

Call for Abstracts
Special Issue of the DOCOMOMO
Journal

with the working title:

Learning from Modern Movement Interiors in Times of
Crisis

By the Scientific Committee on Interior Design of
Docomomo International



Sunk terrazzo bathtub 'In corpore sano' with faience finishing, Villa Les Zéphyr, arch. Oscar Van de Voorde, Westende-bad-Middelkerke (B), ca. 1922, photo: Els De Vos, 2020

DOCOMOMO International is pleased to announce the Call for Abstracts for a special issue of the Docomomo Journal dedicated to the functioning and experience of the modern interior in times of crisis, gained through a variety of insightful perspectives from around the world.

Having already initiated an online discussion at the Tokyo Congress in 2021 'Modernism Frozen, Urbanism and Architecture under/after Covid-19: Learning from Modern Movement Interiors in Times of Pandemic', organized by Docomomo International, it was obvious that the short and long term and small and large scale effects necessitated further discussion as new pieces of information were discovered, which has led to this call.

When the magnitude of the virus outbreak became clear, the interior architecture magazine *Inner* immediately launched a call for papers on the topic of living in times of pandemic, arguing that the new condition may have come to stay in our daily lives, – to some degree at least. According to *Inner*, a number of themes concerning this new condition and its relation to interiors needs to be examined: space and multifunctionality, smart working, new duties such as home schooling and fitness, outdoor activities entering the home, the challenges of the smart interior, and how the public interior reacts to social distancing. Moreover, we have become more aware of our intricate and interconnected relationship to the natural environment and the need for a wide range of strategies to tackle a common issue, themes related to qualities of the Modern Movement, which enable a parallelization and expanding of the discussion. Here, we would like to refer to historian Paul Overy's 2008 book *Light, Air and Openness*, and in particular its opening chapter entitled 'Health'. The volume, which deals with Zeitgeist aspects that deeply influenced Modernism, such as notions on hygiene and purity but also on the bond between democracy and economy, touches on preoccupations which seem to return in the current Covid era. Zooming in from the city to the house, the author describes the challenges of hygiene and cleanliness in a way which strikingly reflects our concerns with the pandemic. The modernists' pervasive obsession with hygiene and cleanliness on a personal, domestic and urban level recall the lessons that people around the world have recently been forced to (re)learn: from how and how long to wash hands, how to greet, how to quarantine an infected family member in one's home, to more complex questions such as how to organise public transportation, schools, hospitals and care homes. The parallels run even deeper: the recent calls for a new and better society triggered by the pandemic, a sudden situation of crisis, involving more equitable societal organisation principles, show many similarities with the modernist ethos.



Sanatorium Zonnestraal, Hilversum (NL), archs. J. Duiker and B. Bijvoet, 1926-28, Main Building. Interior: bright light yellow walls with blue steel windows, brown linoleum in order to economize, photo: Mariël Polman, 2003

This reflection raises many questions. What can the legacy of the Modern Movement teach us about living in health and hygiene? How relevant are its views on related issues such as the degree of connectedness or separation between the private and the public, or between the built and the natural environment, especially in a context of crisis? Can ideas such as the machine à habiter or the Existenz Minimum provide clues for new typologies, which, with the aid of technology, flexibly adapt the boundaries between the private, collective and public spheres, preventing excesses of distance and solitude, and enhancing solidarity? Can concerns for objectivity, the truthful treatment of functions, or an architecture designed around the scale, movement and perception of the human body help give place to the personal, the human and the poetic within a framework aimed at control, purification and biosecurity? How can these topics influence newbuild and re-use design processes? Do MoMo typologies function well under crisis management? What might a revisiting of our relationship with nature unravel, and what might this say about our interior spaces?

We are seeking 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, but especially from the **Far and Middle East, Africa, Australia, and the Baltic Countries**. We encourage papers which discuss the modern heritage as an interplay between what was thought and written and what was built and crafted, focusing on its conservation and its legacy. Multidisciplinary approaches on, for instance, materials in combination with complex and multi-layered, underlying ideas such as on machines to lighten labour and increase efficiency, the creation of conditions for leisure and personal development would gain our favour. How current, challenging and essential are these idea(l)s and the search for ways to achieve them, not only in relation to the private home, schools, care homes or hospitals, but to our entire environment?

From the perspective of the *Docomomo International Specialists Committee on Interior Design*, it seems extremely relevant to consider these issues with reference to the Modern Movement. We thereby propose to focus on 'interior qualities' in the sense of all qualities related experience – whether indoor or outdoor –, thus avoiding the narrow interpretation of the interior.

This is an open call for academics and practitioners with interest in the subject to contribute to this special issue of the Docomomo Journal with:

- articles (documentation, technical and conservation issues, case studies),
- essays and interviews,
- best practice cases involving endangered heritage,
- tributes and book reviews.

This Docomomo Journal is guest edited by Zsuzsanna Böröcz and Deniz Hasirci.

Scientific Committee: the guest editors and members of the Specialist Committee on Publishing of Docomomo International.

After double-blind peer review the contributions for this special issue will be selected by the guest editors in cooperation with the editorial team of the Docomomo Journal. The Docomomo Journal is Open Access and indexed by Scopus and DOAJ - Directory of Open Access Journals among others (www.docomomojournal.com).

Please, send us your abstract of 300 words and 100 word CV in English, accompanied by maximum three illustrations (300 dpi) to the OJS system by **30 January, 2023**. The schedule for the launch of this special issue of Docomomo Journal will be defined after examination of the received material.

This publication is based upon work of the Specialist Committee of Interior Design of Docomomo International in the context of the series of debates entitled 'Modernism Frozen, Urbanism and Architecture under/after Covid-19' (<https://docomomo.be/learning-from-modern-movement-interiors-in-times-of-pandemic/>).