



Is do-it-yourself design and architecture helping or hurting our industry?

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The process by which interior design has become a fascination with the American public can be traced throughout its 100 year history. The evolution of mass media, consumerism and the globalization of style has caused a tremendous effect on the design industry; the media gave life to a new language for interiors. HGTV is one of two channels dedicated to offering the general public a piece of the design action. Big box stores, hundreds of magazine publications and books and do-it-yourself (DIY) videos are also available to aid people in their quests to become creative and accomplished do-it-yourselfers. The availability and accessibility of design resources is just a part of this revolution of interior design and architecture in the 21st century. The media collaboration has brought interior design to the masses, forever changing its shape. What was once considered a luxury is now commonplace. We are a do-it-yourself, HGTV, Home Depot generation and we want more.

The birth of Modernism in conjunction with the opening of large retail warehouses, such as Ikea in 1943, lent itself to a new way of living in America. People were fascinated with the ability to improve their homes on their own without relying on the professional design and production process. They were living in a modern world with modern options. Almost forty years later HGTV was born and though there were skeptics (even those who started the network) it has flourished. Today, more than 88 million U.S. households, as well as residents in 26 other countries around the globe, enjoy Home and Garden Television's information-as-entertainment format of designer tips, whirlwind remodels, instant landscapes and celebrity home tours.

As designers should we be grateful that our field is so popular and in demand? Will the advent of influential designers in the media continue to satisfy an increasing public appetite for design and architecture?

HGTV's standing among home and garden design pros tends to be mixed. La Jolla interior designer Carol Spong, president of San Diego chapter of the American Society of Interior Design (ASID), calls it "a double-edged sword."

"On the one hand, HGTV has made the profession of interior design prominent to the public. But the impression that HGTV gives is that remodels and makeovers are done quickly, easily, and cheaply and that the public, after watching a few TV shows, can do it themselves," said Spong.

Would the Mies van der Rohe's of the mid-century be turning in their graves? The media has achieved a successful fascination with an age old profession which used to only belong to the upper class. Television has taken interior design and architecture and made it feasible for anyone to partake in the experience. The collaboration of all medium has brought interior design to the forefront of everyone's mind. You can't walk in to a book store, a strip mall, turn on your television or radio without being smacked in the face by something having to do with the design of your personal

space. Our generation is lacking a "movement" so far in regards to design, perhaps because our movement is DIY.

The defining act which makes our generation independent is the freedom to create our own spaces and the media has provided the tools for us to do it. Whether or not it is for our own good, well... the jury is still out. The designers of the past paved a road, one which had rules and guidelines to be followed, one that had specific requirements of taste and space. We have come a long way in our perceptions. We are apparently in a rule free zone of design. Whatever you fancy you cannot only have, but do yourself. I suppose we are living in a world of style which has no style.

Looking critically at this revitalization of interior design and architecture it is obvious that the lines between professional design and DIY design are "eroding in this dynamic period of cross-fertilization," Susan Yelavich, a world renowned architecture critic said. Perhaps the old adage of jack of all trades, master of none could be applied to the DIY revolution. "The 'jacks' will always need the 'masters' at the end of the day. Interior design and architecture does require what our predecessors put forth: a certain passion and knowledge of space, material, juxtapositions, theory, history, art etc..." said Mark Stumer, principal architect of Mojo Stumer Associates, p.c. Keeping the auspicious profession of interior design intact may take a merger of professional designers and novice decorators in establishing the DIY movement. A respect of one from the other could certainly keep the road of inspiration paved as we move further in to the 21st century.

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