

## **Scholarly Program – Lindsay Tan (tan@auburn.edu)**

My program of research and creative work explores *environmental symbology*, which is the study of the symbolic significance of human-created spaces. My work serves the profession of interior design by contributing to what Martin and Guerin (2005) have identified as the environment and behavior subsection of the Interior Design Body of Knowledge (IDBOK). In particular, my agenda addresses problematic disconnects within and between human-computer and human-environment interactions to facilitate translation from theory to action. My work does not merely fill holes; it analyzes critical problems and synthesizes new frameworks that shape future discourse, primarily by scholars within the field of interior design but also to a lesser degree in our sister disciplines.

I have established a solid foundation of juried publication and exhibition outcomes from which I am building a scholarly agenda of demonstrated merit to my department, University, and to the profession at large. This body of work has earned me an invited membership among the Interior Design Educators Council Academy of Reviewers and the Center for Health Design's EDAC Advisory Council.

This targeted agenda is successful in part because I have developed a set of skills that make me valuable as both an independent researcher and as a collaborator. First, I have a breadth of professional design experience – over ten years of work in hospitality, healthcare, residential and corporate interiors, digital and print media, interface and interaction, exhibit, visual merchandising, and production for stage and film. Second, I have a strong ability to forge meaningful connections between complex ideas and issues. This skill requires deep and critical analysis of the work at hand from multiple perspectives, as well as the capacity to interpret and communicate ideas in a language suitable to the work's audience.

I can see the broader applications of *environmental symbology* and have been successful in introducing its theories and perspectives in places that don't initially seem an obvious fit. This capacity to see connections further facilitates my interdisciplinary work. My achievements to date have frequently resulted from successful collaborations across disciplines and institutions, underscoring the value and relevance of my work to a broader audience.

One unexpected area of contribution is my work with design-related technologies. My technical expertise has enabled me to work as a developer with the Layar Development Program and Apple Development Center; and as a beta tester for several prominent software companies including Adobe Systems, Inc., developer of critical industry-specific software.

As I take the next step in my scholarly agenda I see many untapped wells within *environmental symbology* from which I can draw to develop future research and creative works. For example, I have collected data from over 250 participants concerning their personal expressions of religious symbolism in the home. This rich, qualitative data is still being analyzed but I am excited by the preliminary results I'm seeing and anticipate the outcomes to include a series of journal articles as well as creative works. I also plan to continue analysis of the foundational frameworks of *environmental symbology* with the capacity to develop and publish works on this core area of research in an iterative cycle for many years.

From this central line of work I can also branch out, relating each iteration to a range of cross-disciplinary applications. This presents new opportunities for collaboration, such as those within the Center for Health Ecology Research. At CHER we are currently working on a cross-disciplinary R15 proposal.

To date I have developed a scholarly program of demonstrated merit in *environmental symbology* that has resulted in peer-review publications and exhibitions, paper presentations, and lectures. I am confident that I will continue to be successful in my targeted agenda based on my present achievements as well as the creativity and passion that drives me to lean forward into new scholarly challenges and opportunities. I look forward to continuing my research and creative work through tenure and beyond.