

Interiors: Cause and Effect

Fact Sheet



In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists. – Eric Hoffer



Building Biology Institute
The science of healthy buildings



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Cultivated living tells us a lot about the educational background, character, intellect, artistic sense and aesthetics of an individual person, a family, and a community.

Not much is known about the relationship between human occupants and interior spaces, although we are confronted with this integrated reality every day. In fact, the time spent in our living spaces has a significant and multi-layered influence on each and every one of us.

We are facing a modern dilemma in that – similar to building culture – individualized and personalized culture in furniture and the living environment has more or less disappeared. Furnishing a dwelling has become reliant on technology, industry, mass production, wholesale and retail sales activities and mass consumption. Civilized people are now, for the most part, totally dependent upon large-scale furnishing businesses, construction companies and housing developments. Lost is the uniquely creative, individualized ideas-based culture that once placed an intrinsic value on craftsmanship and workmanship.

The word nostalgia derives from *Heimweh* (meaning, “yearning for home”). More people are now including individuality, stability, and originality in their values. It is the human yearning for desirable surroundings. This is a contrast to the monotony of stark, modern rectangular furniture.

Ageless furniture pieces, which are singular and culturally-connective, are best designed and constructed by an artistically-inspired artisan or craftsman. The craftsman should know the individual who will ultimately use the piece, and the furniture should be custom-designed according to individual specifications and styles. Such a piece of furniture will have a symbiotic relationship to its creator, the owner and the space in which it is kept.

Furniture can have many biological effects on those dwelling with it. The physiological, chemical, electrical, and climatic circumstances related to furniture and humans in the built environment are very much interrelated. Physical, mental, and spiritual spheres influence each other.

When viewed from the biological standpoint, the following criteria should be considered with regard to furniture:

1. Influence on room climate
2. Influence on electro-climate
3. Smell and emission of substances hazardous to health
4. Causation of accidents in the home
5. Physiology of furnishing
6. Synthetic materials

Like Baubiologie, the Physiology of Living is a new branch of science. It deals with the adaptation of buildings, building materials, furniture and installation to the needs of man to improve health, well-being and overall performance.



Of considerable significance are the anatomical measurements of furniture and space in kitchen; sanitary facilities in living rooms and bedrooms; and medical requirements of furniture (especially of chairs and beds).

Room climate, solar radiation, and acoustics are investigated under the hygienic aspect of living, which includes recommendations for heating, ventilation, lighting and noise protection. In the physiology of living, we are also looking for the reasons that accidents occur in homes, along with their prevention, as well as the specific accommodations for the elderly and disabled.

Buildings, apartments, components and furnishings should meet the needs of the human being holistically (body-mind-soul) to enhance a person's health and wellbeing. What is important for the dwelling is also important for adjacent areas of living such as school, workplace, hospital, places of recreation and housing development areas.

To do justice to the many interrelated demands, a close cooperation of physiologists of living, bau-biologists, and sociologists in the field of living is necessary. A close contact should be established to all builders, as well as to the authorities in building and medicine, developers and house owners to be.