

Introduction: Professionalization as a Focus in Interior Design History

I - Introduction (Interior/Domestic/Amateur/Feminine)

In the industrialised West, the design of the interior has been conceptualised as a domestic and amateur phenomenon, and the domestic interior has been conceptualised as a feminine realm. This introductory article¹ aims to overcome the tendency to conflate the interior, the domestic, the amateur and the feminine in three ways. Firstly, it engages with a broad definition of the interior, encompassing professional and amateur spaces in both domestic and extra-domestic contexts. Secondly, it examines processes of professionalization which, from 1870 to 1970, moved the practice and product of interior design beyond its amateur origins. Thirdly, the association of femininity and domesticity so fundamental to patriarchal society is here replaced with a concern for the professional practice of women, and men, as gendered subjects. Each of these points is addressed in turn. ‘Professionalization’ here refers to the process of developing an activity into a generally recognised profession, through the setting up of professional organisations, the articulation and monitoring of standards and codes of conduct, the institution of clear educational routes and means of assessment, networking and gate-keeping. There exists a more general sense of professionalism as the opposite of amateur, a paid activity, neither of which is sufficient to indicate a professionalized field. To professionalize, interior design has needed to shift its emphasis from taste to skill, and interior designers have necessarily asserted their expertise and authority, often working as advisors and practitioners. ‘Professionalising Interior Design 1870-1970’ does more than simply focus on designers, whether professional or amateur, and their work; it holds up for examination the processes of professionalization in order better to understand design, its objects, processes and histories.

A number of factors make interiors particularly difficult to analyse. They are rarely designed by one person for one person. They are composed of a wide variety of objects. Both interiors and the objects they comprise are subject to continual use and modification (with a few exceptions). Historical records for interiors are difficult to retrieve, especially for the period prior to the invention of photography (and the interior is difficult to capture photographically). Interiors are not mobile, so they present particular problems of display. Above all, many interiors are private, posing additional challenges to the scholar. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the history of interior design has proved to be an enduring concern for design reformers, interior decorators, connoisseurs, curators, design historians and scholars in a range of related disciplines.

¹ Grace Lees-Maffei would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments, which were useful in drafting the introductory article.

Polemics on contemporary design by designers and design reformers from Gottfried Semper and Christopher Dresser onwards provide much valuable information about the history of the interior, as do advice books published by paid interior decorators from the middle of the nineteenth century.² In Britain, the 1876 publication of Agnes and Rhoda Garrett's *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork and Furniture* asserted the cousins' aspiration to be seen as professional decorators, just as the authorship of the book required them to adopt the mantle of expertise and authority necessary to the advice writer.³ In America, Candace Wheeler's two part article 'Interior Decoration as a Profession for Women' appeared in *The Outlook* in 1895 and her *Principles of Home Decoration with Practical Examples* was published in 1903.⁴ Notable among early twentieth-century examples are Elsie de Wolfe's *The House in Good Taste* (1913) and Dorothy Draper's *Decorating is Fun! How to be Your Own Decorator* of 1939.⁵ Following World War II, interior design had been approached within architectural history or from a connoisseurial perspective by historians and curators of the decorative arts, in stylistic histories of upper class and upper middle-class domestic interiors.

² G. Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. H. F. Mallgrave and W. Herrmann (1851) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989; C. Dresser, 'On the Means by which Repose is Attainable in Decoration,' in *Studies in Design* Cassell, Petter and Galpin, London, 1876, pp. 11-12, reproduced in M. Taylor and J. Preston, eds., *Intimus: Interior Design Reader*, Wiley, 2006, pp. 86-88. Analysis of domestic advice literature remains much more extensive for the nineteenth century. Studies of early American interior design manuals include J. Jones, 'The Distance from Home: The Domestication of Desire in Interior Design Manuals' *Journal of Social History*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1997, pp. 307-326 which analysed six manuals published in 1869, 1878, 1897, 1917, 1922 and 1952 and J. Gordon and J. McArthur, 'Interior Decorating Advice as Popular Culture: Women's Views Concerning Wall and Window Treatments, 1870-1920,' *Journal of American Culture*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1986, pp. 15-23; an example of the analysis of interior design advice in magazine format is S. Teasley, 'Home-builder or Home-maker? Reader Presence in Articles on Home-building in Commercial Women's Magazines in 1920s Japan,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2005, pp. 81-97.

³ R. Garrett and A. Garrett, *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork and Furniture*, Macmillan, London, 1876; E. Ferry, 'Decorators May Be Compared to Doctors: An Analysis of Rhoda and Agnes Garrett's *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork and Furniture* (1876),' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 16 no. 1, 2003, pp. 15-33. Other examples of domestic advice treating interiors from this period include I. M. Beeton, ed., *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, S. O. Beeton, London, 1859-61; Mrs E. B. Duffey, *What Women Should Know: A Woman's Book about Women, Containing Practical Information for Wives and Mothers*, Philadelphia, 1873; C. L. Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste, in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details*, Longman's Green & Co., London, 1868.

⁴ C. Wheeler, 'Interior Decoration as a Profession for Women,' *The Outlook*, 6 April 1895 pp. 559-60 and 20 April 1895, p. 649; C. Wheeler, *Principles of Home Decoration with Practical Examples*, Doubleday, Page & Company, New York, 1903.

⁵ E. De Wolfe, *The House in Good Taste*, New York: Century and Co., 1913; P. Sparke, *Elsie de Wolfe: the Birth of Modern Interior Decoration*, Acanthus, New York, 2005. D. Draper, *Decorating is Fun!* Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1939, and reissued by Pointed Leaf Press, New York, 2007; C. Varney, *In the Pink: Dorothy Draper, America's Most Fabulous Decorator*, Pointed Leaf Press, New York, 2006.

In reviewing the development of the literature of interior design for this journal, Paula Baxter noted both expansion and greater sophistication from 1961 to 1991, as spending on the home increased and formal interior design courses were set up at various levels, requiring textbooks and reference sources.⁶ Baxter acknowledges the development of design history in producing more historically contextualised accounts of designers and firms, distinguished from the existing output of decorative arts specialists.⁷ In the UK, a new prominence for design and decoration within mainstream media and popular culture, stimulated by an ill-fated property-boom, increased the market for histories of styles, decorating advice and information on preservation and restoration.⁸ Some of these sources treat interior design history as a research resource for the creation of historic interiors, rather than analysing it as representative of issues of power and patronage, modernity, identity-formation and the processes of professionalization. Baxter recognises the bibliographic impact of celebrity interior designers: ‘individuals who had, by [1980] developed a social cachet normally reserved for fashion designers.’⁹ The origins of a connection between interior and fashion design are explored in Penny Sparke’s contribution to this special issue. Not all interior designers enjoyed such status and women working in design professions experienced difficulties, addressed in the a 1986 resource book by design historians Judy Attfield and Tag Gronberg.¹⁰ The theme of the professionalization of interior design in relation to women’s role in society and an emergent feminism builds on earlier design historical work promoting the contributions of women, both in the form of generally-applicable theoretical or survey texts¹¹ and in specific studies of

⁶ P. Baxter, ‘Thirty Years of Growth in the Literature of Interior Design,’ *Journal of Design History*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1991, pp. 241-250; Baxter’s review was conceived as an update G. Lackshewitz, *Interior Design and Decoration*, New York Public Library, New York, 1961.

⁷ For example, C. R. Smith, *Interior Design in 20th-Century America: a History*, Harper and Row, New York, 1987; A. Massey, *Interior Design of the 20th Century*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1990.

⁸ D. Hicks, *Style and Design*, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1987; P. Thornton, *Authentic Décor: the Domestic Interior 1620-1920*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1984; S. Calloway, *Twentieth-Century Decoration: the Domestic Interior from 1900 to the Present Day*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1988; C. Gere, *Nineteenth-Century Decoration: the Art of the Interior*, Abrams, New York, 1989; C. Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior: the British Collector at Home, 1750-1850*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1989. J. Cornforth’s *Inspiration of the Past* (London: Viking, 1985) looked at the historical preservation of the interior. The trend for ‘authentic décor’ is critiqued by curators J. Porter and S. McDonald in an account of displaying the history of the domestic interior at the Geffrye Museum in London, ‘Fabricating Interiors: Approaches to the History of Domestic Furnishing at the Geffrye Museum,’ *Journal of Design History*, vol. 3, no. 2/3, 1990, pp. 175-182.

⁹ Baxter, 1991, pp. 247-8.

¹⁰ J. Attfield and T. Gronberg, *Women Working in Design: Issues and Problems Confronted by Women in their Education and Careers in Design: a Resource Book*, London Institute, Central School of Art and Design, London, 1986.

