**Draft: Interior Archipelago – Postcards from Our Islands**

**Patrick Macklin, Glasgow School of Art**

**Lois Weinthal, School of Interior Design, Ryerson University**

**Wen Liang, Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University**

The interior has never been given such attention as it is now, a time when maps of the world represent COVID–19’s movement as a ripple crossing continents, with daily recordings of cases increasing and decreasing, or coming to a halt between neighbouring countries’ now sealed borders. At the global scale, political borders have abstract boundary lines, yet on the ground, walls and poche of living spaces act as immediate buffers between individuals and neighbours. Even closer, face-masks intimately screen-off those friends and families not in one’s immediate bubble. We leave and return from home like scuba-divers exiting a submarine, or astronauts venturing forth from the protection of a spacecraft. The threshold moment is prolonged, preparing masks, gloves, scarves, keys, bank cards–hard currency is risky–everything ritualised… check for hand-sanitiser. On return, the process is reversed, everything left at the door, shoes, gloves, masks, wallet, purse, bags, packaging is removed, cleansed, hands are scrubbed in the way a medic would… timing is everything.

These near-sighted perspectives have become magnified over several months, drawing into focus emerging issues previously blurred. Things are re-prioritised, and we start to confront inequalities made visible with the intersection of the virus. New genres of interiors are forming within our traditional interiors, both physical and virtual, and the disease is making us look inside like we never have before.

*Interior Archipelago–Postcards from Our Islands* is an international project that captures the familiar, but transformed interior during this time. Daily routines have been interrupted and with that, our ability to travel at will, we primarily journey from room to room. Postcards recall travel while acting as souvenirs. This presentation frames souvenirs as images from lock-down in the form of postcard sized works and reflects the design communities of students, faculty and staff from The Glasgow School of Art in Scotland and Singapore; the School of Interior Design at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada and Tsinghua University in Beijing, China.

The development of this project took place from August – November 2020 with the launch of the website in December 2020, just as the second wave of COVID-19 and the new variants were emerging. Since then, the project has received images from students, faculty and staff from our respective communities as an opportunity to turn our interiors into shared creative works. These images reflect travels within the domestic setting emphasizing interior details, encounters online, and shared experiences. Contributions show how new areas of the interior have emerged, such as mini-quarantine spaces at the entry of homes, areas carved out to accommodate new workspaces, a Yoga mat on the floor, and the rearrangement of furniture to make sub-rooms. The confined interior also reveals the desire for having space to one’s self when constantly surrounded by others, or the need to have others around when constantly alone. The interior is not only defined by the size, measurement, view, sound, smell, and so on, but by the frequency of absence.

The thirteen-hour time span across continents and countries provides insight into how these design communities shape their interiors through making. The website has become a hub for international community engagement across our interior design programs allowing us to engage virtually through creative works and to learn from one another.

*(The authors will use the following website during the presentation to highlight the collaboration and design work from our respective communities.)*

<https://interiorarchipelago.com/>