

IDEC BOOK AWARD

NOMINATION LETTER: SELF-NOMINATION

September 30, 2015

Re: Mark Hinchman, *The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Interior Design*, 3rd edition. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.

To the Committee:

When a dictionary is written, or as in this case, rewritten, it is not a rote task, but the occasion to assess the state of the field. In strategizing how to edit the existing volume, it became clear that a professional dictionary is a statement that answers the question: What is Interior Design today? When addressing what to delete, what to rewrite, what to add, one is reflecting on the relevance of words from the past to the current situation. What remains salient, what is outdated, and what new words reflect current issues? In addition to consolidating information, a printed dictionary serves as an ideological snapshot about the discipline at a moment in time.

In 2012, Fairchild Publications asked if I was willing to write a new edition of their *Fairchild Dictionary of Interior Design*. First written in 1983 by Martin Pegler, as a comprehensive reference book, its sales were good, so it received a cursory re-do in 2006 in preparation of a second printing. It was not the occasion for a major reassessment. It was seriously outdated: *asbestos* was described in glowing terms, and *Oriental* was used to describe people and not floor coverings. As originally written, *The Dictionary* focused on residential interior decorating, with an emphasis on connoisseurship, and stylistic terms. Its author came from a background in merchandising. The text was heavy on terms related to the decorative arts, such as *commodes en tombeaux* and *toile de jouy*. When written, computers and the internet were in their infancy.

I took a hard look at the text and outlined a vigorous rewriting strategy. I proposed a plan to Fairchild, they accepted it, and that has been my focus for the last two years.

My strategy centered on four principal areas:

1. Commercial realm of interior design
 2. The contributions of women and global diversity
 3. Digital technologies
 4. Current issues: placemaking, environment, sustainability, wellness
1. The biggest change was shifting from residential design to also addressing THE COMMERCIAL REALM. These sectors were strategically examined, looking at office design and governmental administration, hospitality (hotels and restaurants), education, retail, and health care.
 2. By the second decade of the third millennium, the book was outdated in multiple respects, one of them being how the appendix of designers included, or excluded, WOMEN. Major designers were missing including Eileen Gray, Charlotte Perriand, and Nancy McClelland. For the new edition, the appendix of designers and architects was

quadrupled. Additions highlighted CONTEMPORARY DESIGNERS, and designers from across the globe.

3. COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET changed the role of printed books, and how interior design offices operated, regarding administration, and also design and fabrication. Because of the availability of online source, many entries were shortened. It didn't seem necessary for *The Dictionary of Interior Design* to have a lengthy entry on Christopher Wren. New terms from the digital realm were added, such as *frit* and *parametric*.

4. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES: 80% of the existing terms were thoroughly reedited (by me). A few were deleted. Long entries were shortened, in recognition that some information was available elsewhere. The global turn was reflected in the new entries: Many words were added that relate to the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, e.g. *suwer*, West African term for painting on glass; *biombo*, a Mexican screen.

As part of the fee negotiations with Fairchild's acquisitions editor, Olga Kontzias, I hired two students as research assistants. One, interior design student Elyssa Yoneda, worked on the designers and architects appendix; architecture student Zachary Klebba focused on a new section of graphic and space standards, and interior detailing.

With the new and improved appendices, the goal is that *The Dictionary* will not be one of the textbooks that students sell back to the bookstore at semester's end, but that it will stay with them as they transition to the professional world. The method of use for most people is that they seek to find a definition of a word as it pertains to interior design; many of the words are not adequately addressed via internet searches. My hope is that readers' eyes will wander, and they will discover new words. In the course of writing this, I discovered new (to me) words, such as *pronk*, *quysshien*, *skeuomorph*, and *WOBO*. Focusing on interior design's beginnings and marveling at where it is headed, I learned anew the richness of the profession that I hope is reflected in a text designed to serve students and professionals alike.

Sincerely,



Professor Mark Hinchman
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September 30, 2015

Dear IDEC Awards Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Mark Hinchman's book, *Dictionary of Interior Design*, as you consider potential contenders for the IDEC Book Award. Book awards often seem to be bestowed upon books addressing trendy or sensitive topics that are "sexy" to the reading public. While these awards may be appropriately given, there are publications at the other end of the spectrum, those that serve as foundational information sources for a discipline, that are equally as deserving of award consideration for different reasons. The authors of these types of books have, no doubt, toiled just as hard to produce their works and while they may not be espousing a new theory, these products serve a vital and important role in documenting and defining a segment of a discipline's body of knowledge. Mark Hinchman's book, which captures in both words and visuals, the language of our profession, is *that* kind of book.