¹¹ C. Buckley, ‘Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design,’ *Design Issues*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1986, pp. 3-14; J. Attfield and P. Kirkham, eds., *A View from the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design*, The Women’s Press, London, 1989, pp. 187-205; J. Seddon and S. Worden, eds., *Women Designing: Redefining Design in Britain Between the Wars*, University of Brighton, Brighton, 1994; P. Kirkham, ed., *The Gendered Object*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996; P. Kirkham, ed., *Women Designers in the USA 1900-2000: Diversity and Difference*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

professionalization.¹² Earlier texts to have surveyed the work of women interior designers include Isabelle Anscombe's 'The Heyday of the Decorators,' and Pat Kirkham, Penny Sparke and Judith B. Gura's "'A Woman's Place...'? Women Interior Designers.'¹³ Monographs profiling individual women designers include studies of Dorothy Draper, Elsie de Wolfe and Nancy Lancaster to name but a few.¹⁴

Attention to the history of the interior since 1990 forms part of a context in which gender, consumption and domesticity have functioned as overarching themes bringing together scholars from a range of fields including women's and gender studies, social and cultural history, the sociology of culture, area studies including American studies and others, as well as art and design history, material culture studies, ethnography and anthropology.¹⁵ This introductory article cites some of the most useful recent work. Each of the articles in this special issue makes a clear contribution to the literature of interior design by building on existing studies of professional design and holding up for detailed examination the precise *processes* by which professionalism occurred from 1870 to 1970. During this period, women practitioners played a significant role in the development of interior design beyond its amateur origins. Considered together, the articles in this special issue chart a remarkably continuous process of professionalization across three continents over a century, with 1870 presenting a useful starting point due to the widening influence of the design reformers of the mid-nineteenth century. As the case studies presented in this special issue show, several factors contributed to professionalization: the maturation of manufacturing industries and processes of industrialisation, the legacy and spreading influences of the 19th-century design reformers in promoting design, the establishment and international impact of design education initiatives such as the South Kensington system and, later, the Bauhaus; the continuity of some Arts and Crafts movement philosophies within modernist design practice and theory; the rise of the USA as a leading nation in manufacturing; the development of psycho-analysis

¹² Studies of women and professionalization include L. Walker 'Women Architects,' in Atfield and Kirkham, eds., 1989, pp.90-105; Maguire, Paddy, 'Women and the Profession of Design' in Seddon and Worden, eds., 1994, pp. 46-49; Worden, Suzette and Jill Seddon, 'Women Designers in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s: Defining the Professional and Redefining Design,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1995), pp. 177-193; J. Seddon, 'Mentioned, but Denied Significance: Women Designers and the "Professionalization of Design in Britain, c. 1920-1951,' *Gender & History*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2000, pp. 425-447.

¹³ I. Anscombe, 'The Heyday of the Decorators' in *A Woman's Touch: Women in Design from 1860 to the Present Day*, Virago, London, 1984, pp. 68-85; P. Kirkham, and P. Sparke, 'A Woman's Place...'? Women Interior Designers: 1900-1950,' pp. 305-316 and J. B. Gura, 'A Woman's Place...'? Women Interior Designers: 1950-2000,' pp. 317-328 in Kirkham, ed., 2000.

¹⁴ Varney, 2006; Sparke, 2005; M. Wood, *Nancy Lancaster: English Country House Style*, Frances Lincoln Ltd., London, 2005; also on Lancaster, L. Ward, 'Chintz, Swags and Bows: The myth of English country house style, 1930-1990,' in S. McKellar and P. Sparke, eds., *Interior Design and Identity*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2004, pp. 92-113.

¹⁵ For an overview of some of the breadth of this work, see Taylor and Preston, eds., 2006.

and its influence on marketing and advertising, to name only the most obvious aspects of modernity, modernisation and Modernism relevant to professionalization in design.

The articles in this special issue were – with one exception – delivered as papers at a conference, ‘The Professionalization of Decoration, Design and the Modern Interior, 1870 to the Present,’ hosted by the Modern Interiors Research Centre at Kingston University in 2006.¹⁶ The conference indicated the importance of the disappearance of boundaries for understanding the professionalization of interior design, be they between fields of design practice or nations and regions.¹⁷ John N. Turpin considered the career of Dorothy Draper as a designer of commercial interiors, rather than domestic ones, as did Bobbye Tigerman for the case of Florence Knoll.¹⁸ Sarah Teasley, Judith B. Gura and George Verghese discussed the development of the interior design profession in Japan, New York and Sydney respectively. This special issue develops this comparative framework in case studies from three continents, including analyses of Australia, Austria-Hungary, the US and France. The articles published here which derive from the conference are accompanied by another which brings the selection up to the 1970s. Informed by mid-nineteenth century design reformers, who promoted the importance of good design and in so doing habilitated its producers, the period 1870-1970 saw the emergence and growth of professional interior decoration and – following a reappraisal of the role of the decorative within modernist design discourse, and greater identification with other design fields - interior design. This period shaped the assumptions with which the contemporary field still grapples, including ideas about gender, nation, and relations with neighbouring fields of practice such as architecture. As practising architect, Joel Sanders, has argued of the relationship between architecture and interior design ‘...the supposed incompatibility between these two rival but nevertheless overlapping design practices evokes deeper cultural conflicts that are themselves bolstered and sustained by profound social anxieties about gender and sexuality.’¹⁹ The historical case studies presented in this special issue address such contemporary debates, and illuminate past concerns.

II - Domestic/Commercial/Amateur/Professional: a Holistic Definition of the Interior

¹⁶ ‘The Professionalization of Decoration, Design and the Modern Interior, 1870 to the present,’ Dorich House Conference, Kingston University, May 2006.

<http://www.kingston.ac.uk/~kx23813/MIRC/index.html>

¹⁷ The continued exploration of globalisation for the history of interior design is represented by a planned *Journal of Interior Design* conference in Montreal in March 2008, entitled ‘Crafting a Historical Narrative for the Evolution of Interior Design.’

¹⁸ B. Tigerman, “‘I Am Not a Decorator:’ Florence Knoll, the Knoll Planning Unit and the Making of the Modern Office,’ *Journal of Design History*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2007, pp. 61-74.

¹⁹ J. Sanders, ‘Curtain Wars,’ *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 16, 2002, pp. 14-20, p. 14.

Understanding of the interior is largely associated with homes perhaps because those are the spaces we furnish and inhabit most intimately. The majority of interior design is performed by amateurs for domestic environments, as consumers decorate their homes, albeit drawing on commoditised advice and using a range of designed components. The characteristics of domestic interiors are taken as symbols of the people who inhabit them. The home facilitates withdrawal from the public world; it offers a secluded place for introversion, reverie and recuperation. Sociologist Erving Goffman pointed, influentially, to the home's role in accommodating the 'backstage' preparations necessary for the next public performance.²⁰ In this way, the home may be viewed as the epitome of interiority, based around changing concepts of relative privacy, intimacy, identity and, particularly, gender.²¹

Over the last 25 years, the interior has been understood within a continuing preoccupation with issues of domesticity which has extended across the humanities into literary studies, social and cultural history, cultural geography, American studies and other area studies, and art and design history and architectural history.²² In Britain, this academic concern has informed the establishment and output of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior, which placed the domestic interior at the centre of design history, and related fields.²³ Within the pages of this journal, a valuable body of

²⁰ E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Anchor Books, 1959. For a design historical application of Goffman's concept of front and backstage to the domestic interior see G. Lees-Maffei, 'From service to self-service: etiquette writing as design discourse 1920-1970', *The Journal of Design History*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2001, pp. 187-20 .

²¹ B. Gordon, 'Woman's Domestic Body: The Conceptual Conflation of Women and Interiors in the Industrial Age,' *Winterthur Portfolio*, special issue 'Gendered Spaces and Aesthetics,' vol. 31, no. 4, 1996, pp. 281-301; C. Grant, 'Reading the House of Fiction: From Object to Interior 1720-1920,' in C. Grant, ed., 'The Domestic Interior in Literature,' special issue, *Home Cultures*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2005, pp. 233-250; F. Berry, 'Designing the Reader's Interior: Subjectivity and the Woman's Magazine in Early Twentieth-Century France,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2005, pp. 61-79; C. Briganti, and K. Mezei, 'House Haunting: The Domestic Novel of the Inter-War Years,' *Home Cultures*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2004, pp. 147-168.

²² Some early landmark texts in the scholarship of domesticity include D. Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: a History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods, And Cities*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981; L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780 to 1850*, Hutchinson, London, 1987 and W. Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, Heinemann, London, 1988. The profusion of recent titles on the home includes D. Wood, and R. J. Beck, *Home Rules*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994; I. Cieraad, ed., *At Home: an Anthropology of Domestic Space*, Syracuse University Press, 1999; T. Chapman, and J. Hockey, eds., *Ideal Homes? Social Change and the Experience of the Home*, Routledge, London, 1999; D. Morley, *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*, Routledge, London, 2000; S. Pink, *Home Truths: Gender, Domestic Objects and Everyday Life*, Berg, Oxford, 2004; C. Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes: a History of the Retailing and Consumption of Domestic Furnishings*, Ashgate, 2005; M. Ponsoy, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850*, Ashgate, 2007. For a discussion of domesticity and architectural theory, see L. Walker, 'Home Making: An Architectural Perspective,' *Signs, Forum: 'Domestic Space'*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2002, pp. 823-835.

²³ The Arts and Humanities Research Board (now Council) Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior was a five-year fixed term project which ran from 2001-6 at the Victoria and Albert Museum,

writing has addressed the domestic interior.²⁴ And the journal *Home Cultures* has explored the domestic in a variety of studies more or less informed by anthropology.²⁵

While the domestic interior has been an enormously rich locus for social and cultural analysis, the interior cannot be equated solely with the domestic. Interior design is the professional activity of constructing the homes, workplaces, retail and leisure environments which constitute the inhabitant's interior experience of the built environment, and a variety of non-domestic interiors conditions our experiences in public and commercial spaces. Some of the most discussed interior design exists in these contexts, such as the airplane interiors by Gaby Schreiber (1957-1963), Dorothy Draper (1958) and Kelly Hoppen (2000), the retail environments designed for Joseph by Eva Jiricna (1988) and for Jigsaw by John Pawson (1996) and Nigel Coates (1988-1996), and hotel interiors designed by Philippe Starck for Ian Schrager (1988-).²⁶ To varying degrees, non-domestic interiors such as hotel rooms and interior elements such as reclining airline seats and shop changing rooms are interesting for their peculiarly ambiguous nature as *both* public sphere and loci of interiority. The concept of a distinction between public and private spheres has been central to women's history and labour history, as discussed further below.

