

Oona Horx-Strathern

VIENNA
AUSTRIA

THE SENSE OF SPACE

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A CONVERSATION ABOUT
LIVING- AND DESIGN TRENDS
THAT WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT
ROLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
ABOUT CHANGES THAT INFLUENCE
OUR DEMANDS ON THE SPACE
THAT SURROUNDS US AND HOW
CHANGING LIVING SPACES AFFECT
OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.



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Oona Horx-Strathern comes from London and has been working as a trend researcher, author, consultant and speaker for over 20 years. She's written books on the history of futurology, architecture of the future, as well as numerous studies for the *Zukunfts-institut* which she founded with her husband Matthias Horx. Her favorite topics: Architecture as lifestyle, urban development and socio-demographic change, the relationship between emotions and technology.

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One of the earliest memories Oona Horx-Strathern associates with architecture is a visit to the city of Chandigarh in India, where Le Corbusier realized his vision of a perfect city. Years later, these impressions also inspired her to write her thesis at Bristol University entitled *Le Corbusier: Utopian or Optimist?*

LE CORBUSIER
WAS A
REVELATION
TO ME.

With the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, also known as the Wohnmaschine, a kind of co-living space, he was far ahead of his time. The former mayor allowed him to build what he wanted, and Le Corbusier was already moving toward thoughts of individualistic communities with Shared Space, such as shops, kindergartens, swimming pools and guest-rooms-for-rent. *That's exactly what people are trying to build now.*

How will you live in the city of the future?

When Oona Horx-Strathern thinks of Human Space, she first thinks of two dimensions: interior and exterior, living space and public space. These spaces correspond with each other and are subject to processes of transformation. We live in a time in which the understanding of our homes is changing. Processes of change through socio-structural shifts and the tendency towards individualization are already in full swing. It is not surprising that the demand for public space will continue to rise, as small living spaces create the need for more connectivity. There

is a big trend towards co-living, shared spaces and neighborhood economies. Sharing with others and connecting with them makes a difference in cities. Shared space encourages people to create goals toward improving the quality of city life. Paradoxically, the more individualistic we become, the more we need support from other people. People don't really want to live in a bubble and withdraw. This has been happening in the digital world for some time now. We connect, share what we do and where we are, but we find the real happiness when we as the "Homo urbanus" meet neighbors and friends in our area and forge face-to-face relationships. A pizza delivery cannot be compared to a picnic at a shared space, where we can create connections to other people.

When you do something together, the neurons will light up.

For architecture, this means that the architects should not only design and build houses, apartments and public spaces, but also design and build relationships. It gives people a good feeling when, for example, they can chat and interact from balcony to balcony and not live isolated from their neighbors.

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The way we will live in the future will therefore have a lot to do with building relationships through architecture. *In this sense, architecture is not just a miraculous object. It is a catalyst for change.*



OONA
HORX-
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Our home is a hub that essentially provides a basis for mobility, both mentally and physically. Meaning that the demands on the home and the definition of the home are more complex today than ever before.

In the distant past, it was not unusual to spend your whole life in one single convenient place, one home. Perhaps the people took over their parents' business, the bakery, the carpentry shop and started a family in the place where they had grown up. All stages of life took part in one place.

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Today, things have changed. The compulsion or desire to stay in one village has largely disappeared. Society has become much more mobile. Lifespans have extended and the desire for greater experiences has manifested itself. Income is not first and foremost invested in a thing but spent on experiences.

Collect moments not things.

This phenomenon contributes to the fact that even a smaller apartment can meet the requirements and form the shell or sphere that we call home. A home that through experiences, whether real or virtual, is a multifunctional base that on another level is larger than the sheer number of square feet. Due to limited and decreasing individual living space, each object and how one furnishes it becomes more important. The individually selected pieces of

furniture now span a biographical arc, whereas in the past complete furnishings were inherited from parents. Now you choose a special piece and take it with you. One has a relationship with them.

I am not wacky at all, but it is about identity, and we need home to remember who we are.

Since 2010 Oona has lived with her family on the outskirts of Vienna in the Future Evolution House. The ensemble consists of several cube-shaped modules.

The Work module is separated from the actual residential building. The residential house itself is made up of three further modules which are structured as Hub, Love and Kin, but can also be separated and converted if required. This sounds complex, but in reality, it is very simple to use.

The different areas work as a sort of empty canvas to be used and filled with life. It's also not overloaded with all kinds of technological functionality. *You don't need a tablet computer to open and close the curtains.* The Hub forms the center of the house, with an open kitchen and space for social and family life. The Love area not only houses the bedroom, as one would expect, but also the bathroom, which is not designed like a typical bathroom, but as a boudoir that offers a further retreat for reading or relaxing. A *mindful home* for a new awareness of architecture and its relationship to human relationships.

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In the digitalized world, sensory experience is regaining importance. Natural materials are experiencing a comeback as an expression of a return to analog-real life.

It's not only about the romantic transfiguration of craftsmanship, or a bedroom clad in pinewood. It's about authentic artistry in furnishing the home.

Handmade objects like a table and a handmade wooden floor have a story to tell. Craftsmanship is often considered a countertrend to the movement towards

digitalization. *People don't just need to see and hear, they must engage all of their senses in order to feel alive.* The demand for custom-made products is growing, and consumers are increasingly looking to support smaller, independent design firms.

A great opportunity for craft to create an aesthetic countertrend to our digital lives and become part of a larger movement towards more mindful living.

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