

SÖDERTÖRNS HÖGSKOLA | STOCKHOLM
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Critical Perspectives in Interaction Design

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Main purpose of presentation

- To suggest methods to defamiliarize with the design of everyday taken-for-granted artifacts in order to critically examine them and/or redesign them
- To provide theories and earlier examples of digital design that shed light on what critical perspectives in interaction design can be

The difference between critical design and design critique

- Critical design, seek **change** in users and society: Adding new (societal) ideas?
 - Spur reflection for users?
 - Spur questioning of current situation?
 - Material creativity?
- Design critique, seek users' approval: Clarity and coherence?
 - Ease of use?
 - Look and feel?
 - Meet goals?

Why critical interaction design?

- Assumption 1: technology reinforce values and ideas
- Assumption 2: Ideas embedded in artifacts tends to be taken for granted
 - Star & Bowker 2000, Sorting things out, classification and its consequences
- How do we unpack the way that values are embedded in interaction design
- How do we challenge societal ideas through interaction design?

Norm Critical Perspectives

Norm critical perspectives

- Expected behaviors, constant experience during the day, “the way we behave”
 - ”The "normal", actions that we don't react to
 - Often self-evident, invisible
 - React when broken
- **Power:** outside / within the norm
 - Interest in maintaining or upholding the norms
 - Who benefits from the current order?
 - Who is privileged through the current order?

Bromseth, J., & Darj, F. (Eds.) (2010). *Normkritisk pedagogik. Makt lärande och strategier för förändring*. Uppsala.



Intersectional perspective

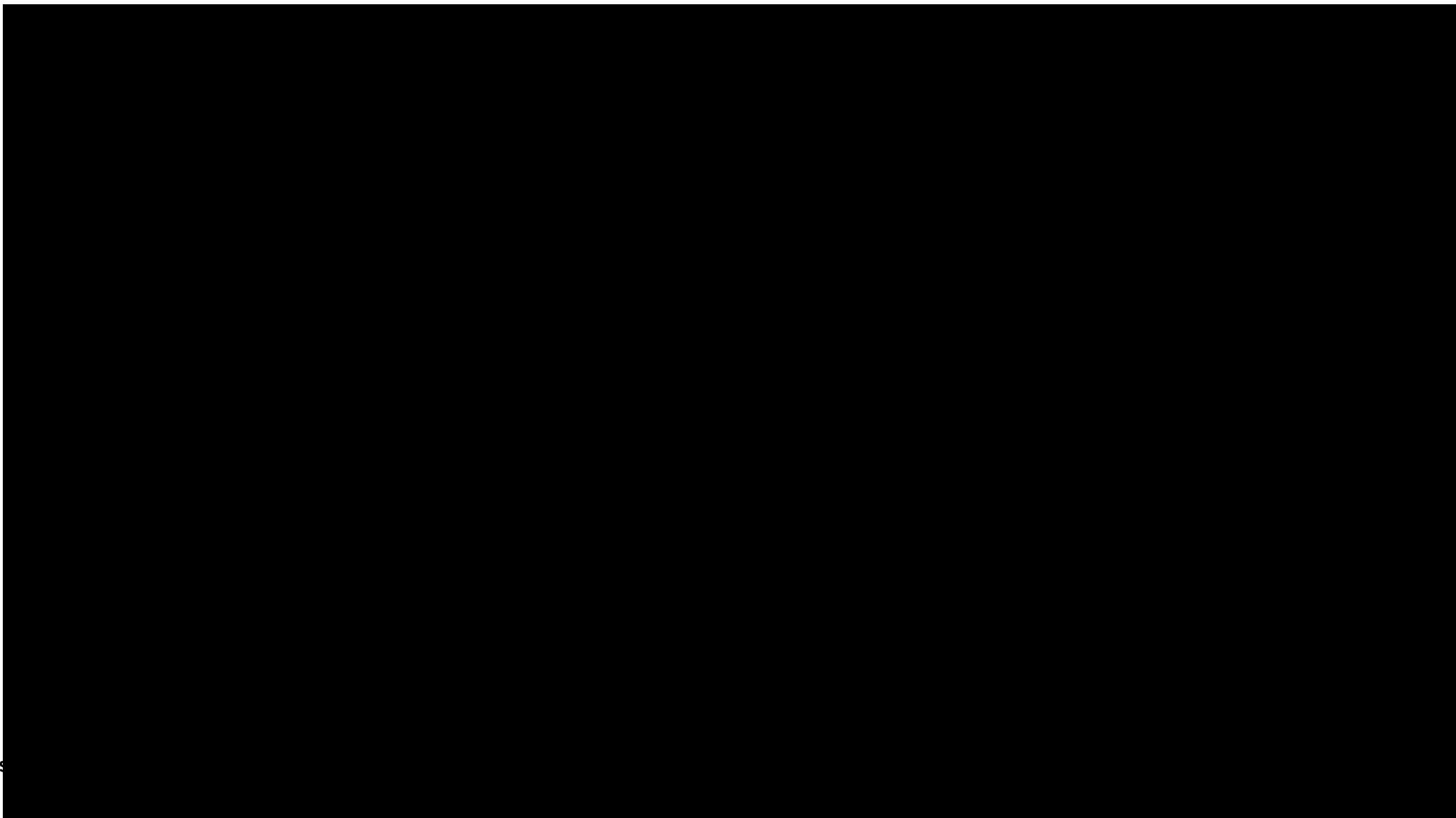
- People do not only have one identity
- What happens when the discriminatory norm systems interact?
- How norms interplay and thereby creates a superiority or inferiority of various groups