This special issue regards the interior as something which may be designed by architects and interior-designers, or by amateurs who are often the inhabitants of the spaces they assemble. Applying an holistic definition of the interior fosters studies which illuminate the breadth and diversity of such spaces while also recognising that certain functions, such as shelter and design for need (whatever that need may be and however successfully met) are characteristics common to all interior spaces. The authors, and editors, of the articles presented here, have provided an inclusive understanding of the interior as something which encompasses diverse

the Royal College of Art and Royal Holloway, University of London. <http://www.rca.ac.uk/csdi/> Outputs include J. Aynsley and C. Grant, eds., *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*, V&A Publications, London, 2006, which has a useful historiographical introduction.

²⁴ The *Journal of Design History* has addressed interiors through a number of recent special issues: 'The Georgian Interior' (20:4, 2007), 'Do It Yourself: Democracy and Design' (19:1, 2006), 'Publishing the Modern Home: Magazines and the Domestic Interior 1870-1965' (18:1, 2005), 'Domestic Design Advice' (16:1, 2003) and 'Anxious Homes' (16:3, 2003) In much of this writing, the interior is domestic; exceptions include J. Kinchin's 'Designer as Critic: E W Godwin and the Aesthetic House' (18:1, pp. 21-34), which examined the architect as arbiter of domestic taste.

²⁵ *Home Cultures*, launched 2004,

<http://www.bergpublishers.com/JournalsHomepage/HomeCultures/tabid/3203/Default.aspx>

²⁶ Jiricna is one of only two interior designers included in the 43 profiles of women designers which comprise L. McQuiston's *Women in Design: a Contemporary View*, (Trefoil Publications, London, 1988, pp. 62-3) although many architects are discussed. The other is Gaby Schreiber, who preceded Kelly Hoppen's British Airways First Class cabins by several decades with her design for the BOAC fleet (1957-1963). Dorothy Draper designed interiors for General Dynamic's Convair 880, in 1958 which were developed by Harley Earl, Inc. See Varney, 2006, pp. 183-187.

spaces from home, work, office, retail, entertainment and transport interiors. This broad definition is necessary to fully explore the professional activities of the practitioners examined, from embroiderers in Austria-Hungary and architects in Australia, both operating in the late nineteenth century, to haute couturiers and decorators in fin-de-siecle France and the US, to the design and organisational work of a leading interior decorator and the commercial consultancy of a leading weaver, in early and mid-twentieth century USA respectively.

III - Amateur/Professional: Design and its Professional Organisations

Design history has considered professional and amateur practice by turns. Early design historians celebrated the work of key modernist professional designers and in so doing established a canon. Since then, the discipline has long been criticised - for example by Clive Dilnot, Adrian Forty, anthropologist Daniel Miller and Philip Pacey - for privileging the work of leading professional designers.²⁷ Pacey has argued instead for fuller attention to be paid to women designers, non-Western design and children's design. Partly in response to these critiques, a significant body of work has addressed amateur design.²⁸ Criticisms of an emphasis on professional design, and increasing understanding of the importance of amateur practice, do not preclude further work on professional design. That the designers to have attracted most attention from design historians have usually worked in professional contexts does not mean that professionalization has received due attention. Indeed, as Jonathan Woodham has succinctly put it:

Design-historical writing has often obscured much of the wider picture of the professional status of the designer and the role of design in industry through its general focus on successful partnerships between designers and industry.²⁹

This introductory article argues for analysis of the historical processes by which professional status is conferred upon the act of designing. In providing greater understanding of what

²⁷ C. Dilnot, 'The State of Design History Part I: Mapping the Field', *Design Issues*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1984, pp. 3-23; A. Forty, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society Since 1750*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1986, chapter 11, 'Design, Designers and the Literature of Design,' pp. 239-245; D. Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, p.142; P. Pacey, 'Anyone Designing Anything?' Non-Professional Designers and the History of Design,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1992, pp. 217-225.

²⁸ Examples of analysis of amateur practice include T. Putnam and C. Newton, eds., *Household Choices*, Futures Publications, Middlesex, 1990; B. Burman, ed., *The Culture of Sewing: Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking*, Berg, Oxford, 1999; J. Turney, 'Here's One I Made Earlier: Making and Living with Home Craft in Contemporary Britain,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2004, pp. 267 – 282; T. Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2006, pp. 69-83; R. Brown, 'Identity and Narrativity in Homes Made by Amateurs,' *Home Cultures*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2007, pp. 213-238, especially pp. 265-266.

²⁹ J. M. Woodham, chapter 7 'Design Promotion, Profession, and Management' in *Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, pp. 165-181, p. 167.

interior design professionals do, the articles here re-evaluate the work of professional designers left out of the existing canon as a result of their practice as interior designers or their gender as women.

Interior designers actively seeking to professionalize their field or those who simply wished to work as professionals, engaged with a wider context of debates and value judgments through which work in general has been accorded professional status. The period from 1870 to 1970 was crucial to the development of professionalization across a wide spectrum of work, as professionalization is attendant upon industrialisation, specialisation, the division of labour and interdependence.

By the 1880s, doctors, lawyers, architects, and other practitioners of white-collar occupations had come together to organize nationwide professional associations, establish uniform standards, set qualifications for entry into their respective fields, and coordinate training.³⁰

Professionalization represents the institutionalisation of trust and reputation. It has been the subject of general useful analysis by sociologists and historians.³¹ The professionalization of individual fields has been explored, to varying degrees. Following the example set by medicine, law and architecture, Jill Seddon has suggested that the ‘prerequisites for the establishment of a profession’, meaning specifically, a design profession, are ‘recognised training; registration and regulation; the founding of professional associations; participation in official and government bodies; and a means of indicating public recognition. [...and] the production of a recognisable body of work, identifiable with a single individual.’³² Seddon notes that registration and specific qualifications have never been mandatory for practising designers, and the lack of a defined professional framework (such as might include a marriage bar, for example) worked in favour of women designers, in the early twentieth-century Britain. Professional organisations have been crucial to professionalization in Britain, the US

³⁰ C. Robertson, ‘From Cult to Profession: Domestic Women in Search of Equality,’ in K. Martinez and K. L. Ames, eds., *The Material Culture of Gender*, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, Delaware, 1997, p. 89

³¹ A British analysis of professionalization is provided by H. Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880*, Routledge, London, 1989. Perkin’s *The Third Revolution: International Professional Elites*, (Routledge, London, 1996) considered national comparisons and the development of global networks of professionals. For the American case, see S. Haber, *The Quest for Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750-1900*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991 and B. A. Kimball, *The “True Professional Ideal” in America: A History*, Blackwell, Cambridge, MA, 1992. Further critiques of professionalization are sociologist Eliot Freidson’s discussion of knowledge and credentials, *Professional Powers: A Study of the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1986; M. S. Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA., 1977; historian P. M. Glazer and social scientist M. Slater’s, *Unequal Colleagues: The Entrance of Women into the Professions, 1890-1940*, Rutgers University Press, 1987; and historian A. Abbott’s, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988.

³² Seddon, 2000, p. 427-8.

and other countries in which they emerged, through: a selective application process and monitored membership; the articulation and promotion of professional standards and codes of conduct; conferences and training events for continuing professional development and networking opportunities; publication of journals and books as a mouthpiece for organisation views, a showcase for the work of members and as educational material; accreditation of education and training; the development of public education and understanding of the profession and representation of member's interests in commercial, government and international contexts.

Early Design Organisations

Engineering undertook an organised and self-conscious step towards professionalization relatively early, and therefore became an exemplar industrial design and other design fields. The example of engineering makes clear the way in which professionalization is contingent upon industrialisation. In Britain, the Institution of Civil Engineers was founded in 1818 and published its charter in 1828. For the US case, Ruth Schwarz Cowan discusses the Franklin Institute as a failed predecessor to later groups such as The American Society of Civil Engineers, formed in 1852.³³ The American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers was founded in 1871 and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers formed in 1880. The IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) launched in 1963 with the merger of the AIEE (American Institute of Electrical Engineers, formed in 1884), and the IRE (Institute of Radio Engineers, 1912). These and other engineering groups founded the Engineer's Council for Professional Development in 1932, to validate degrees and publish educational materials.³⁴ The history of engineering was broached by Edwin Layton Jr.'s *The Revolt of the Engineers* (1971), which prompted historical studies of the various engineering sub-disciplines, and subsequently the associated professional groups have produced centennial histories.³⁵

While in some ways the professionalization of interior design was roughly contemporaneous with other design fields, interior design was comparatively late in achieving its own

³³ R. S. Cowan, *A Social History of American Technology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, pp. 142-144.

