Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

- Paper / Proposal Title:
  Achieving Women’s Health in a Diverse Socio Economic Neighborhoods

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- Abstract (300 words):

  Designing a place for women leading daily hardships often demands a distinct set of interventions that brings unique challenges to designers. The Northside neighborhood is a poor and racially tensioned neighborhood with lack of opportunities and social support. These challenges brought economic hardships to many families in the neighborhood resulting in concerns for necessities such as housing and healthcare. Many women in the Northside neighborhood voiced their concerns about not having socially and culturally safe environment to engage in wellness activities (Erickson, S. & Logan, J., personal communication, June 18, 2018). Having daily challenges with childcare, financial hardship, accessibility, communication, cultural traditions that prevent them from taking care of their mental and physical wellness, these women do not have the luxury to concern about their health and wellbeing. Besides, conventional health facilities have been designed emphasizing the functional delivery of the space rather, often lacked or unsuited to satisfy the psychological or social needs. This paper discusses processes and results of three community design charrettes conducted to gather
information to identify the needs for women's fitness center to promote holistic means of wellness. The three design charrettes were organized with a) residents from the Northside community (n=15); b) local organizational stakeholders and community leaders (n=7), and c) potential wellness center partners (n=2). In conjunction with the design charrettes, an alternative market study survey (n=108) were conducted to learn about people’s opinions and views on the community’s primary interests and the needs for the women-focused health system in the Northside neighborhood. Both charrettes and survey discovered their immense needs for childcare, sense of community, security, and privacy to participate in the wellness activities. This research posits that design based on community’s voices would help designers, educators, and policymakers to produce a realistic and impactful design that responds to the needs of women in a socio-economic neighborhood.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Seyeon Lee is an assistant professor and George Miller Quasi Endowed Professor in the School of Design. Before entering academia, Lee worked as an architectural and interior designer and project manager in the offices of Clifford Planning and Architecture (Hawaii) and MG2 (Seattle) for over 14 years. Lee's professional portfolio includes residential, commercial, retail, hospitality, and urban planning projects in the United States, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. She is a NCIDQ certified interior designer and a LEED Accredited Professional. As a design professional, Lee has involved in many community design charrettes ranging from rehabilitation of a historic community spaces in downtown Honolulu to urban planning of a new community in the rural area of Columbia, South America.

As an academic, Lee’s Ph.D. research focused on developing instructional strategies to improve and strengthen design education with learning objectives that include cost as an integral design determinant. Her research interests engage community environment with an emphasis on sustainable and affordable architectural design and planning with a special focus on improving housing conditions for local community.