

# INTRODUCTION

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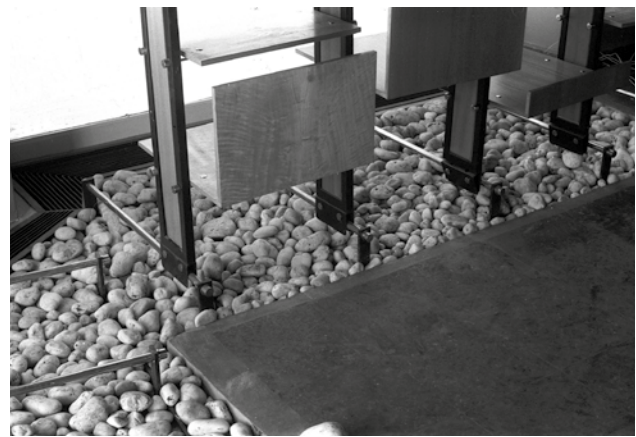
## MODERN INTERIORS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The idea for this special issue stemmed from a time of crisis in the world, aiming to search for lessons from related modern interiors to shed light on the future [FIGURE 01, FIGURE 02, FIGURE 03, FIGURE 04]. Crises vary in scale and dimension, and the realization that the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022 was not a contained crisis but one of many that bound the past, present, and future led to the broadened framework for the call for papers in April 2023.

There were many submissions from around the world, and the aim regarding paper selection was to ensure a varied outlook on the topic, focusing strictly on the modern interior while practicing a generous definition of what constitutes a crisis. The papers included in this special issue encapsulate these aspects as well as an emphasis on the spatial composition, the relationship between inside and outside, furniture, art, and the processes by which these features define the interior.

This issue stems from the initiative *Modernism Is Frozen – Urbanism and Architecture under/after COVID-19*, a series of online conferences held in 2021 in response to the global pandemic. Organized as a parallel event to the 16<sup>th</sup> International Docomomo Conference Tokyo Japan 2020+1 – *Inheritable Resilience: Sharing Values of Global Modernities*, the initiative was proposed and coordinated by the conference chairs Ana Tostões, then Chair of Docomomo International, and Yoshiyuki Yamana, then Vice-Chair of Docomomo Japan. The sessions, under the moderation of Takayuki Suzuki, explored the impact of the pandemic on modern architecture and urbanism, with particular attention to the interiors of the Modern Movement. However, it was clear that the short and long-term effects necessitated further discussion. Following are some of the questions that were believed to help expand the dialog:

- What does the Modern Movement's legacy teach us about living in health and hygiene?
- How relevant are its views on related issues, such as the modes of transition between the private and the public, between the built and the natural environment, especially in a context of crisis?
- Can concerns for the truthful treatment of functions or for an architecture focused on the scale, movement, and perception of the human body help make space for the personal, the human, and the poetic within a framework aimed at control, purification, and biosecurity?
- How can these topics influence new building and re-use design processes?



01 Pamuk Pharmacy (Pamuk Eczanesi), a space of hygiene, by Önder Küçükerman, interior perspective drawing (left) and shelf detail photograph (right), Istanbul (Turkey), 1968 and ©: Önder Küçükerman and DATUMM: Documenting and Archiving Turkish Modern Furniture Archives (datumm.org).



02 Sanatorium Zonnestraal, Hilversum (The Netherlands), architects Jan Duiker & Bernard Bijvoet, 1928. © Jannes Linders, 2003.



03 Rinsema House, bedroom 1st floor, Drachten (The Netherlands), architect Theo van Doesburg, 1923. © RCE Dutch National Cultural Heritage Agency, nr 16033-81603, Photo: Mark Sekuur, 2019.

- Do original MoMo typologies function well under crisis management?
- What might revisiting of our relationship with nature unravel, and what might this say about our interior spaces?

