GROWING THE NETWORK. The task of this working group lead by Marianne Daep was to gather new members of national organisation and to help to established organisation for interior Architects in countries without one.

3 THE ATLAS initiated and created by Graeme Brooker and Miriam Dreyer from the Royal College of Art. The Atlas is an interactive data base covering all aspects of interior architecture and the intention is that it will become a major resource for sharing knowledge within the profession.

4 THE ECIA AWARD. This European Interior award will be an annual event with the first prize awarded in April 2025.

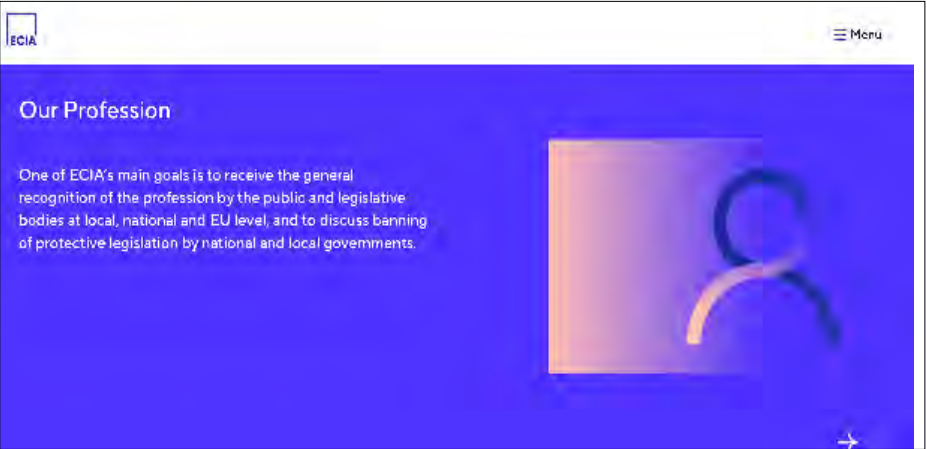
5 PROMOTING THE CHARTER. This publication of the 2020 charter in book form is one of the goals for this working group. Its aim is to make the requirements of practice more available to the Universities that have interior architecture training as part of their portfolio and to establish a common level of entry to the profession throughout Europe. The second aim is to encourage universities to create research fellowships and Practice based research programs in the field of Interior Architecture. These programs will increase our standing in Academia and the knowledge gained will filter down to practice making us more able to cope with structural changes in the profession and the changing demands from industry. The 2025 Oslo conference “Substance - research in Interior Architecture/ Design” marks the start of this project. 14 academics and practitioners from 9 different countries were invited to present papers in on their research projects. The intention was to create a European network for academic research in Interior Architecture.

6 REPRESENTING THE NETWORK. By setting up policy working groups to brainstorm and discuss about policy and regulatory questions, organize stakeholder events and ECIA round-tables.

DIFFERENT CULTURES, SHARED VALUES, ONE PROFESSION.

The 3 year Creative Europe funding ended on 1st May 2025. The BCSP working groups have achieved more than the ECIA board could ever have hoped towards the goal of creating stronger connections within the profession of interior Architecture across Europe. The work started in these groups will be continued over the coming years, fueled by the ECIA's vision – *Different cultures, shared values, one profession*, and strengthened by the accumulation of Knowledge and an academic network with connections to current research in Universities throughout Europe. This book will be available on the ECIA website as a digital publication with a comment menu.

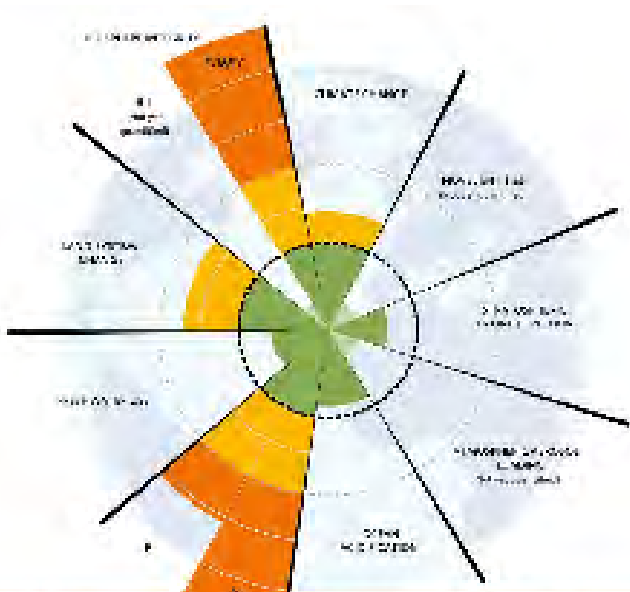
We would like the book to be a live document that can be continually up-dated as our world and profession changes. So please comment and contribute with articles and amendments that can be included in the next revision.



