

# The professionalisation of interior design in South Africa

by Raymund König

Interior design is a spatial occupation. It entails the design of enclosed interventions in the built environment for which documentation is produced. As such, it is an architectural occupation. At the University of Pretoria (UP), interior design is represented by the Programme for Interior Architecture in the Department of Architecture.

The discipline is the art and science of the design of designated spaces, investigating relationships between user, object and spatial envelope.

The interior design occupation is not given any formal professional recognition in South Africa. The built environment professionals who have achieved occupational closure, as listed by the Council for the Built Environment, are the engineers, architects, landscape architects, property valuers, quantity surveyors, project and construction managers, planners and surveyors. In 2004, interior design was placed under pressure when the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) took steps to identify and monopolise architectural work. This served as an incentive for interior design to professionalise the occupation, and led to the establishment of the South African Institute of the Interior Design Professions (IID) in 2006.

This institute is dedicated to establishing, promoting and maintaining expertise, professionalism, sound business practice and high standards throughout the industry. The IID strives to expand the contribution of interior design to society through the exchange and development of knowledge and experience in education, practice and fellowship.

The IID was accepted as a voluntary association of the SACAP in April 2009.

In 2009, the Department of Architecture made a proposal to the SACAP to establish interior design as an architectural discipline. This would allow interior designers

practising in South Africa to register as professionals with the SACAP. The department is a model of interdisciplinary cooperation, incorporating three architectural disciplines (architecture, landscape architecture and interior architecture). As such, it is in a unique position to assist the IID to achieve one of its key objectives, namely the recognition of the professional status of its members in the interior decorating, interior design and interior architecture sectors. The department entered into a formal relationship with the IID to consolidate their parallel efforts towards professionalisation. The aim of the two institutions was to develop relevant registration categories for the discipline that correlate with the existing registration categories for the architectural profession.

Following research, the Department of Architecture at UP and the IID (with collaboration by the Department of Architectural Technology and Interior Design at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and the Department of Interior Design in the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg), finalised the interior design registration categories in 2010. This proposal was submitted to the Council of the SACAP in April 2010.

The department proposed three professional registration categories: professional interior designer, professional senior interior designer and professional interior architect. These categories have been accepted in principle and negotiations between the SACAP, the IID and the department are continuing with regard to the implementation process and time line. ☺

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## The South African Institute of the Interior Design Professions

The IID is the only professional body in South Africa representing the local interior design industry. The stated objectives of the Institute include the following:

- To promote excellence in the practice of interior design
- To improve the profession
- To protect the rights of its members
- To grow the organisation
- To expand the contribution of the profession to society at large

Membership of the IID indicates your status as a qualified, experienced and ethical practicing interior design professional.

Membership also provides you with support and networking, as well as access to information and ongoing education, all of which help to improve your professional practice in addition to fostering a wealth of contacts that will help connect you to a host a suppliers and colleagues from across the South African interior design industry.

The IID is a member of the International Federation of Interior Architects / Designers (IFI) and has also been recognised as a Voluntary Association by the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP).

### Who are our Members?

Our membership is comprised of a broad cross-section of professional interior architects, interior designers, interior decorators, educational institutions as well as a wide range of industry suppliers.

Contact the IID if you wish to find a professional interior architect, interior designer, interior decorator or registered supplier in South Africa.

### Why Choose an IID Member?

By choosing an IID member you are assured of advice and assistance from trained and highly skilled professionals who have expertise in residential and commercial design and who are able to create, implement and manage interiors of distinction. The Institute also offers clients the added assurance of access to impartial mediation in the unlikely event of a dispute arising between a client and a member of the IID.

In order to achieve full membership of the IID, an interior architect, interior designer or interior decorator must demonstrate that they have the education and/or experience required to enable them to perform professionally and , in addition, they must comply with the IID's code of conduct.

**For more information on our members or membership contact our national office or visit our website.**

**Phone 011 465 9732 Fax 086 651 8375**

**Email [national@iidprofessions.com](mailto:national@iidprofessions.com)**

**Website [www.iidprofessions.com](http://www.iidprofessions.com)**

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