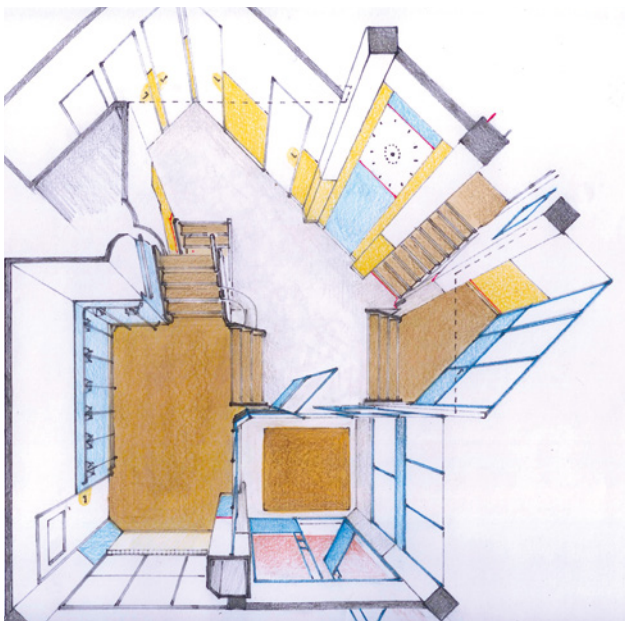
Echoing the views of the Docomomo International Specialist Committee on Interior Design (ISC/ID), it is believed that it is relevant to consider 'interior qualities' as all qualities related to human experience with reference to the Modern Movement. Thus, the open call was for academics and practitioners to contribute with articles (documentation, technical and conservation issues, case studies) and best practice cases involving endangered heritage and tributes.

This issue includes eleven research papers and one exhibition review. The papers range from focusing on the role of interior space in defining identity to geographic localities, including both research presented at the Tokyo Conference and others from an open call. Overall, it is believed that this is a rich collection of research celebrating the role of interiors in the Modern Movement. Moreover, this issue includes studies from interiors from different geographies such as Brazil, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Poland, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, and Turkey, which enabled a broader and more inclusive global scope. The papers presented may be grouped under the following headings, although most authors touch upon more than one category:

- Modern houses with specific features
- Adapting apartments, bathrooms, and entire houses
- Public spaces, buildings, and functions

#### MODERN HOUSES WITH SPECIFIC FEATURES

While Bonini discusses Eileen Gray's Villa *Tempe a Pailla* in Castellar, France, in detail and its close connection to natural systems, Barker focuses on the changing domestic definitions of Modernism in South Africa. Villarias and Fernandez



04 Open air school Amsterdam, entrance, Amsterdam (The Netherlands), architect Jan Duiker, 1930. © Mariël Polman, Suzanne Fischer, 2010.

highlight domesticity and incorporation of the vernacular through Peter G. Harnden's house in Orgeval near Paris, showing modernist influences in challenging times and their social and stylistic effects.

#### ADAPTING APARTMENTS, BATHROOMS, AND ENTIRE HOUSES

Peixoto highlights the significance of modern interiors and multifunctionality in relation to sustainable solutions in Brazilian cities. Pasin and Öztürk study the domestic 'wet space' and highlight the fact that cleanliness and hygiene represent gendered domestic norms, which creates a crisis of its own, adapting and resisting foreign architectural influences. Hasirci explains the representative quality of modern hygiene in terms of national identity in Turkey, holistically synthesizing habits of the East and West. Akerfelt, Wilczynska, Fainholtz, and Veldi discuss terms of reconstruction, identity, and ideology in modernist housing ideals, as well as the reception and adaptation of the interiors in reconstruction after crises today. The discourse on interiors and housing had a strong nationalist connotation in the selected articles, aiming to create new homes reflecting the Polish identity, breaking with historicism and its associations with German rule, replacing it with Modernism in both architecture and interior design.