Lykke, Nina (2010) *Feminist Studies. A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* (NewYork & London: Routledge),

Norm critical approaches to IxD

- Find ways to understand and analyze **how norms and power structures are portrayed by design**
- Create designs that are either **norm neutral** or supports **alternative norms/ minority norms**

Joy Boulamwini



Critical perspectives in interaction design



Humanistic HCI (Bardzell & Bardzell)

- Interface criticism
 - Analysis of intentions, history, composition, affect on the user
- Critical social science
 - Analysis of the social/cultural experience. How is the person recreated? What kind of work goes on to create a phenomenon?
- Critical discourse analysis
 - How do the discourse evolve around certain topics ("makers")
- Critical design and research through design
 - Vad do design do, what kind of reading, comparisons
- Emancipatory design, utopian design
 - Explore possible futures without prescribing

Moralizing Technology

Understanding and Designing the Morality of Things, Paul-Peter Verbeek (2011)

- Exploration of the role of technology as moral support/carrier
- Should things be moralistic? In which cases?
- Should things force us to act moral, (low-flow shower heads)
- Is there a risk that things allow us to forget/ignore our moral responsibility? Abdicating our responsibility...



Critical perspectives in adjacent design traditions

Critical perspectives in related subjects

“Even though built space shape the experiences of people's daily lives and the Cultural Assumptions in Which They are immersed, it is easy to accept the physical landscape unthinkingly as a neutral background. But the spatial arrangements of buildings and communities are neither value-free nor neutral; They Reflect and reinforce the nature of each society's gender, race, and class relations.”

Leslie Kanes Weisman (architecture) Encyclopaedia of Women
Discrimination by Design: a feminist critique of the man-made
environment (1992)



