

# Interior intelligence - using our microenvironment as a stage

By [Kim Williams](#)

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*Having grown up spending many hours indoors in her yellow bedroom as a child because of a club foot, creative behavioural strategist Kim Williams has a particular insight into feeling isolated in our interior world. She recently shared her insights as keynote speaker at Decorex 2021 on how we have entered a time where great design has moved past purist notions of practicality and become centred around creating strategies that produce spaces that are mindful and serve our life and work objectives. Here, Williams shares her top insights on how the evolution of intelligent interiors can facilitate a better experience of living.*

## Evolution of perspective



Kim Williams, creative behavioural strategist

As a child, I spent many hours looking out at the world which shaped my understanding of how interior spaces can be a sanctuary during chaos. As I shared my story in my new book, *MyYellowRoom*, I realised how my experience of feeling isolated in my room prepared me for the needs of my clients before social distancing was even an idea, and helped me understand the power our spaces hold. My room was a place I could control and change, and I was fascinated by how people's engagement with my room would alter when I changed the elements within it.

It taught me that our behaviour is largely influenced by how we experience the elements around us. There is real power in shuffling the objects you already have in a space to refresh your personal perspective and renew a space's emotive power. By valuing both the designer and the client's unique perspectives, we can create new life stages to facilitate specific experiences in our spaces that are truly expressive of the client's desires and absolutely authentic to the people who inhabit them, regardless of the budget limitations.

## Evolution of residential spaces

Our homes and interiors have evolved alongside us through the various stages of lockdown to become places that facilitate the experience of living well. Corporates had always known that our spaces have a drastic impact on us and over the last year, we have seen residential clients awaken to the same truth.

The sudden transition from open-plan living illustrates this perfectly. Nowadays, people are prioritising places for focused work, managing the movement of others in their spaces and desiring nooks in which to cocoon and self soothe in solitude before feeling recharged enough to rejoin the jubilation of typical family life.

## Evolution of the virtual space

We are seeing a radical integration between our physical and virtual spaces. The virtual and physical worlds are set to merge and we are looking to designers to make sense of this integration; to help make sense of the potential chaos at the intersection of these worlds through balancing technology and comfort within the personal narrative of their client's space.

## The evolution of individualism

Individualism emerged before Covid and has been bolstered by it and we are far more attentive to expressing individual aesthetics in space. Younger generations have been challenging us on how we perceive people, what our contribution to society is and how important it is that we understand who we are and who we are seen to be.

We are thinking critically about our experiences of space from sight to sound to shape to texture and how these principles can be used to express parts of our client's personalities. The process of pulling out individualism and combining that with trends and how we put the two together to help individuals, families and brands express themselves in interesting ways that are meaningful to them will be the catalyst for many exciting innovations in the near future.



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## The evolution of mindful connection

The importance of mindfulness is on the rise, with many more people creating spaces to practice whatever mindfulness activities support them. Mindfulness is amazing for productivity. The sense of connection we gain from these practices gives us clarity on how we think about what we are executing.

We have also realised how important nature is to refresh, recharge and heal. A connection to nature is a powerful dynamic we must factor into our spaces. The emphasis on the awareness of our impact on nature is not going anywhere either. In fact, I think we will become more aware of what our design products are made from, where and how the raw materials are collected, where the manufacturing takes place and the final carbon cost the product has.



Kim Williams recently shared her insights as keynote speaker at Decorex 2021.

# The evolution of nostalgia

We have started to design with our own memories as we once did with the latest trends. In part due to us not being able to travel, or see family, we have learned to create better memories when we are presented the opportunity. For a while, we were not able to just grab a coffee, or pop away for the weekend or have big family gatherings. Now when we do have those opportunities, we feel a strong desire to document them and incorporate them into our spaces with special items and photographs.

We also see people trying to immerse themselves in cultures that they love, or an era that they loved, to trigger the memories of that wonderful holiday they had or romantic memories of a less complex world. This all fits perfectly with the uprising of repurposing and DIY, both of which are long-standing stable trends that have become mainstream - as is seen with the second-hand malls all over Europe. Repurposing gives us the opportunity to make things our own.

Designers are at the precipice of assisting clients to create spaces that set the stage for their lives on which to play out. Every client's microenvironment is a stage of the story of their lives and the duty of a great designer is to make those stages facilitate a great experience of life. With the potential that technology carries, the deepening of our mindful connection, the change in our perspective and the groundedness we find in our memories, we are capable of creating amazing spaces that are truly riveting to experience.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kim Williams, creative behavioural strategist

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