#### PUBLIC SPACES, BUILDINGS, AND FUNCTIONS

Kordic, Zoric, Todorovic, and Mrlješ tackle the difficult question of how modern architecture and design can help to provide physical distance while maintaining social closeness, empathy, and solidarity in cities. They emphasize the modern movement heritage in Serbia, its potential, and the interiors that extend outside, creating open-air interior spaces. Modern interiors remain a fertile ground for innovative approaches to creating new links between indoor and outdoor spaces. Orchowska highlights the emigration point in Gdynia, Poland, as a hygienic threshold with a

very specific function and layered messages, while Avci dwells on tuberculosis and related modern health facilities hosting modern interior components designed with anthropometric data and new production techniques. Karabağ and Ballice focus on modernist interior influences through the Izmir International Fair Pavilions in Turkey.

Finally, the exhibition review—*Retrotopia: Design for Socialist Spaces*—enables visuals as well as the necessity to have a diverse range of materials based on components of modern interiors from post-socialist countries. Thus, the review by the curators Banz and Huber-Doudová provided a base for discussions of various spaces, from futurist hotel interiors to presidential airport lounges to cybernetic living spaces. The overall picture provides answers but also raises questions for future research.

The modern interior has a tightly knitted relationship regarding how one must conduct one's daily life and oneself as a member of an improved society, reaching the beacon of a more advanced, civilized, overall better life (Rajguru, 2022; Parr, 2002; Prakash & Kruse, 2008). Modernity began as a reality in Western Europe, according to Berman (1988), transforming into a so-called fantasy towards the East. Moreover, design history literature focusing on interiors often aligns with either the Western or the colonial discourse, which may be restrictive, leaving several voices around the world on the periphery. The approach is to reach a wider and more holistic understanding of the concept, including the many interpretations of modernity and reflections on interior space.

Paul Overy (2008), dealing with *Zeitgeist* aspects that deeply influenced Modernism, such as notions of hygiene and purity but also the bond between democracy and economy, touches upon preoccupations that seem to be on their return in the current era. Zooming in from the city to the house, the author describes the challenges of hygiene and cleanliness in a way that strikingly reflects our concerns when being in a situation of crisis but also when more complex questions come to the surface, such as how to organize public transportation, schools, hospitals, and (care) homes. The parallels run even deeper: calls for a new and better society are triggered, which shows many similarities with the modernist ethos. A crisis situation, in general, seems to ask for more equitable societal organization principles, and MoMo principles could be of some help.

Docomomo Journal has long prioritized conservation practices regarding the modern interior as, "key conservation issue for modern living", as well as its components, such as furniture and industrial design, materials, and details (Tostoes, 2012). Coutinho (2012a), has noted that, comprehending and experiencing modern spatiality was determined by interior design, and that it was a field requiring holistic, layered, and plural perspectives

(2012b). Normandin (2012), expressed the significance of Charles and Ray Eames' furniture shaping the vision of modern interiors around the world, prescribing a modern way of living in the wake of crisis of rebuilding after World War II.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, this issue not only focuses on interiors and carries significance in terms of the output of the Docomomo International Specialist Committee on Interior Design (ISC/ID) but also presents an effort to collect an array of views from around the world. The goal was to create a special issue of the Docomomo Journal dedicated to the functioning and experience of the modern interior in times of crisis, showcasing a variety of insightful perspectives. The COVID-19 pandemic has made us more aware of our intricate relationship with the natural environment and the need for a wide range of strategies to tackle a common issue. These are topics that directly relate to qualities of the Modern Movement and are believed to inspire an expansion of existing discussions. Here, we sought contributions based on scientific research of Modernism's theoretical foundations as well as of its practices, its tangible legacy, and its most appropriate sustainable conservation techniques from all continents. The wish is to cast a more permanent spotlight on modern interiors in the context of the Docomomo Journal, as interiors reflect modern living in close range with immediate shifts and adaptations to one's needs, despite being difficult to document due to their continuous dynamic nature.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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