Environmental issues

The five years since the publication of the 2020 charter revision have seen an increase in environmental awareness and climate change. We are more aware of the extreme need to manage to hold the global warming below 1,5degrees. Temperatures above this level will have irreversible effects on the climate and can be catastrophic for the very existence of life on the planet as we pass the tipping points in the nine planetary boundaries.(Rockström and Gaffney 2021) The building industry is responsible for approximately 40% of all Co2 emissions and the production of concrete for about 7% of this figure. This places a large responsibility on the us as the designers of new or existing buildings.

The diagram below if from the Stockholm University's Stockholm Resilience Center and shows Rockstrom and Gaffneys 9 tipping points of climate change, two av these irreversible points of change have already been crossed.



<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-news/2015-01-15-planetary-boundaries---an-update.html>

As Science publishes the updated research, four of nine planetary boundaries have been crossed: climate change, loss of biosphere integrity, land system change, altered biogeochemical cycles (phosphorus and nitrogen). Image source: E. Pharand-Deschêtrics / Globaia

Environmental change and the move towards more sustainable building systems has already started to change the structure of the building industry. There has been a marked increase in the use of wood as a structural material that can replace steel and concrete.

The concept of “Urban mining” or “spoilia” where existing buildings are taken apart and their parts are re-used in new buildings is also gaining traction. The two advantages are that the re-used materials make use of the embodied energy stored in these already existing materials and also it reduces the need for extraction of new materials and the accompanying Co² emissions this causes.

The Danish company Lendager re-uses section of brick work and renovates used windows and gives them a new life.
Resource Rows Lendager Denmark.
<https://lendager.com/project/resource-rows/>



Adaptive Re-use

The most important development in the profession of interior architecture in relation to the environment is the re-use and re-purposing of existing buildings for a new user group. Adaptive re-use of existing buildings has accounted for the largest part of the work of interior architects for as long as we have practiced. We design offices, hotels, restaurants and museums and many other building types and these are most often rehabilitation or conversion projects where we create new interiors for a new user group. The focus for the architecture professions is now moving away from new- build to re-using the existing building stock. This means that our special competence in this area will be more in demand as the need to reduce Co2 emissions in the building industry increases.



Fernsjø + Fløysvik - Proposal for a new restaurant Bankplassen 4, Oslo

Artificial Intelligence



Reception for the Norwegian Post Head Office – Placebo Effects 2002

Architects and designers were early adaptors in the technology revolution and started using digital tools long before the present discussion around Artificial Intelligence. By the end of the 90's architects began to merge gaming technology with computer assisted drawing programs to create photo realistic digital visualization's of projects that were still in the planning phase. These models have become an essential part of the architectural planning process, particularly because we, the designers, can create a very clear impression of how the building, or interior, will look and feel and use the visualization to discuss alternatives or changes with our clients at an early stage in the process.

Throughout the past 25 years visualization programs have become more sophisticated with the introduction of virtual reality (VR) which allows us to not just see the interior, but also here and feel the space, and augmented reality (AR) which can place an imagined interior in a real building so we can see both at the same time.