³⁴ Known since 1980 as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology and since 2005 as ABET <http://www.abet.org/history.shtml>

³⁵ E. T. Layton Jr., *The Revolt of the Engineers: Social Responsibility and the American Engineering Profession*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1971, 1986; A. M. McMahon's *The Making of a Profession: a Century of Electrical Engineering in America* (IEEE Press, New York, 1984) is one of the group of books to have followed Layton's lead in the analysis of engineering's sub-disciplines. The impact of Layton's book is explored by R. R. Kline in a special issue of *Technology and Culture* reviewing the achievements of the field of engineering in the twentieth century, in centennial reflection (vol. 27, no. 4, 1986, pp. 835-836).

professional organisations. Prior to this, some general design organisations represented interior designers alongside other designers. Woodham lists some European portmanteau design organisations founded in the nineteenth-century, including the Swedish Society of Industrial Design (Svenska Slödförinengen), established in 1845; the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design (1879) and the Hungarian Decorative Arts Society (Magyar Iparművészeti Társulat) formed in 1885.³⁶ Longstanding debates about the role of the designer within society had emerged in Britain with the developing awareness of the output and effects of industrialisation. Design reformers A.W. Pugin, John Ruskin, William Morris, the Art Workers' Guild (founded 1884) and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (formed in 1888), had sought to promote design and designers. Stefan Muthesius has discussed the definition of interior design in late nineteenth century Munich in relation to the development of a 'vernacularized old German, Bavarian or Alpine world' with reference to the writings of Georg Hirth and Viennese reformer Jacob von Falke's *Die Kunst im Hause* of 1871.³⁷ Falke is important in Rebecca Houze's analysis for this special issue, 'At the Forefront of the Newly Emerging Profession? Ethnography, Education, and the Exhibition of Women's Needlework in Austria-Hungary in the Late Nineteenth Century.' Houze interrogates hierarchies of practice by showing how a stereotypically amateur, decorative, feminine pursuit – embroidery - was a fulcrum for debates about the interior, the design profession and the negotiation of national identity in nineteenth-century Austria-Hungary.

Professionalising Design in Britain 1915-1951

Following early twentieth-century professional organisations launched in Poland, the Netherlands and Denmark,³⁸ representation for designers in the UK was one aim of the Design and Industries Association (DIA), which formed in 1915.³⁹ Design promotion was furthered by state involvement in the form of the British Institute of Industrial Art (BIIA, 1920-1933),⁴⁰ and the Council for Arts and Industry (CAI) which campaigned for better pay

³⁶ Woodham, 1997, p. 165.

³⁷ S. Muthesius, 'The "altdeutsche" Zimmer, or Cosiness in Plain Pine,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2003, pp. 269-290. See also, S. Muthesius, 'Communications between Traders, Users and Artists: the Growth of German Language Serial Publications on Domestic Interior Decoration in the Later Nineteenth Century,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2005, pp. 7-20.

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³⁹ These include the Polish Applied Arts Society of 1901, the Netherlands Association for Crafts and Industrial Art (Nederlandsche Vereeniging voor Ambachts en Nijverheidskunst) and the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design of 1907; Woodham, 1997, p. 165. Seddon, 2000, provides a useful critique of DIA and the Society of Industrial Artists (SIA), pointing out the ways in which women were not represented by the professional organisations, pp. 433-436.

⁴⁰ Y. Suga, 'Purgatory of taste' or Projector of Industrial Britain? The British Institute of Industrial Art,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2003, pp. 167-185.

for designers following its establishment in 1933.⁴¹ Elizabeth Denby's work for the CAI forms an exception to the general tendency observed by Seddon that:

The drive towards "professionalisation" excluded women from the public face of design in that they did not achieve the highest positions within government or professional bodies, nor did they occupy gatekeeping roles within training or education has been the subject of design historical analysis.⁴²

The work of fostering a professional identity for designers was difficult not entirely successful at this time, as Woodham notes:

...the widely felt uncertainty of terms commonly used in the interwar years such as 'commercial art' or 'graphic design,' 'industrial art' or 'industrial design' reflected the inability of designers to establish a clearcut professional identity or status.⁴³

The Society of Industrial Artists (SIA) was founded in 1930 and changed its name to The Society of Industrial Artists and Designers in 1960 and the Chartered Society of Designers in 1986, following the granting of a Royal Charter in 1976 for work in establishing the profession of design.⁴⁴ Interior designers are represented in a CSD discipline group. In 1936, the Royal Designers for Industry scheme was set up.⁴⁵ Following World War II, the professionalization of design was the object of concerted effort from government and design organisations, in Britain (the Council of Industrial Design, or COID was founded in 1944, and renamed the Design Council in 1972) and in Poland, West Germany, the USSR, France, Ireland, Sweden, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore.⁴⁶ COID promoted design during a

⁴¹ P. J. Maguire, 'Industrial Design: Aesthetic Idealism and Economic Reality,' in P. J. Maguire and J. M. Woodham, eds., *Design and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain: the Britain Can Make It Exhibitions of 1946*, Leicester University Press, London, 1997, pp. 111-122, p. 112. Also, in the same volume, J. M. Woodham, 'Putting the Industrial into Design: Early Problems Facing the Council of Industrial Design,' pp. 123-134.

⁴² Seddon, 2000, p. 444. Further on Elizabeth Denby, see J.M. Woodham, 'Women, Design and the State in the Interwar Years: a Case Study of Elizabeth Denby and the Council for Art and Industry,' in Seddon and Worden, eds., 1994, pp. 41-45; E. Darling, "'The Star in the Profession she invented for herself': a brief biography of Elizabeth Denby, Housing Consultant', *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2005, pp. 271-300; E. Darling, 'A Citizen as well as a Housewife: new spaces of femininity in 1930s London,' in H. Heynen and G. Baydar, eds., *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender*, Routledge, London, 2005, pp. 49-64.

⁴³ Woodham, *Twentieth-Century Design*, 1997, pp. 165-181, p. 167.

⁴⁴ Chartered Society of Designers, http://www.csd.org.uk/about_us/history.jsp

⁴⁵ F. MacCarthy and P. Nuttgens, *Eye for Industry: Royal Designers for Industry, 1936-1986*, Lund Humphries, London, 1986, pp. 77-79.

⁴⁶ On COID's early years, see J.M. Woodham, 'Managing British Design Reform I: Fresh Perspectives on the Early Years of the Council of Industrial Design,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1996, pp. 55 - 65. Elsewhere, Woodham notes that Poland's Buiro Nadzoru Estetyki Produkcji (Office for the Supervision of Aesthetic Production) was formed in 1947; West Germany's design council (Rat für Formgebung) was launched in 1953; in the USSR VNIITE (the All-Union Scientific Research Institute for Technical Aesthetics) was established in 1962 and in France state intervention in design was channelled through the Centre de Création Industrielle from 1969 and, briefly from 1975, the Conseil Supérieur de la Création Esthétique Industrielle. In Ireland, the government was involved with the Kilkenny Design Workshops, founded in 1965 and in Sweden a Design Centre was set opened in Stockholm in 1984, and the Danish Design Council (1977) and Design Centre (1987) have worked

period of restrictions imposed by rationing. Following World War II, COID organised its own exhibitions, notably *Britain Can Make It* of 1946, featuring a display explaining the work of the industrial designer.⁴⁷ COID produced travelling displays and contributed to the Daily Herald Modern Homes Exhibition of the same year and the Building Exhibition of 1950.⁴⁸ COID's *Design* magazine appeared in 1949, its showcases of good design were akin to the 'Design Index' displayed at the Design Centre in London. Contemporary design was further promoted at the 1951 Festival of Britain.⁴⁹

To many, the Festival represented the culmination of achievement; designers had achieved a public profile and recognition by the state. From the perspective of many male designers with successful careers established by 1951, it could be argued that design had achieved the status of a profession.⁵⁰

Seddon notes, however, that the same did not apply to women designers and that the 'clubby' professional networks between designers and their peers and their clients 'did not appear to work to the benefit of women'.⁵¹

Professionalising Design in the US

British histories of design have recognised the influence of the American consultant designer of the 1930s upon ideas about design and designers in the UK and beyond.⁵² US industrial

with government to promote design education. The Japanese Advertising Artists Club launched in 1951 and the Japanese Industrial Designers Association (JIDA) formed in 1952. The Japanese Export Trade Organisation (JETRO) has liaised with (largely American) designers since 1956, the Ministry of Trade and Industry set up a design division in 1959 and its Japan Design House opened the following year. Japanese design has been promoted abroad through the Japanese Industrial Design Promotion Organisation (JIDPO), which has also promoted regional industry internally. Korea's Design and Packaging Centre (DKPC) launched in 1970, the Taiwan Design Promotion Centre was established in 1979 and the Singapore Trade Development Board has promoted design as a commercial too since 1984. The Italian Association for Industrial Designers (ADI) was established in 1956, Woodham, *Twentieth-Century Design*, 1997, pp. 165-181, p. 172-176. Further on design and the state, see S. E. Reid, ed., 'Design, Stalin and the Thaw' a special issue of the *Journal of Design History*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1997, including articles by K. Kettering, "'Ever More Cosy and Comfortable": Stalinism and the Soviet Domestic Interior, 1928-1938,' pp. 119-136 and V. Buchli, 'Khrushchev, Modernism and the Fight against *Petit-bourgeois* Consciousness in the Soviet Home,' pp. 161-176.

