

The future home

If we pursue wide variety of postures in the home we can move toward a more sensory, sensual, and restorative idea of domestic space.

The home would become an arena of retreat. A special chamber designed for the kinds of activities I have described, a cross between a gymnasium and a meditation room, might appeal to those who want separation, but I would prefer to see the entire home recognized around these concepts. They do require continued, regular use to be effective.

Redesigning our entire home setting as a place for creature comfort has several implications. The most important one, over and above the actual physical changes, is the challenge to the notion of the home as a place for status display. Typically, people decorate their homes to show their educational level, taste, class, and where they have travelled. Instead, the home could become a retreat for recharging and rejuvenation. In the long run, those who have the new "creature comfort" home might accrue high status; but in the short run, it might mean abandoning old forms of status.

The aesthetic of the new ensemble created by this new use of surfaces, platforms, stools, benches, kneeling chairs, perches, and the like could take many forms. The look is stylistically open and unlimited, neither necessarily eccentric nor dull. These new forms and arrangements could draw on vernacular traditions, such as the Turkish raised platforms, the Indian divan, the Japanese floor-oriented tatami, the Chinese heated *k'ang* for sleeping and social life, or even the firm beds that serve as sleeping spaces and "seating" by day in contemporary Chinese mass housing.

Another aesthetic possibility is high-tech. Body-conscious design could harmonize with the high-tech emphasis on smooth surfaces and planes. Alternatively, a rich and lush treatment of the same platforms and planes could draw upon embroideries, vibrant colors, and numerous textures to create an atmosphere of sumptuous pleasure. These forms, just like Western furniture, can be used in an austere and intellectual way, a sensual or erotic way, or a comfortable coy way.

A final implication is that if people get used to this kind of sensual ease and pleasure in the home, they might begin to demand it in the workplace, in public transportation, in places of public assembly, in doctors' waiting rooms, airports, libraries, and the like. Unfortunately, today the influence is often reverse. We get used to institutional stiffness and then accept it, if not aspire to it, in our homes.

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*From The chair: rethinking culture, body and design
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