Karin Ehrnberger



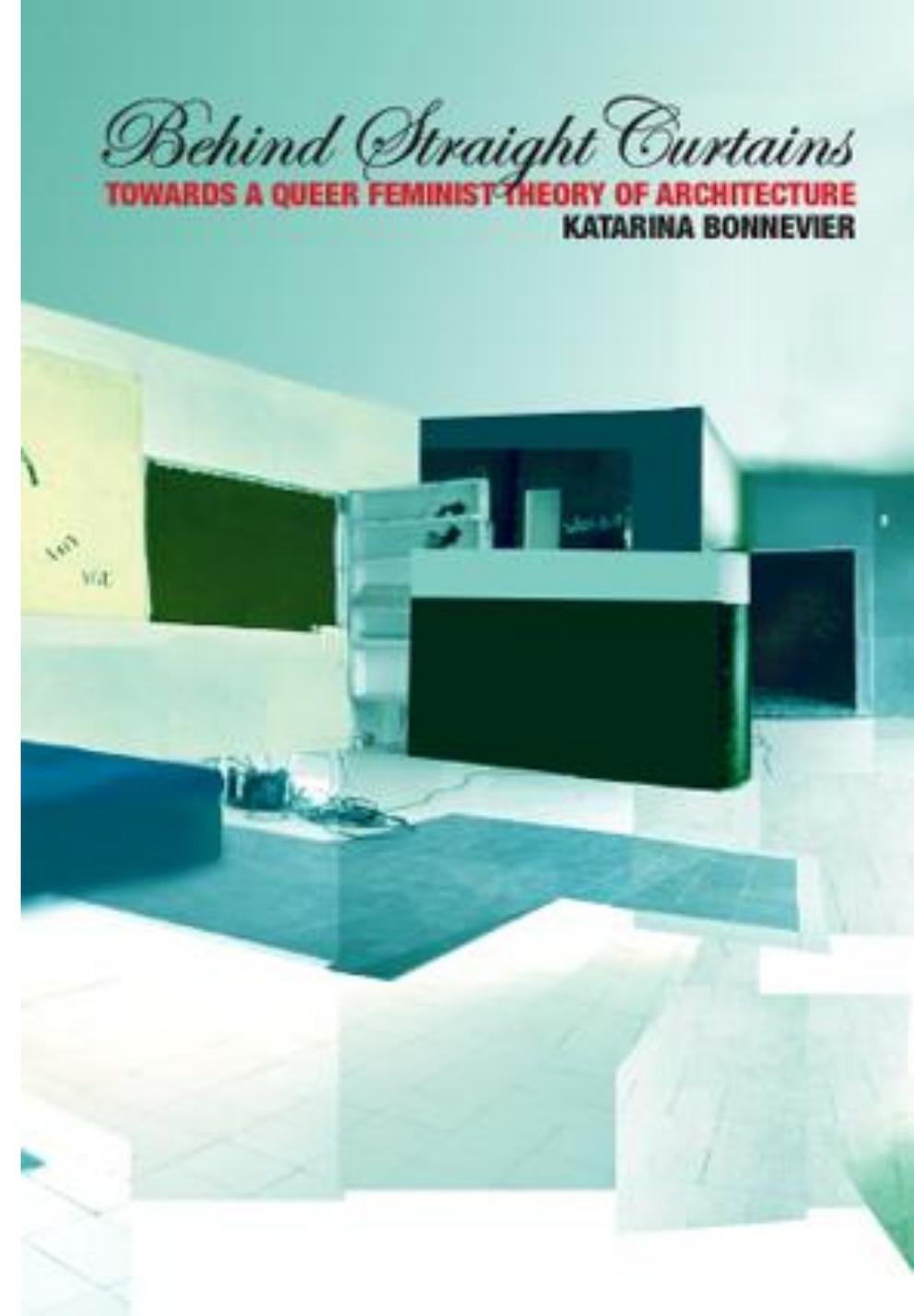


Spaces and norms

Behind Straight Curtains: Towards a Queer Feminist Theory of Architecture (Katarina Bonnevier)

- Heteronormative architecture
- 'Master bedroom',
- Social and private spaces

Dual work of norms: we are not only building houses that manifests normative ideas about family life but the physical building design also reinforces the ideas.



Methods for critical design I

Fields under development!

- Speculative design (Dunne & Raby) what if?
Experiment with the impossible League
 - A sort of attitude rather than a method
- Envisioning Cards
 - A deck of cards which helps with perspectives from various angles (stakeholders, sustainability of the product, etc.)
<http://www.envisioningcards.com/>
- Backcasting: speculate in the future and then backtrack the steps needed from the now and on to get to that future.

Methods II

Jeffrey Bardzell, Shaowen Bardzell, and Erik Stolterman. 2014. Reading critical designs: supporting reasoned interpretations of critical design. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '14)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 1951-1960.

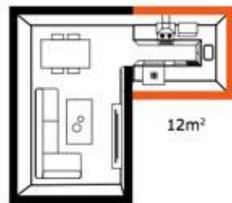
	Changing perspectives	Proposals for change	Enhancing appreciation	Reflectiveness
Topic				
Purpose				
Functionality				
Interactivity				
Form				
Materiality				



Methods III

Design fiction (Bruce Sterling, Near Future Laboratory)

Using storytelling to envision (and explain) the future



New KRÄFTSKIVA kitchen module* 29:-/h/guest
Host more guests than you can. Dinner party containment structure, max 8 people per module. Wide range of global cuisine included (local cultural license fees may apply).



Combine with:
DELNING Self-subscribing food storage & pantry 99:-/month/family member
De-clutter your home by placing all fresh, perishable, frozen and diffusion foodstuffs in a central, safe, encrypted, biometric security storage unit. Compatible with IKEA Foods, Wholefoods, Tesco and Amazon. 712.234.76

* Connects to any IKEA Garden Home with compatible Facade, Patio, Roof Deck or Promenade.



New service FOLKLIG kitchen activity/preparation counter 1295:-
Active Clever Agent provides precise, friendly, sensible instructions for measurements, volumes, directions and lively anecdotes helping you prepare a wide range of recipes from around the world.*
457.321.01

* Comes with complete library of Scandinavian specialties and sauces.

FOLKLIG kitchen service contract 36:-/month
Powerful privacy controls and personal diet recommendations based on your IKEA Tillsammans profile analytics. 647.123.45

The Discrimination Map

- Combines people's stories of exposure and discrimination with geographical location
- Builds on ideas about conflict
- *DiSalvo, Carl (2012). Adversarial design. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press*



The Discrimination Map, some reflections

- Mentioning concepts that build on provocation or conflict probably leads to certain readings of the design.
- By letting the users' contribute, we allow for a diverse perspective that the design alone could not offer
- Combining narratives with locations added connotations both to location and to discrimination.

Summary

Norm critical perspectives

To act or be in a norm may give certain privileges and superior status, which means that it is beneficial for people within the norm to maintain it.

- How do these benefits get embedded in design?
- What gives privileges in a certain context?
- Who benefits from the status quo?
- The purpose: visualize norms

Making a difference: norms and values in interaction design

Interaction design reproduce values and norms

- Is there any value-neutral kind of design?
- How can individuality and the diverse perspectives be expressed through design?

Why is this important?

- Limitations of thought if we all use the same products
- It is important to strengthen groups which are in the minority
- It is also important that we have the tools to take apart and criticize design, especially for societal services