⁴⁷ J.M. Woodham, 'Britain Can Make It and the History of Design', in Maguire and Woodham, eds., 1997, pp. 17-25; L. Bullivant, "'Design for Better Living" Public Response to Britain Can Make It', in P. Sparke, ed., *Did Britain Make It? British Design in Context 1946-86*, The Design Council, London, 1986, pp. 145-155.

⁴⁸ A. Jackson, 'From Solving problems to Selling Product: the Changing Role of Designers in Post War Britain,' *Designing Britain 1945-1975*, 2002, http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/learning/designingbritain/html/crd_desref.html

⁴⁹ A. Forty, 'Festival Politics', in M. Banham and B. Hillier, eds., *A Tonic to the Nation: The Festival of Britain 1951*, Thames and Hudson/V&A, London, 1976, pp. 26-38; B. Curtis, 'One Continuous Interwoven Story (The Festival of Britain)', in Jon Bird et al, eds., *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 209-220; B. Conekin, "'Here is the Modern World Itself" The Festival of Britain's Representations of the Future' in B. Conekin, F. Mort and C. Waters eds., *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* Rivers Oram Press, London and New York, 1999, pp. 228-246.

⁵⁰ Seddon, 2000, pp. 425-447, p. 427.

⁵¹ Seddon, 2000, p. 432.

design gained recognition the mid-1920s.⁵³ Following the establishment of the National Alliance of Art and Industry, the American Union of Decorative Artists and Craftsmen (AUDAC) was founded in 1928 on the basis of an interest in modern design influenced by the International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925 and an Exposition of Art in Trade staged in New York by Macy's in 1927.⁵⁴ The latter was one of a series of exhibitions of modern design staged by US department stores to stimulate the acceptance of contemporary design in the US market. Following the 1929 crash, many industries suffered, but interest in industrial design was *fuelled* by the depression and a need to gain market advantage.⁵⁵ In the 1920s and 1930s, US consultant designers promoted themselves and their profession simultaneously in order to secure contracts. Jeffrey L. Meikle has shown how US consultant designers such as Raymond Loewy, Walter Dorwin Teague, Henry Dreyfuss, Harold Van Doren and Norman Bel Geddes promoted industrial design as a creditable profession, beyond mere styling, in the minds of the manufacturers, potential clients and consumers.⁵⁶ Norman Bel Geddes was especially creative in using his public relations department to work on promoting his design expertise in oblique ways at crucial points in the procurement process, at a time when 'Admen considered industrial design as a subsidiary of advertising.'⁵⁷ AUDAC closed in 1932. The next year, the National Recovery Administration's drive to stamp out design piracy prompted the setting up of the National Furniture Designer's Council, but the NRA's closure as unconstitutional in 1934 closed the NFDC too. The following year the Federal Art Project National Index of Design was launched and ran until the US entry into World War II.⁵⁸ As well as furthering public understanding of design, it provided employment for commercial. Also in 1935, the Works Progress Administration funded the Design Laboratory, a Bauhaus-influenced educational institution led by Gilbert Rohde. Government cuts closed the school within a year but several higher education institutions went on to develop industrial design courses in the 1930s.⁵⁹ The

⁵² P. Sparke, *Consultant Design: the History and Practice of the Designer in Industry*, Pembroke Press, London, 1983; P. Sparke, *Introduction to Design and Culture 1900 to the Present*, second edition, Routledge, London, 2004 (1986) contains a comparative discussion of 'The Designer for Industry' in Europe and the US and an examination of 'international designers' within 'designer culture' of the postwar period.

⁵³ George Nelson, 'Design, Technology and the Pursuit of Ugliness,' *Saturday Review*, October 2, 1971, cited in S. Abercrombie, *George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA., 2000 (1995), p. 49.

⁵⁴ M. F. Friedman, Chapter 2, 'The 1927 Macy's Exposition of Art in Trade,' *Selling Good Design: Promoting the Early Modern Interior*, Rizzoli, New York, 2003, pp. 21-29. The book discusses other exhibitions at Lord and Taylor, Abraham & Straus and Frederick Loeser & Co. and B. Altman and Co.

⁵⁵ Abercrombie, 2000 (1995), Chapter 3, 'A New Profession: Industrial Design', pp.49-65, p. 49.

⁵⁶ J. L. Meikle, *Twentieth Century Limited*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1979 (2001).

⁵⁷ Meikle, 1979, p. 68, p. 73. See N. P. Maffei, 'Designing the Image of the Practical Visionary: Norman Bel Geddes 1893-1958,' Unpublished PhD thesis, Royal College of Art, 2001.

⁵⁸ A. J. Pulos, *American Design Ethic: a History of Industrial Design*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1986, p. 396.

⁵⁹ Pulos, 1986, p. 400.

American Designers Institute (ADI) was founded in 1938 and produced a code of ethics intended to protect both designers and consumers.

A hiatus in the professionalization of non-military design accompanied US involvement in World War II. Meikle points out that ‘with the postwar return of prosperity, industrial design became institutionalized.’⁶⁰ In 1951 ADI incorporated the Chicago Society of Industrial Designers (CSID) and became the Industrial Designers Institute (IDI). In 1955, the Society of Industrial Designers (SID, formed in 1944) was renamed the American Society of Industrial Design (ASID). The Industrial Design Education Association (IDEA) launched in 1957 to represent the interests of design educators, and merged with IDI and ASID in 1965 to produce the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA).⁶¹ IDSA’s first president was Henry Dreyfuss. The work of these various professional organisations in promoting the status of design as a profession has been furthered in the US by the exhibition of an elite and European-influenced model of good design at the Museum of Modern Art, and in the UK through state intervention in design in the form of exhibitions and the compilation of canons of design.⁶² Edgar J. Kauffman Jr. hosted a ‘Conference on Industrial Design: a New Profession’ in 1946 with SID. The journal and magazine literature was influential in forming both public ideas of designers and designer’s own ideas of their profession; Meikle avers that ‘the success of *Industrial Design* [an offshoot of *Interiors* magazine] certified that the profession had come of age.’⁶³

This certainty has not been shared by all fields of design, however. Ellen Mazur Thompson has examined the professionalization of graphic design in the US prior to William Addison Dwiggins’s 1922 coinage of the term ‘graphic design.’⁶⁴ She notes that sociological work on professions has established a tripartite process by which professional status is achieved: education, self-imposed standards and professional gate-keeping organisations. While graphic design has not achieved consensus on the education needed to work as a graphic design

⁶⁰ J. L. Meikle, ‘From Celebrity to Anonymity: the Professionalization of American Industrial Design,’ in A. Schonberger, ed., *Raymond Loewy: Pioneer of Industrial Design*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, 1990, pp. 51- 61, p. 57.

⁶¹ C. M. Gantz has provided an outline of the professional organisations for design in the US, ‘History: IDSA and its predecessors,’ Industrial Designers Society of America, www.idsa.org

⁶² On MoMA, see E. Kaufmann, Jr., ‘Industrial Design in American Museums’, *Magazine of Art*, no. 42, May, 1949, pp 179-183; T. Smith, ‘Pure Modernism Inc’ chapter 11 in *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1993, pp. 385-404; S. Lawrence, ‘Declaration of Function: Documents from the Museum of Modern Art’s Design Crusade, 1933-1950’, *Design Issues*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1995, pp. 65-77. For the UK, see Maguire and Woodham, eds., 1997 and Woodham, 1997.

⁶³ J. L. Meikle, *Design in the USA*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 148 ff., p. 161, p. 168.

⁶⁴ E. M. Thomson, *The Origins of Graphic Design in America, 1870-1920*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1997.

professional, the latter two requirements are met by the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), formed in 1914.⁶⁵ Notwithstanding the combined efforts of commercial artists, typographers, printers and photographers, and AIGA:

By 1920 members of graphic design associations had achieved a sense of professional solidarity and pride, but they continued to grapple with problems of status. Graphic design, like other applied and popular arts, held an ambiguous place in the American cultural hierarchy.⁶⁶

Since 1963, graphic designers in the US and elsewhere have been represented by The International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA), a meta-organisation founded in 1963. In 2003, ICOGRADA merged with the International Council for Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID, founded in 1957), to form the International Design Alliance (IDA). IDA has worked with the International Federation of Interior Designers (IFI) to debate design and globalisation.⁶⁷ While graphic designers today enjoy the infrastructure of professionalization, the status of the field is still in question as untrained consumers use desktop publishing and home computing software to practice as amateur graphic designers.

Interior Design Professional Organisations

While many of the organisations mentioned above included interior design within their remit, specific representation and professionalization for interior design followed after other that of design fields. Rowan Roenisch and Hazel Conway have suggested that this might be due to the fact that interior design ‘relates to so many different areas’ of design, and encompasses the work of ‘architects, engineers, builders, joiners, plasterers, textile designers, fine artists and furniture designers.’⁶⁸ Interior design has historically occupied a marginal place within the cultural hierarchy, as a feminised sphere of activity, playing a secondary role in relation to architecture. This special issue applies a broad definition of interior design to facilitate examination of these interdisciplinary connections. Tracey Avery’s ‘Acknowledging Professional Interior Design? Developing Design Practices for Australian Interiors, 1880-1900,’ explores the intersections of architecture and interior design in a developing market. Australia’s professionalising infrastructure is shown to have been distinct from inherited colonial models. Penny Sparke’s ‘Interior Decoration and Haute Couture: Links between the developments of the two professions in France and the U.S.A. in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries - a historiographical analysis’ presents a comparative analysis of the

⁶⁵ American Institute of Graphic Arts, www.aiga.org Standards of Professional Practice are published at <http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/standards-professional-practice>

⁶⁶ Thomson, 1997, especially chapter 4, ‘Professionalization’, pp. 85-104.

