

BODY CONSCIOUS DESIGN

Kolding Design Institute, Denmark
Guest Professor Galen Cranz

Fall 2007

This seminar prepares students to evaluate and design environments from the point of view of how they interact with the human body. Tools and clothing modify that interaction. Semifixed features of the nearencvironment, especially furniture, may have greater impact on physical well being and socialpsychological comfort than fixed features like walls, openings, and volume.

Yet Scott's Architecture of Humanism roots architecture itself in proprioception, the body's sense of mass, pressure, volume and orientation in space. Similarly, kinesthetics shaped Olmsted's approach toward landscape design.

Reformers and therapists from prison authorities to birthing center planners believe in communicating their ideas through and into the bodily experiences of their inmates and participants. Aspects of building science pertaining to perception of comfort ultimately rest on culturally modified ideas about the body. Today designers can help redefine and legitimize new attitudes towards supporting the human body by, for example, designing for a wide range of postural alternatives and possibly designing new kinds of furniture.

This course covers these topics with special emphasis on chair design and evaluation. The public health implications of a new attitude toward posture (and back "support") will be explored. The course will heighten students' consciousness of their own and others' physical perceptions through experiential exercises. Students will produce three design exercises: shoe, chair, and a room interior.

Sept. 17 International workshop with Galen Cranz, Jader Tolja, Leonardo Chiesi