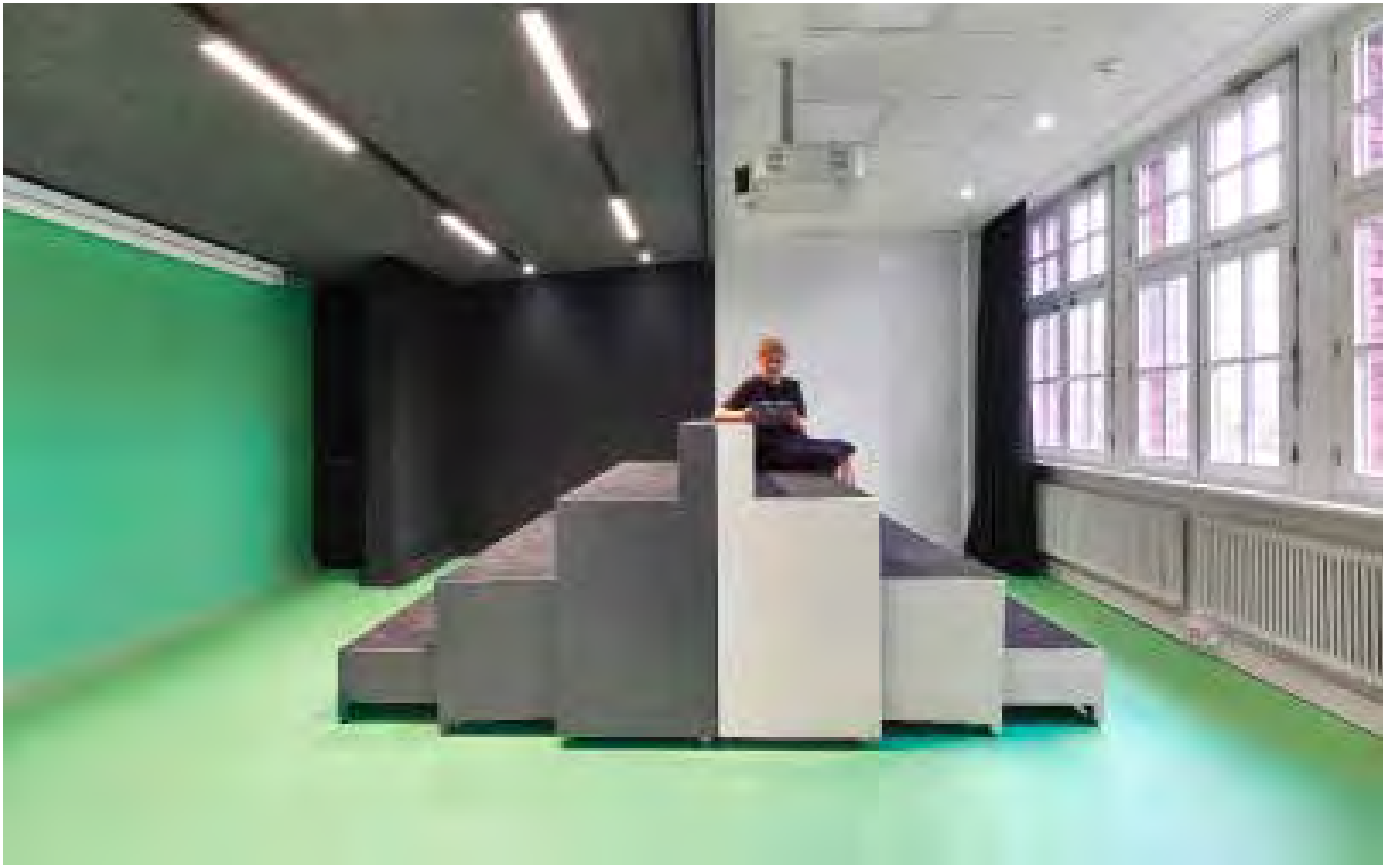
From the early 2000's architects, designers and engineers have used digital technology in the hard planning of space with the use of Building Information Modeling (BIM) which can connect the complexity of many different physical infrastructures in one 3D model so each of the many consultants in a complex building project can extract, exchange or network the same model at the same time.

With the exponential growth in computer power, the development of the AI powered information network has become the most important discussion of our time. Algorithms play a steadily increasing part in many aspects of our lives. In his most recent book of 2024 Yuval Noah Harari writes the following:

“Computers are making more and more decisions about us, both mundane and life-changing. In addition to prison sentences, algorithms increasingly have a hand in deciding whether to offer us a place at college, give us a job, provide us with welfare benefits or grant us a loan. They similarly help determine what kind of medical treatment we receive, what insurance premiums we pay, what news we hear and who would ask us on a date.”

As the tech-revolution starts to effect the political system, how we communicate, and relate to each other, and most other aspects of our lives and cultures the most important question is whether these technologies will serve humanity and help to create a safer more stable people-centered world or if we will become slaves to a social credit system that we are not able to understand.

ISE LAB Hamburg, digital learning space, Schienbein + Pier 2022 ↓



↑
Picture from av VR Model from Master Project "The Future" by Sarah Ulrikke Ottesen 2024

In the coming years architecture, and particularly interior architecture, will play a defining role in the struggle between a system controlled by an AI and global culture organized round basic human needs and preferences.

The tendency in interior architecture now seems to be towards a counterweight to highly digital interiors. The majority of Master theses in Scandinavia are focused on using renewable materials, re-using existing materials and re-introducing nature into our built environment using biomimicry and biophilic design as methodical approaches. Few young designers create the futuristic interiors imagined in Sci-fi films of the previous decades, their attention is often directed towards design solutions that lead to a sustainable use of materials, area efficiency and socially sustainable spaces with a preference for simplicity and interaction with our physical senses; visual, audible and tactile.

Designers and architects have always created the “look” of an era. The streamlined 50's reflecting the speed and efficiency that mass production brought to the consumer market; the colorful, free, peace-loving 60'; the growth and affluence of the 90's visualized with high luxury and product orientated interiors. And it will be the next generation of “digital native” interior architects who will express the spirit and the look of the tech-revolution through the spaces that they design, and they will define what is most important for us in the spaces we occupy, whether they are domestic, work, entertainment, or care spaces.

Acknowledgements

The work of the ECIA in promoting and strengthening our profession is entirely voluntary. Many people and organisations have contributed directly and indirectly to this work and also the publication of this illustrated version of the 2020 Charter for training of Interior Architects.

The authors would specially like to thank the past and present boards of the ECIA, the 20 national organisation members and Kristiania University of Applied Sciences for their large contributions over the past 3 years.

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