⁶⁷ Woodham, *Twentieth Century Design*, 1997, p. 176.

⁶⁸ R. Roenisch, and H. Conway, ‘Interior Design,’ in Hazel Conway, ed., *Design History: A Students’ Handbook*, Unwin Hyman Ltd., London, 1987, pp. 86-109, p. 87.

development of interior design and fashion design as highly interrelated professional disciplines. However, in pursuing professional status, interior design has played down its interdisciplinarity and emphasised its specificity. In her article for this special issue, ‘Nancy Vincent McClelland (1877-1959): Professionalizing Interior Decoration in the early 20th Century,’ Bridget May makes clear that: ‘a formal definition of the professional that covers knowledge required and areas for service is a way to establish boundaries and jurisdictions for professional expertise and services.’ Sparke has noted that interior design expanded as a specialised area of professional design in the period following World War II, along with the fashion, graphics and automotive design fields:

Rooted within the ideology of modernism, the newly defined interior design profession broke away from the older, pre-modern, discipline of interior decoration, which had been tainted by links with amateurism, femininity and domesticity, and linked itself more strongly with architecture and the language of modernity [...] By that period, most interior designers were trained first as architects and, in the spirit of the modernist idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, saw the interior as a natural extension of their work.⁶⁹

In 1931, The American Institute of Interior Decorators (AIID) was founded, and renamed the American Institute of Decorators (AID) in 1936. It was later renamed the American Institute of Interior Designers. Bridget May illuminates Nancy McClelland’s important role in achieving professional status before what we now recognise as the infrastructure of professionalization was instituted. McClelland was a founding member of AIID and its first female president (1941-44). She thereby helped to define the profession of interior design. This is remarkable given Seddon’s findings for Britain:

Analysis of women’s membership of, and participation in, the major institutions, from training through to professional practice, has demonstrated that they did not achieve key roles in the shaping of their profession.⁷⁰

The Finnish Association of Interior Architects (SIO) was founded in 1949.⁷¹ In 1957, the US National Society of Interior Designers (NSID) was launched. In the UK, the Interior Decorators & Designers Association was established in 1966. The Council for Interior Design Accreditation (formerly known as the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research or FIDER) was founded in 1970 to accredit US interior design education. In 1972 the National Council for Interior Design Qualification was founded by AID and NSID prior to their 1975

⁶⁹ Sparke, 2004 (1986), p. 168

⁷⁰ Seddon, 2000, p. 444.

⁷¹ M. Sarantola-Weiss, ed., *Rooms For Everyone: Perspectives on Finnish Interior Design 1949-99*, trans. M. Erasaari, M. Kalhinen and J. Kokkonen, Otava, Helsinki, 2000, published to mark the fiftieth anniversary of SIO’s foundation.

merger (to produce the American Society of Interior Designers, ASID). Today, ASID members must 'have a combination of accredited design education and/or full-time work experience and pass a two-day accreditation examination administered by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ).'⁷² Interior design education is also monitored by the Interior Design Educators Council, which makes available an outline of interior design's body of knowledge.⁷³ The US interior design organisations have sought legal protection for American interior design expertise: state legislation was first introduced in Alabama in 1982. The International Interior Design Association was founded in 1994. In 2002, the UK Interior Decorators & Designers Association merged with the UK chapter of the International Interior Design Association to form the British Interior Design Association (BIDA), an associate member of the International Federation of Interior Architects & Designers (IFI). Global networking and worldwide representation for interior designers is provided by the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), which was the result of a merger between the Institute of Business Designers (IBD), the International Society of Interior Designers (ISID) and the Council of Federal Interior Designers (CFID) in 1994.

A continuing theme in the history of the professionalization of the design disciplines is a tension between the pursuit of aesthetic excellence and the commercial imperative. In this special issue another case study of a US female practitioner who pioneered her own path of professionalization is Regina Lee Blaszczyk's 'Designing Synthetics, Publicizing Building Brands: Dorothy Liebes, DuPont Fibers, and Postwar American Interiors.' Blaszczyk considers Liebes's creative consultancy for DuPont; she employed synthetics in the manufacture of soft furnishings and textile art as a way of marketing DuPont Fibers. Liebes was successful in weaving, corporate consultancy and marketing: she marketed her expertise as an interior design tastemaker to both customers and corporations alike. Blaszczyk demonstrates that the history of interior design has some common ground with business history in exploring the relationship between the creative economy and other economic sectors.

Professionalising Interior Design: National and International Contexts

This account of the development of professional organisations as evidence of an increasing process of professionalization has dealt primarily with the UK, and the US, to complement and extend the geographical coverage of the following articles, which explore France, the US, Austria-Hungary and Australia. Each of the articles shows how interior design has been fundamental in negotiating national identities. For the Western countries discussed here,

⁷² The American Society of Interior Designers, <http://www.asid.org/about/>

⁷³ Interior Design Body of Knowledge, <http://www.careersininteriordesign.com/idbok.pdf>

building a nation encompasses both the literal construction of the built environment and building the infrastructures of industrialisation and of professionalization. Here, Rebecca Houze's paper explores the anxiety about national identity in the dual nation of Austria-Hungary, in which it was hoped that education and embroidery would ameliorate social conditions. Tracey Avery's paper examines an illuminating early case study of the ways in which colonial identity was considered and articulated through design practices and designed spaces in a literal act of building a nation. In Australia, interior design represented an evolving nationhood both informed by and forged in distinction from British foundations. This case study raises questions both in terms of what was distinctive about the professionalization of interior design in the Australian case and about issues of the globalization of design history. Bridget May and Regina Lee Blaszczyk each shed light on the ways in which interior design has developed and achieved commercial success in twentieth-century America. Both McClelland and Liebes helped to shape American taste and forged a modern aesthetic for American consumers. Penny Sparke's article, like those by Rebecca Houze and Tracey Avery, deals with the interplay between two nations but whereas Houze's article explores the negotiation of dual nationhood, and Avery's contribution considers a colonial relation between two countries, Sparke maps this national comparison onto the relationships between two fields of design, interior design and fashion design. She presents a comparative analysis of two distinct countries, one the home of couture and considered across the world as the epicentre of fashion and the other at the vanguard of clothing and furnishing the mass market. Sparke points to the trans-Atlantic style of 'Old French' and a shared, upper class understanding of good taste which transcended regions. The global perspective taken by the five contributions to this special issue on the development of one design profession goes beyond the analysis of style, although of course style, too, can be subject to illuminating critiques, for example in Daniel J. Sherman's account 'Post-Colonial Chic'.⁷⁴ The articles here inform understanding of the professionalization of interior design on three continents, Europe, North America and Australia and show convergence as well as divergence, common to many industrialised Westernised countries, inviting further study of the processes of professionalization in non-Western countries.

In recent decades, debates about the professional status of the designer have been informed by the introduction of digital photographic and design software for home computing and professional applications alike. These are seen by some to reduce the creative input of designer while facilitating amateur involvement in design. Amateur design practice has also

⁷⁴ D. J. Sherman, 'Post-Colonial Chic: Fantasies of the French Interior, 1957–62,' *Art History*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2004, pp. 770–805.

been showcased in popular media coverage of home design and interior decoration.⁷⁵ At the same time, a broader realignment of relationships between the professional and the public has meant that authority and expertise are commodified and do not generate automatic granted credence.

Notwithstanding the sometimes divisive nature of debate channelled through the professional design organisations, they have worked to promote design. In so doing, they have formed a figure of the designer which is upheld by the professional designers it represents and consumed by the public. However successful the promotion of design and the designer is seen to have been, the figure of the designer has rarely encompassed women. Women have not found it easy to enter design practice, and this has been more acute where issues of professionalization, and its key channel, the professional organisation, are concerned. The articles in this special issue each challenge existing understanding of professionalization and they provide a rich understanding of what constitutes interior design, which has not always been present in existing accounts.

IV - Women's Work: Separate Spheres and the Professionalization of Interior Design

In opening her article 'Mentioned, but Denied Significance: Women Designers and the "Professionalization of Design in Britain, c. 1920-1951,' Jill Seddon observes that:

It has been argued that professionalism can create a "neutral" environment, where women escape from determinants of gender and class; in practice, however, this rarely seems to have been the case. In analysing the attitudes of the design "profession" to its female members, categories devised in relation to "male-stream scholarship", "Exclusion, Pseudo-Inclusion and Alienation", have provided valuable insights. [...] the second, "pseudo-inclusion", which "appears to take women into account, but then marginalises them", most closely fitting those institutions associated with design.⁷⁶

Women entering professional fields engaged a wider system for the conferment of status and reward, geared not to them but to men. In discussing the teaching profession at the turn of the

⁷⁵D. Philips, 'Transformation Scenes: the Television Interior Makeover,' *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2005, pp. 213-229; G. Palmer, "'The New You" Class and Transformation in Lifestyle Television' in S. Holmes and D. Jermyn, eds., *Understanding Reality Television*, Routledge, London, 2004, pp. 173-190; D. C. Giles, 'Keeping the Public in their Place: Audience Participation in Lifestyle Television Programming,' *Discourse and Society*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2002, pp. 603-628; R. Holliday, 'Home Truths' in D. Bell and J. Hollows, eds. *Ordinary Lifestyles* Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 2005; V. Narotsky, 'Dream Homes and DIY: television, new media and the domestic makeover,' in Aynsley and Grant, eds., 2006, pp. 258-273.

