

Ohio University
College of Fine Arts
School of Art + Design
Interior Architecture

Introduction to Design Process and Programming

ART 3600 Fall Semester, 2018

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A Professional Design Process: Part I

As a professional designer you need to know what you are doing at every step in a design project. This does not mean that you need to know exactly what you *will be* creating, or designing, as ***design often unfolds as the project develops.***

What this means is that you need to be aware of, you need to understand, what you are doing, step by step, from beginning, through development, to the end of a project.

When beginning a design project the following steps may provide a useful sequential path that helps to understand and develop project proposals.

1. Understand the site, location, of the project.

Geographic, cultural, governmental; urban, suburban, rural
Know everything reasonably possible about the existing, given conditions.

2. Research and develop an understanding of the client/user.

Who is the client?
What do they want, what do they like?
Is the client the actual 'user' of the project?

3. Study the program elements:

What is supposed to be designed?
What are you being asked to do?

4. Study the required presentation, deliverable, components:

What do you have to produce?
Drawings, models, samples, written specification?

5. Identify/select a point of view or a method (methodology) for your designing:

You are going to be creating visual, physical elements.
How do you create these kinds of things?
What does 'being creative' mean?

6. Coming up with one idea can often lead to the development/creation of

several components.

An idea for a wall pattern MAY also be used as the basis of a light fixture, a flooring pattern, a reception desk, et cetera. By changing the size, or the color, or the material of your initial idea you can effectively 'create many objects/components from one. This is a very, very useful idea!

How are you going to 'create' the physical and visually interesting elements (the walls, ceilings, floors, built in components like reception desks, shelving units, et cetera) that will make the project distinctive?

Aligning your approach with a movement, such as Bio Mimicry, or Critical Regionalism, or Parametric design, can direct, limit, focus your approach to creating interior elements and to how you think about the project.

Your point of view could be 'Modernist', or 'De-Constructivist' or 'eclectic'. Your design work could be vigorously geometric, or gridded, or color driven, or curvilinear, or ...

What you design should express a point of view, an idea, a philosophy, and/or some character.

Good design work is NOT bland, generic and dull.

"Creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value."

Sir Ken Robinson