Chapter 17
Figuring Out the Interiors Through the Representation of Experiential and Interactive Environments

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ABSTRACT
In the learning society, knowledge is the new capital, and the role of the designer encompasses a visionary and imaginative force that must translate the cultural dimension of the project into formal expressions but also ensure a functional and environmental character that is nowadays enhanced by digital technologies. Design does not solely restrict itself to designing the experience of use, the “economy of experience,” but introduces an innovative vision of systems or innovative access to cultural heritage in all its forms. The chapter exploits methodologies to support the experiential design process where the tools of representation are critical to simulate, prototype, and build interiors but also arrange the right set to control and validate the final perception of a space. A participatory application for the Cola Filotesio museum of Amatrice concludes the chapter: a prototype of a community center to replace by the means of a virtual environment the church of Saint Emidio, which was razed to the ground by the 2016 earthquake.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-2823-5.ch017
INTRODUCTION

Paideia, a word coming from the antique Greek, which means formation or education, is the term that in ancient Greece denoted the pedagogical model in force in Athens in the fifth century BC, referring not only to school education of children, but also to their ethical and spiritual development in order to make them citizens perfect and complete, a high form of culture capable of guiding their harmonious integration into society.

Interior design is taught to be an essential tool for envisioning and modeling the environments we live in but also to create the places of knowledge, to encourage continuous learning according to an innovative vision. Donald Schön’s work on organizational learning and reflective practice that tends to receive the most attention in the literature, his exploration of the nature of learning systems and the significance of learning in changing societies has helped to define debates around the so called ‘learning society’.

Education was not a segregated activity, conducted for certain hours, in certain places, at a certain time of life. It was the aim of the society. The city educated the man. The Athenian was educated by culture, by paideia. (Hutchins, 1970)

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The chapter, starting from the new social condition inspired by the learning society introduces issues and questions about the role of designers in the future. The change in the attitude of designers, the need to design and promote an effective experience of interiors is promoting the integration of interactive environments for the fruition of cultural heritage and a new concept for creating space for the community and the civic empowerment. Representing culture and human heritage in the digital age is the contemporary challenge for designers that are figuring out interiors for community centers, like a museum or a library or the new hybrid spaces designed as urban interiors.

The chapter exploits the tools for experiential design describing the processes of representation to design and build interiors but also their perception as a space. Crucial is the role of visual interaction in designing and envisioning environments. Representing interior spaces through drawing requires a continuous process of imagination. Design does not solely restrict itself to designing the experience of use of goods, “economy of experience”, but introduces an innovative vision of systems and a shared vision of cultural heritage in all its forms; it also makes it possible to start upon a participatory and inclusive learning path, social well-being, which makes its diffusion in the community sustainable and cost-effective (from the institution to the cultural operator, to the different categories of users). Knowledge technologies are recognized as opportunities in terms of simulation and communication of environments, but also of creating culture and awareness that is expressed in the contemporary forms of sharing and dissemination. Learning, in the different seasons of life, should, therefore, be considered as the source of an increasingly innovative economy that becomes sustainable and has an impact if it reaches a substantial and diversified number of users and social subjects.