⁷⁶ Seddon, 2000, pp. 425-447, pp. 425-426, cites B. Elliot and J. Wallace, *Women Artists and Writers: (Im)positionings*, Routledge, London, 1994, p. 67 and B. Thiele, 'Vanishing Act in social and political Thought: Tricks of the Trade,' in L. McDowell and R. Pringle, *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 26-8.

century, Samuel Haber has written ‘the influx of a significant number of women into any profession sorely endangered its elevated status.’⁷⁷ Analysis of women’s work not only increases our understanding of women’s history, women’s contributions to society and women’s achievements, it also increases understanding of professionalization and the professions, labour history, and design history more generally. Ellen Mazur Thomson has noted: ‘A comprehensive history of women in graphic design would right the old imbalance. It would also provide a more realistic view of the context in which graphic design began.’⁷⁸ The articles in this special issue challenge understanding of interior design, what it means to be a design professional, the nature of the design professions, and the processes of professionalization. While the processes of professionalization have been gendered male, along with the professional sphere more generally (in the manner of the much-debated ideology of separate spheres), women have had to negotiate a particular set of vantage points within this process, as these case studies show. It is *because* professionalization has been gendered male that the specific case studies in which women have successfully marshalled these conditions to secure a place within the design professions are important and particularly revealing case studies. The articles in this special issue show that women have been instrumental in the processes of defining and professionalising interior design.

Separate Spheres and Women Interior Designers

The project of writing women into histories of design and its professionalization is part of a wider project of examining women’s work, which has been the pre-eminent project of women’s history. Professionalization has occurred simultaneously with the growing economic and social presence of women. The woman worker has fairly consistently been, for contemporaries, a locus for anxieties about industrial society. Early histories such as Ivy Pinchbeck’s *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution* (1930) ‘expanded the definitions of work and industrialisation, making them less male-centred.’⁷⁹ Later second-wave feminist ‘compensatory history’ was informed by the Marxist training that many women historians had received and by the ideology of separate spheres - the association of women with the private sphere of the home and of men with the public sphere of work – based on Engel’s dissociation of public and private spheres of life.⁸⁰ Separate spheres has been useful both as a way of

⁷⁷ S. Haber, review of B. A. Kimball, *The “True Professional Ideal” in America: A History*, Blackwell, Cambridge, MA., 1992 in *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1993, pp. 590-591, p. 591.

⁷⁸ Thomson, 1997, chapter 6 ‘Women in Graphic Design History’, pp. 133-158, p. 158.

⁷⁹ B. Melman, ‘Changing the Subject: Women’s History and Historiography 1900-2000,’ in I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*, Longman/Pearson Education, 2001, pp. 16-31, p. 19; I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, Routledge, London, 1930.

⁸⁰ F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, ed. E. B. Leacock, International Publishers, New York, 1972. See L.K. Kerber, ‘Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: the Rhetoric of Women’s History’ *The Journal of American History*, vol. 75, no. 1, 1988, pp. 9-39, p. 13.

understanding an ideology of gender operating in the past, and as an analytical tool in twentieth century history writing. Landmark analyses of separate spheres include Nancy F. Cott's *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (1977) and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780 to 1850* (1987).⁸¹ However, it has sometimes been drawn in a heavy-handed way, so the dichotomy has lost credibility as an analytical tool.

Although separate spheres has been a resilient theme,⁸² scholarship over the past generation has critiqued and problematised relationships between separate spheres, domestic and non-domestic, private and public spaces, including Judy McGaw's 'No Passive Victims, No Separate Spheres' and Amanda Vickery's 'From Golden Age to Separate Spheres.'⁸³ Linda K. Kerber noted that:

Historians of working women have thus had especially good reason to understand that the language of separate spheres has been a language enabling contemporaries to explain to themselves the social situation – with all its ironies and contradictions – in which they understood themselves to be living. "Separate spheres" was a trope that hid its instrumentality even from those who employed it; in that sense it was deeply ambiguous. In the ambiguity, perhaps, lay its appeal.⁸⁴

Ruth Schwarz Cowan has challenged a lingering tendency to associate women with domestic consumption by showing the home to be a site of production *and* consumption.⁸⁵ Following in Cowan's wake are, for example, Jen Browne's study of 'Decisions in DIY: Women, Home Improvements and Advertising in Post-War Britain.' While 'women were rarely shown actually DIYing [...] which suggests that the product manufacturers behind the advertising saw women's role as primarily designers and decision-makers,' 'consumption in this context represented a great deal of work.'⁸⁶ Although Browne is aware of the amount of work

⁸¹ N. F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1997 (1977); Davidoff and Hall, 1987.

⁸² M.P. Ryan, 'The Public and the Private Good: Across the Great Divide in Women's History,' *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 15, no 1, 2003, pp. 10-27; J.B. Landes, 'Further Thoughts on the Public/Private Distinction,' *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2003, pp. 28-39.

⁸³ J. A. McGaw, 'No Passive Victims, No Separate Spheres: a Feminist Perspective on Technology's History,' in S. H. Cutcliffe and R. C. Post, eds., *In Context: History and the History of Technology, essays in honor of Melvin Kranzberg*, Lehigh University Press and Associated University Presses, Bethlehem and London, 1989, pp. 172-191; A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres: a Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History,' *The Historical Journal*, vol. 36, no. 2, 1993, pp. 383-414.

⁸⁴ Kerber, 1988, pp. 9-39, p. 31.

⁸⁵ R. S. Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*, Basic Books, New York, 1983.

⁸⁶ J. Browne, 'Decisions in DIY: Women, Home Improvements and Advertising in Post-War Britain,' in Maggie Andrews and Mary M. Talbot, eds., *Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture*, Cassell, London, 2000, pp. 131-145, p. 139. That this essay appears in an anthology on consumer culture may have influenced its content and approach.

involved, the acts of shopping for materials, designing interior schemes and executing the DIY are nevertheless presented as consumption, not production.

By dispensing with the idea that some spaces are public and some are private, historians are in a better position to examine the complex negotiations of public and private in daily life. Public incursions into the home include the pervasive presence of media objects functioning as mouthpieces of the public sphere, such as television, radio, internet and recorded music.⁸⁷ And communications technologies such as telephone, email, internet chat rooms and webcams make the home itself a kind of public stage. A complexified notion of relationships between public and private is of further use in understanding the history of the domestic interior when we consider the fact that a range of public interiors fulfil their purpose through aping the domestic interior, whether hotels, naval quarters, ocean liners, department store restrooms or corporate dining rooms, not to mention all the room sets staged in retail environments, trade fairs and museums.⁸⁸ Kerber, writing in 1988, notes a trend for taking the word 'sphere' literally by examining 'the physical spaces to which women were assigned, those in which they lived, and those they chose for themselves.' For example, in examining the development of a 'public female sphere' from 1870 to 1930, Estelle Freedman has revealed that 'feminists had been most successful when they had commanded actual physical space of their own, which they could define and control.'⁸⁹ In addition to the influence women have exercised over their interiors as clients and consumers, it is important to recognise the extent to which women have shaped the built environment as architects and interior designers.⁹⁰ By examining the professional work of women in designing interiors both public and private, the articles in this special issue contribute to the project of enhancing our understanding of separate spheres and refuse a simple association of women with the home. In addition, work which explores the intersections of masculinity, sexuality and interior design has contributed greatly to the process.⁹¹

⁸⁷ For example, L. Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992.

⁸⁸ C. Brucken, 'In the Public Eye: Women and the American Luxury Hotel,' *Winterthur Portfolio*, special issue 'Gendered Spaces and Aesthetics,' vol. 31, no. 4, 1996, pp. 203-220; Q. Colville, 'The role of the interior in constructing notions of class and status; a case study of Dartmouth Naval College, 1930-1960', in Sparke and McKellar, eds., 2004, pp. 114-132; A. Wealleans, (nee Massey) *Designing Liners: A History of Interior Design Afloat*, Routledge, London, 2006; B. Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History*, Leicester University Press, London, 1995.

⁸⁹ Kerber, 1988, p. 32, refers to E. Freedman, 'Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930,' *Feminist Studies*, 5, 1979, pp. 512-529.

⁹⁰ A. T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History*, Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1998; A. Ravetz, 'A View from the Interior,' in Attfield and Kirkham, 1989, pp. 187-205.

⁹¹ J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2007 (1999); M. Francis, 'A Flight from Commitment? Domesticity, Adventure and the Masculine Imaginary in Britain after the Second World War,' *Gender & History*,

Professionalising Domesticity

It is precisely the association of women with the domestic interior which produces such compelling material for gender analyses. As the articles in this special issue clearly show, issues of professional and amateur status in relation to interior design are intrinsically gendered, within a broader gender divide in the history of design. It was possible for women to earn a living through interior design (and interior decoration), when other design professions were closed to them. The professionalization of interior design involves the granting of professional status to an area of activity usually performed by amateurs for their domestic environments, as part of homemaking, alongside domestic cooking, childcare, cleaning and maintenance of the home. The development of an association between women and interior decoration in 18th-century Britain has been examined by Charles Saumarez-Smith and the extent to which interiors themselves were gendered in the 19th-century has been discussed by Juliet Kinchin.⁹² In her essay 'From Cult to Profession: Domestic Women in Search of Equality,' Cheryl Robertson describes the ways in which domesticity was Professionalized in the US both through the development of home economics and the emergence of female interior design professionals. Degree courses in domestic science were offered following the 1862 Morrill Act which established state land grant colleges and the American Home Economics Association was founded in 1908.

