Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Neuroscience and Emotional Trait Influences Upon Design Process and Outcomes

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• Abstract (300 words):
The neuroscience behind the design process is a newly tapped field that has the potential to reshape our understanding of how physiology can be leveraged to impact creativity and the education and practice of design. Recent studies using fMRI have shown that the linkages between the default, executive control, and salience networks of the brain indicate the presence of creative thinking. These three areas of the brain tend to work independently rather than in tandem making these findings particularly interesting in understanding how the brain produces innovative solutions to complex problems. This new research could prove impactful for design educators and practitioners in evaluating design exercises that strengthen the connections between these brain networks.

Concurrently, research efforts that take a more behavioral approach can prove very useful in both design education and practice. Research indicates that those with high trait EI will tend to perform more effectively in design teams. Likewise, individuals with a
high empathy quotient may perform more effectively in building empathy with clients, the first stage of design thinking.

This two-pronged approach to understanding the design mind through neuroscience and trait behaviors will be discussed in this presentation. Analyzing and identifying design processes in education and practice that improve the synergy between the brain networks will help educators and practitioners alike to focus efforts to make the most impact. Similarly, trait behaviors can be analyzed and leveraged to improve relationships between colleagues and clients. In both cases, neuro and behavioral processes could be trained to rethink the relationship between people and the generation of objects and environments.

Resources


- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Steven Webber is an Associate Professor at Florida State University in the Department of Interior Architecture and Design. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, he practiced for 12 years working on all phases of interior, architecture, and master planning projects ranging in size from a few thousand square feet to over 100 acres. His research focuses on impacts of emotional intelligence, empathy, and neuroscience on the design process with keen interest in understanding what makes the design mind tick. In addition, his book, *Interior Design Fundamentals*, published by Fairchild Books, is in production and publication is planned for autumn of 2019.