In a field where defining our own body of knowledge and uniqueness as a profession has been a major topic in recent history, Hinchman's dictionary is important. Not only does it serve as a dictionary of historical interior design terminology, but it goes beyond that to include contemporary terminology reflecting emerging and global trends in the profession. From that standpoint, I submit that this work is much more than simply a common dictionary, but rather a publication that both thoroughly and succinctly documents the past and present language of our profession. It does this not only in words, but also through the clear and consistent illustrations which are invaluable to those of us teaching and learning and practicing in this visual profession. Finally, the inclusion of the biographies and space standards in the Appendices of the book clearly move this well beyond a simple reference book. Including this type of information elevates this book from something that might sit on a shelf and be referenced once or twice per year, to a relevant and valuable tool students and practitioners alike are likely to reference frequently throughout the design process and their careers.

While many books, perhaps even some award winning books, are sold back to the bookstores by students at the end of a semester, Hinchman's book is not likely to be one of them. Perhaps a book that serves as an invaluable tool across a broad spectrum of readers (students, educators, and practitioners) within a given profession is the kind of book that deserves recognition in the form of a formal award occasionally, too.

Regards,

Interior Design Program, Associate Professor

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This letter is an electronic communication from Texas State University-San Marcos, a member of The Texas State University System.

22 September 2015

TO: Awards Committee, IDEC Book Award

P.O. Box 6967
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RE: IDEC Book Award Letter of Support:
The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Interior Design, 3rd Edition

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www.radford.edu

To the IDEC Book Award Committee:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of the nomination for *The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Interior Design, 3rd Edition* by Mark Hinchman, for the IDEC Book Award. I utilize this book in multiple classes, particularly for students concurrently taking upper level interior design studios, and building codes and construction courses. Its relevance and usability have put it on my required list for future classes.

Authored by a Mark Hinchman, a highly respected name in interior design education, the book provides numerous educational tools: cross-referenced definitions, many with accompanying illustrations; a database of influential designers, architects and organizations; a new appendix of graphic and space standards; and excellent tables on interior material properties. In this text, complex definitions are deduced to essential elements, providing readers with a starting place on which to build knowledge. The content and format of the book buttress its educational tools, making it pertinent to students, professionals and educators alike. It creates a curiosity-driven structure in which one can search for a term, and moments later be immersed in unrelated, yet intriguing subject matter. For instance, a reader can search the term *squab* and then flip a couple pages for a brief history of *Surrealism*, and quickly find him or herself on a quest to learn more about the works of Giorgio di Chirico and Paul Klee.

As the profession of interior design moves into the 21st century, it is imperative to have a resource that provides a broad, introductory overview to the many terms, concepts and historical movements relevant to the discipline and its allied fields. Hinchman has put forth significant effort to make this text attentive to recent advances in interior design practice and education. This is evidenced by the inclusion of such ideas and terms as *evidence-based design* and *parametricism*.

The format of this book expertly conveys multidisciplinary information in a concise, user-friendly fashion. These qualities make the book a comprehensive resource for terminology, basic diagrams and common design standards. For example, the definitions for *string* and *tread* introduce students to common stair components, while the diagrams in appendix 3 act as a means of understanding common dimensions and codes related to stair construction. Many of the entries throughout the text are made memorable with an appropriate amount of wit and humor. One of my favorites is *glamping*, which defines *glampers* as the participants, and whose entry is supplemented with an amusing illustration of a camp table and stools adorned with a candelabrum and champagne.

This book contains a must-have collection of terms and concepts relevant to interior design and its allied professions. It will serve as an excellent reference for students of design throughout their academic and professional careers. I wholeheartedly support the nomination of *The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Interior Design, 3rd Edition* by Mark Hinchman, and hope the Awards Committee will give this text the utmost consideration for the IDEC Book Award. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Nathan Bicak, IDEC
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September 9, 2015

Dear IDEC Awards Committee,

For several decades I have had a much dog-eared copy of a dictionary of interior design published in 1966 at arm's reach in my office. Hinchman's *Dictionary of Interior Design*, 3rd edition by Fairchild Books is a welcome replacement to my much-loved, but outdated, dictionary. Like many educators, one of my pet peeves is incorrect student usage of design terminology (couch when they mean sofa, cement when they mean concrete, etc). This new dictionary is an excellent tool to improve student knowledge and language precision.

The content is a terrific balance of historical and contemporary terminology highly relevant to current students, educators, and practitioners of interior design. While a dictionary is certainly not the most provocative book one might have on their shelves, this should not diminish the significant impact such a publication can have on those who use it. Accuracy and succinctness of correct terminology is critical for any successful designer or design educator. A well-researched, edited, and illustrated reference such as Hinchman's is much needed and appreciated.

A dictionary by definition must be comprehensive. Balancing comprehensiveness with succinctness and contemporary relevance must be a daunting task for any author of a dictionary. Hinchman balances these challenges beautifully. The book is just the right size and length to be a highly useful resource for design students, educators, and practitioners. The more than 700 illustrations are clear and stylistically consistent.

The appendices transcend what one would normally expect from a dictionary and make the book a one-stop informational resource for design students. These appendices are highly condensed versions of other books that a designer needs in their library. To have a critical summary of these tomes collected in one place is a great service to beginning design students and any designer on a tight budget for their book collection.

Carl Matthews
Professor, Interior Design Department Head