The traditions of feminine accomplishments have eased the entry of women into art and design education generally, and have made interior decoration an often-recommended career for women.⁹³

Just as facility at the piano keyboard – a traditional amateur accomplishment of middle-class females – could be transposed easily to manipulation of a typewriter keyboard as a paid office clerk, so too other feminine refinements taught in girls' schools and seminaries since the eighteenth century had applications in the

vol.19, no.1, April 2007, pp. 163–185; C. Reed, *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture, and Domesticity*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2004; C. Reed, ed., *Not At Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1996; B. Osgerby, 'The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon: Masculinity, Consumption and Interior Design in American Men's Magazines, 1930–65,' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 18, 2005, pp. 99-113; G. Waitt, and A. Gorman-Murray, 'Homemaking and Mature Age Gay Men "Down-Under": Paradox, intimacy, subjectivities, spatialities, and scale', *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 14, no. 5, 2007, pp. 569 - 584

⁹² C. Saumarez-Smith, 'Women and Decoration,' *The Rise of Design: Design and the Domestic Interior in Eighteenth-Century England*, Pimlico, London, 2000 (previously published as *Eighteenth-Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1993); J. Kinchin, 'Interiors: Nineteenth-Century Essays on the "Masculine" and the "Feminine" Room', in Kirkham, ed., 1996, pp. 12-39.

⁹³ H. Cunliffe-Charlesworth, 'The Royal College of Art,' Seddon and Worden, eds., 1994, pp. 10-15; Seddon, 2000, cites Mrs. Maufe, 'House Decoration,' *Women's Employment*, no. 24, 15 August 1924, p. 3.

workforce. For instance, training in drawing, composition, color harmony, and painting could yield gainful employment in the home-furnishing sector.⁹⁴

However, subsequent employment has often been hard to secure. Seddon cites one example of Jean McIntosh, a RIBA-trained architect who, upon applying for jobs, was turned down by 160 firms, including the Interior Design Studio at Maples of Tottenham Court Road in London, which enforced ‘a definite veto against draughtswomen.’⁹⁵ Cheryl Robertson discusses Henrietta P. Keith who advertised her services as an interior decorator in the same magazine for which she wrote as a staff decorator, which was incidentally a family concern, published by Max L. Keith, alongside the family’s mail-order housing business. Henrietta P. Keith was also author, with Eleanor Allison Cummins, of *Practical Studies in Interior Decoration* (1906).⁹⁶

As either a public vocation or a private avocation, interior decoration allied itself with traditional ideas regarding femininity and domesticity. Advertisements, advice books, and shelter magazines, dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth, are primary sources for chronicling the thoughts and achievements of “decorative” women who domesticated a profession, and, in the process, bridged the gap between work in the home and the “world’s work.”⁹⁷

To Professionalize such an activity is to dissociate it from its amateur and domestic connections through education, the setting of standards and codes of conduct, the granting of degrees and other qualifications and the setting up of trade and professional organisations and related publishing initiatives such as textbooks and trade journals. However, for some the idea of Professionalized domesticity is oxymoronic. Seddon suggests that British designers Jane Drew, Enid Marx and Susie Cooper were each successful at least partly because ‘all three broke free from the constraints of designing for the domestic sphere.’ Seddon acknowledges that this idea of success derives from male paradigms, and that women’s work was routinely associated with domesticity such that industrial designer Gaby Schreiber was promoted as ‘a housewife herself [who] knows what the housewife wants.’⁹⁸

Women and Textiles

⁹⁴ Robertson, 1997, p. 98.

⁹⁵ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, 1994, p. 12 notes the relatively small number of diplomates of the Royal College of Art who practised as designers after their training, and the same situation applied to the Royal Institute of British Architects, according to Seddon, 2000, p. 438.

⁹⁶ Robertson, 1997, p. 99 discusses *Keith’s Magazine of Homebuilding*, 1905 and H. P. Keith and E. A. Cummins, *Practical Studies in Interior Decoration and Furnishing*, M. L. Keith, Minneapolis, Minn., 1906.

⁹⁷ Robertson, 1997, p. 76-7.

⁹⁸ Seddon, 2000, p. 441, p. 442.

As we have noted, interior design encompasses a range of practices and products and within this special issue, there is a strong presence for textiles, and a strong identification between women and textiles. The place of textiles in architecture and interior design has been the subject of useful recent attention.⁹⁹ In her article for this special issue, Houze shows the male-dominated Viennese Secession appropriating the marginal status of interior design and furnishings for their own *avant-garde* ends. This process of hegemony and appropriation is a useful conceptual framework for understanding the professionalization of interior design. The fact that fashion and home decoration have both been viewed as women's work forms part of their association; they are affiliated in the public imagination and Penny Sparke fleshes out this assumption with some historical detail for France and the US in her contribution to this special issue. Traditionally feminine areas of activity, and the design practice of women, have been slow in achieving the professional recognition granted to other areas of design practice, as shown for example in the British case of a refusal to award degree status to Fashion at the Royal College of Art when other courses gained MA degrees following the Robbins Committee recommendations for the expansion of higher education.¹⁰⁰ For the US, Regina Lee Blaszczyk shows how Dorothy Liebes was able to create a role for herself at DuPont, a market-leader in developing synthetic materials, by exploiting her expertise in the three feminine areas of weaving, fashion and home decoration. She also sold her expertise to the public in the marketing publicity generated around her consultancy. Liebes's knowledge of contemporary trends in interior design and her network were made available for the benefit of the DuPont Corporation and as such she was at the vanguard of both technical experimentation in soft furnishings for the interior and a significant tastemaker. If Liebes had sought to market her expertise in an area of experience not stereotypically associated with women's work then her gender may have worked against her, but as she presented her expertise in weaving and taste in interior decoration, her gender and her professional expertise were mutually reinforcing.

The accounts of women working in the interior design profession in this special issue show women using the association of femininity with domestic taste to their advantage. Bridget May examines Nancy McClelland's work to both define and enable standards for interior designers as a founding member of the AIID, as well as by pursuing her own professional practice. McClelland and Liebes successfully pursued their own interior design careers and shaped the interior design profession by expanding the professional possibilities for women. In their promotion and celebration of the work of two individuals, the articles by Blaszczyk

⁹⁹ J. Jeffries and D. Wood Conroy, eds., 'Shaping Space: Textiles and Architecture' a special issue of *Textile: the Journal of Cloth and Culture*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2006.

¹⁰⁰ M. Proops, 'One Degree Under,' *Daily Mail*, 2 December 1966. Robbins Report, *Higher Education*, HMSO, London, 1963.

and May fit into a collective project of tracing the introduction of modernist design into the US market through the analysis of key individuals, also exemplified by Penny Sparke's work on Elsie de Wolfe.¹⁰¹ An examination of the processes of professionalization clarifies the ways in which women have been treated, or excluded, within the history of design, as well as the design professions.

Conclusion

This introductory article has deconstructed the domestic, amateur and feminine associations of interior design by considering three complex dynamics in turn: domestic/public, amateur/professional and feminine/professional. This introduction, and the articles which follow, engage a definition of the interior which includes professional, amateur, domestic and non-domestic spaces. While the five contributions present distinct case studies in terms of geography and periodisation, collectively the special issue demonstrates that professionalization is an extremely useful and revealing focus for new work in design history. Each paper contribute to existing histories of professionalization, outlined in this introductory article, figures and practices not previously countenanced in interior design history, whether women embroiderers, male colonial architects, or fashion designers. Analysis of professionalization draws the emphasis away from judgements about style in relation to the yardstick of modernism, an enduring preoccupation of design history. In this special issue, design practices and outcomes are considered as representations of national identity, gender, craft and technology, fashionability and competence. The four major articles analyse in-depth, empirical research in original and illuminating ways and Sparke's historiography opens up debate about a vastly under-explored area – the relationship between fashion design and interior design - which has implications for the comparative exploration of other fields of design activity and interdisciplinary approaches. This interdisciplinary concern is echoed in the interplay of craft, technology and marketing at the heart of Blaszczyk's analysis of Dorothy Liebes's consultancy for DuPont. This special issue represents another step on the path to thorough investigation of the history of interior design, distinct from architectural history and subject to the same levels of exploration as the histories of furniture and product design, graphics and fashion design, with which it may be compared. In the articles presented here, a consistent picture emerges about national identity and gender as key issues in the history of the professionalization of interior design. Continuing concerns for globalisation and national identity, and gender, as well as the imperative to interrogate issues of sustainability,

¹⁰¹ P. Sparke, *Elsie de Wolfe: the Birth of Modern Interior Decoration*, ed. M. Owens, Acanthus Press, New York, 2005; P. Sparke, 'Elsie de Wolfe and her Female Clients, 1905 – 1915: Gender, Class and the Professional Interior Decorator,' in B. Martin and P. Sparke, eds., *Women's Places: Architecture and Design 1860 – 1960*, Routledge, London, 2003, pp. 47-68.

make interior design history a compelling area of enquiry and the professionalization of the field a compelling tool for understanding its genesis, characteristics and significance.