Rida Project Phase 4
Professional Guideline for the Interior Design Industry in Hong Kong
Education & Practice
Sylvia Leydecker
- Interior Designer & Owner, 100% Interior
- Author of Book Designing Interior Architecture: Concept, Typology, Material, Construction

“I think it is desirable to have a definition, a solid basis and profound knowledge to share, which also means to qualify therefore. You should have a basic knowledge in defining your profession.”

Q1. There is some debate in academic and scholarly circles on whether it is desirable to have a standardized curriculum for interior design. What is your position on this matter?

A: For securing the definition of the profession itself as well as ensuring the quality and the standing of the profession within the profession and to the public, there should be a standardized curriculum. There needs to be a common standard that integrates framing guidelines in the curriculum to safeguard a professional outcome and qualification, and to serve as protection for consumers as well.

Q2. Members of RIDA Steering Committee have suggested putting in place a qualifying period for interior designers entering the profession, during which they will be monitored by a mentor and required to fill in a logbook. Is there such a system in place in your country? If not, do you think it is desirable to have one?

A: We do have such a similar system in Germany. After successfully finishing his or her studies, a graduate will need two years of full-time practice (regular working hours are eight hours per day) within all phases of design and building. It needs to be proven — usually by the principal of the firm, and graduates have to be able to name and describe their projects [See Q4].

Q3. Is there a code of conduct in place for interior designers in your country? Have you encountered any problems in enforcing it, or educating designers about it?

A: The Association of German Interior Architects (BDIA) has recently published the "Hamburger Erklärung" (Hamburg Declaration) about our future goals. We are working on public relations and also intensifying contact with educators/universities.

Q4. How do you view continuing education for interior designers?

A: We do have this tool implemented as a “must” in our architect’s chamber, for all registered interior architects, but implementation differs from county to county within Germany. You need to get around 12 points per year, and a one-day
seminar counts eight points. Most of them you receive by attending seminars at the chamber’s integrated academies.

Apart from this, some lectures, initiated by firms, count for three points, for instance at a fair. Providers (such as a firm) have to apply for getting the lectures certified officially by the architect’s chamber in advance to offer them to their clientele. Ongoing education isn’t only for registered interior architects, but also for “interior designers” who have not registered. These programs within the academy are differentiated from members / interior architects, for the latter are under regular control: members who do not show up to these courses, seminars and the like are asked to do so. If they refuse, the cases will even go to court.

Q5. In Germany, the title of interior architect is protected. Is interior design training very architecturally based? Are there a qualifying period and an examination?

A: Not “very”, but it is. We do conceptualize and “build” in an architectural way as well at university studying interior architecture. My Diploma-Engineering title, for instance, is related to humidity in buildings focusing on construction. On the other hand, we do have a whole range of interiors-related topics such as acoustics, light, materials, form, color, sketching, sculpting, photography and furniture design.

We shifted from “Diploma Designer” / “Diploma Engineer” — depending on the universities — to “Bachelor” and “Master”. After studying, you need to have enough semesters and then at least two years of work experience in all phases of practice. You then apply for becoming a registered interior architect at your architect’s chamber.

Q6. In Germany are there any overlaps in the work of architects and interior architects?

A: Yes, definitely there are. Depending on the counties within Germany, interior architects are allowed to build to a certain size. But in practice, it is quite difficult to decide what you’re allowed to do and what aren’t, as sometimes the definition is unclear and officials don’t know how to react to interior architects. This is definitely a problem for practicing interior architects within the field of architecture / house building, as it is difficult to cope with these uncertainties while doing your job.

Q7. In your book Designing Interior Architecture, you draw attention to the wide field of interior design, which ranges from spatial and architectural work to furniture design, product design and branding. Given this fact, do you think it is desirable or possible to define a core body of knowledge for interior design?

A: Absolutely. I think it is desirable to have a definition, a solid basis and profound knowledge to share, which also means to qualify therefore. You should have a basic knowledge in defining your profession.
問題1. 學術界對於統一室內設計課程內容持不同意見，您對課程統一有甚麼意見呢？

答：為了向室內設計業界和公眾建立室內設計專業的定義及保證專業的品質和標準，的確需要有一個統一的課程。業界需要有一個融入課程指引框架的共同標準，以確保專業成果和品質達標，同時保障客戶利益。

問題2. 本計劃的指導委員會成員認為，香港室內設計業應為新入職的設計師實施實習期，期間應要求僱主為僱員填寫工作日誌。請問德國有否相關的制度？如沒有，您贊成推行這制度嗎？

答：德國有相類似的制度。學生畢業後，他們需要參與兩年的全職實習（一般的工作時間為每天八小時），期間需要參與設計和建築不同階段的工作。這些工作需要得到公司的總裁批核。實習生需要能夠認真地描述他們參與的工作項目。

（詳見問題4的答案）

問題3. 德國有沒有學會室內設計師遵守的專業操守指引？在您們推行指引時，或向設計師推廣時，有否遇到任何困難呢？

答：德國室內建築師協會最近出版了《漢堡宣言》（Hamburger Erklärung），當中提及未來的目標。我們正在跟進公共關係的工作和加強與教育人員和大學的聯繫。

問題4. 您對室內設計師的持續教育有甚麼想法？

答：我們的建築師議會會推行持續教育制度，提供所有註冊室內建築師參加，但在推行上，各城市都有不同的做法。室內建築師需要每年取得大約12分，如參與一個全日的研討會可取得八分。設計師可以透過參加學會所舉辦的研討活動，取得大部份的分數。

除此以外，出席一些由公司自行舉辦的講座（如在博覽會舉行的講座）可以取得三分。主辦單位（比如說是一家公司）需在講座公開報名前，向建築師議會領取講座證書。持續教育活動不只是供給註冊室內建築師，也提供給未註冊的室內設計師。未註冊的室內設計師可參加的活動跟會員／室內建築師的有所不同：室內建築學會會定期查核後者有否參與，要是他們未有出席任何學術活動，學會會可要求他們出席。如果他們拒絕出席，就有可能被起訴。
問5. 在德國，室內建築師的名銜是受到保護的。請問室內設計訓練的內容是否多以建築學為基礎？有否實習考核期和考試制度？

答：在德國，室內建築學科就是建築為主。大學的室內設計教育中，運用建築學的概念。以我持有工程學文憑為例，事實上，它的重點是在建築過程中所需的知識，如建築內的結構。我的課程另一方面亦涵蓋許多室內設計的課題，如聲學、照明、物料、形態、顏色、繪畫、雕刻、攝影、傢俱設計等。

問6. 請問德國的建築師和室內建築師的工作有何重疊？

答：有，有相當重疊。在德國的一些城市，室內建築師是可以負責建築指定大小的房屋。但在實際的時候，是比較決定哪些是你可以負責任的業務，哪些是你不可以負責任的業務。因為有些業務，有關的定義並不清楚，而政府人員亦不知道如何回應。這對室內建築師的房屋建築工作，絕對是一個問題，因為在工作中，有太多他們無法處理的不確定性。

問7. 在您的著作《Designing Interior Architecture》中，您關注的室內設計領域很廣泛，從空間和建築工作到傢俱設計、產品設計和品牌設計都有。如此看來，請問您認為是否能夠定義室內設計專業的主要知識範疇？

答：絕對可以，我覺得你需要有一個定義，牢固的基礎和深入的知識，從而獲取認同。你需要有基礎知識，去定義你的專業。