

ENGAGING BODY-SPACE RELATIONSHIP: MAKING OF AN INTERACTIVE INTERIOR SKIN

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Light There is an increasing interest in interior design theory that focuses on understanding interior spaces as both the specifics of objects and environments within the interior and the subjects who experience them through their bodily presence. If a theory of interiority cannot simply be characterized by reference to qualities such as walls, ceilings and floors in a Cartesian space and by the objects and finishing contained in it, and we wish to engage physical and psychological body-space relationships as well, then what are some new spatial expressions that can affect our perception of space? What is our perception of a space? What does it mean to feel a space? According to Gestalt psychology, when we enter an interior space, what is first and immediately perceived is neither the subjective sensation nor shapes, colors, or objects, but rather, atmosphere. German philosopher, Gernot Böhme, in his seminal work, *Atmosphere as The Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics*, articulated the interrelationship between the subjects and objects in atmospheric space. According to Böhme, atmospheres are neither something object nor something subject. Instead, atmospheres are both object-like, articulating their presence through qualities, and at the same time subject-like, presenting a bodily state of being of subjects in space.

Human skin is the interface between the body and world: it is our outermost organ that protects our physical bodies, it is sensuous to touch and constantly gives us information about our surroundings. In design history the concept of 'skin' has been used as a site for rich metaphors referring to the clothing that wraps around



the body or the building walls that enclose and protect our body. In fact, 'second skin' is often used as a metaphor for clothing or fashion while 'third skin' is often used as a metaphor for architectural cladding and surface interiority. An architectural skin, referred to generically as the boundary between indoor and outdoor, has to negotiate with both exterior and interior presences. In contrast, interior skin, mediated by architectural skin, can be understood as a series of layers demarcating various interior enclosures: inside and outside demarcation is erased and dichotomy becomes relevant only to the presence of the body.

Directly borrowing from the metaphor of human skin, this art installation *To Feel the Space*, is a full scale interactive interior skin that is produced by using folded plastic corrugation boards and digital technologies. It attempts to explore the potential object-like and subject-like expression of interior atmosphere by focusing on the ephemeral status between subject and object and capturing the fleeting moments of body-space experience. Situated within a large public space, for example, an exhibition hall, the

form of the interior skin, digitally fabricated from folded plates is not the result of the design generated from a specific program, but the result of parameterizing the dome-like structure to the bodily dimensions and movement. The interior skin, as the object in space, actively engages with the subjects as they walk into the exhibition space. Digital cameras capture the colors palettes from the clothing people wear in space and add the live color information to a database to be live project-mapped onto the interior skin. As the people move closer to and within the interior skin, the additional digital cameras will capture people's movements in space and allow for the interactive plays between the bodies and the space. When people move outside of the interior skin and the exhibition hall, they will leave their color information behind in the space and therefore the space is present with the traces of bodies even if the bodies are absent in space. As a result, the atmosphere is neither objective nor subjective, but infused with the fleeting interplay between the object and the subject that is felt through the body and met with the eyes.