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POST-DOMESTIC  
HABITAT  
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# **DOMESTIC DEVICES**

**HOW INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE  
AND DESIGN REACT TO  
THE CONTEMPORARY SCENARIO**

# The Scenography of Everyday Theater

## A New Narrative of Domesticity

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### Keywords

Domestic Spaces, Scenography, Narrative, Social Media, Technology.

### Abstract

With the increasing rise of the Internet, as well as the democratization of technology, people's pursuit of entertainment and visual stimulation inspired countless new types of creativity. Social media fanatics have surged a myriad of content-creating works that brought this creativity to the forefront; this phenomenon has transformed everyday spaces into settings or backdrops for new narratives. The everyday domesticity we inhabit, such as bodies, activities, objects, furniture, and rooms, have all been involved in the process of creation and work, and these spaces can be described as *Everyday Theater*.

The term *scenography* is of Greek origin, *skēnē*, meaning hut or tent, in the theater of ancient Greece, it is a light structure usually at the back of the stage, but over the course of time *skēnē* underwent fundamental change. The core concept of scenography is the *narrative*. This core remains even though it is now given a new meaning, as everyday life has become a stage for a new kind of spectacle. In other words, the conventional domestic spaces are re-invented as a setting for new personal narratives and commercial venues. In this context, the domestic spaces have been transformed into a platform, where the performers use their surrounding elements, objects, spaces, homes, and environments as settings for their own narrative. The goal is to create an immersive experience that captures the audience's attention and transports them into a world that is both familiar and extraordinary.

## 1. Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed a seismic shift in the way we perceive and interact with the world around us, and this transformation is intrinsically linked to the democratization of technology and the rise of social media platforms.

With the rapid growth of technology and the internet in recent years and the popularity of social media at an unprecedented rate, people's pursuit of entertainment and visual stimulation inspired countless new types of creativity. One of the significant phenomena of this new creativity is that it gives rise to countless new jobs called *content creators*. The unique characteristics of this emerging work make our home, once a private sanctuary, become a stage for global audiences.

This paper proposes a critical examination of the evolution of domestic spaces within the context of this socio-technological revolution. It seeks to unfold the emerging narrative of domesticity shaped by the pervasive influence of social media and the democratization of technology; provides a novel perspective on the changing landscape of domestic space, asserting the growing importance of performative and interactive elements; and invites a redefinition of domesticity, facilitating an understanding of how we can design homes that genuinely reflect and cater to our evolving ways of living in the digital age.

## 2. The Democratization of Technology and the Rise of Social Media

On January 9, 2007, Steve Jobs went onstage at the San Francisco Moscone Center and told the world he had reinvented the telephone. He showed the rapt audience a small, slim, elegant-

ly simple object about the size of a cigarette case; the world soon learned to call it by its name: *iPhone* (Baricco, 2006). When Steve Jobs took a picture of the 2-megapixel camera on the iPhone, then placed his thumb and index finger together on the screen and slowly opened them up, showing the audience how to zoom in on a picture, the house exploded. This moment marks a pivotal moment in the history of technology, the starting point of the new era when machines became extensions of human minds and bodies (Baricco, 2006).

One of the most notable aftermaths of this revolutionary event was how cell phone cameras and touchscreens put social media at the fingertips of anyone, who now can share anything with the world with astonishing ease and speed, anywhere, at any time. Just take YouTube and Facebook as examples since they were born around the same time as the first generation of iPhone was launched in 2007. YouTube, now the second most popular website in the world, was born in 2005. The number of active users per month was 20 million in 2006; this number has multiplied eight times in two years, to 160 million in 2008, and according to the latest data in 2023, this number reached 2 billion (Dean, 2023). Nowadays, users watch more than 1 billion hours of content daily, as 500 hours of new content are uploaded each minute (Ceci, 2023). Facebook was born as a social network for college students in 2004, and in 2006, it opened up to anyone over 14 years old with an email address. It has become the most used social media platform worldwide, with almost 3 billion users (Dean, 2023).



### 3. From Entertainment to Career. The Social Media Content Creation and a Re-Definition of Space

As the popularity of these platforms grew, so did the opportunities they presented. What started as a hobby for many soon transformed into a full-fledged career. The number of people identifying as full-time content creators has increased ten-fold in the last decade. The Social Media marketing industry, which heavily relies on content creators, is worth up to \$15 billion by 2022, from \$8 billion in 2019 (Franc Group PTY, 2022). The popularization of content creation, facilitated by technological advancements and social media platforms, has allowed individuals to carve out niches, build communities, and monetize their content in ways that were previously unimaginable. This shift has significant implications for industries, advertisers, and consumers alike, as the landscape of content consumption continues to evolve.

The rise of content creators in the digital business world presents both challenges and opportunities for the realm of the definition of space. As the tools for content creation are now widely accessible, these creative activities can take place anywhere, anytime, by anyone. Thus, the nature of production spaces began to evolve. The home we once lived in, the office we once worked in, and the city we once wandered around, all diffused into an environment, a *Productive Environment*.

### 4. Domestic Spaces in the Spotlight

Historically, domestic spaces were intimate sanctuaries designed to cater to the private lives of their inhabitants, with clear demarcations between areas for rest, recreation, and chores. The living room, bedroom, and kitchen each had their

distinct purposes. The home was once a passive setting where daily routines played out, largely hidden from the public eye, separate from the hustle and bustle of the workplace. These primordial needs emerge powerfully in the contemporary world, where expanded relational values have demonstrated their disruptive power (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, collage, Kunsthalle Tübingen, 1956.

Social media fanatics have surged a myriad of content-creating works that brought creativity to the forefront; this phenomenon has transformed everyday spaces into settings or backdrops for new narratives. The everyday domesticity we inhabit, such as bodies, activities, objects, furniture, and rooms, have all been involved in the process of creation and work, and these spaces can be described as *Everyday Theater*.

With the rise of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and much more, the private sphere has been thrust into the limelight. Homes are no longer just spaces for living; they are sets where content is produced, shared, and consumed by a global audience. Every corner, every piece of furniture, and every decor element becomes part of the scenography of this everyday theater.

Suddenly, sharing moments from one's living room, kitchen, or bedroom with the world became a daily routine for millions. The barriers to entry were lowered, and social media became an inseparable part of our daily lives. Once private realms for personal relaxation and family time, domestic spaces transformed into a new type of scenography under the spotlight.

### **5. The Everyday Theater. Domestic Spaces as Scenography**

The digital world and social media profoundly reshaped our perception of domestic spaces. By analyzing the platforms on social media that use interior spaces as the main vehicle for creativity, exploring the reasons behind their popularity and the scenography roles that spaces play in the phenomenon, three main trends can be identified.

- **Peeking into Privacy:** The allure of domestic spaces in content creation lies in the inherent satisfaction derived from order, systemization, and the transformation of space. Social media has capitalized on this, offering glimpses into personal spaces and routines in various form and content, satisfying the audience's curiosity about the private lives of others, or in other words, the personal narrative of others' life.
- **Amplified daily activities:** Everyday domestic chores, when magnified and presented in the digital realm, attract vast audiences. The spatial significance here lies in the transformative power of design and arrangement, emphasizing the tactile and sensory experience of spaces.
- **Familiarity & Contrast:** Content creators have found success by juxtaposing familiar settings with unconventional activities. This duality, of the known and the unexpected, resonates with audiences, offering both comfort and intrigue.

### 5.1. The Curiosity of Privacy

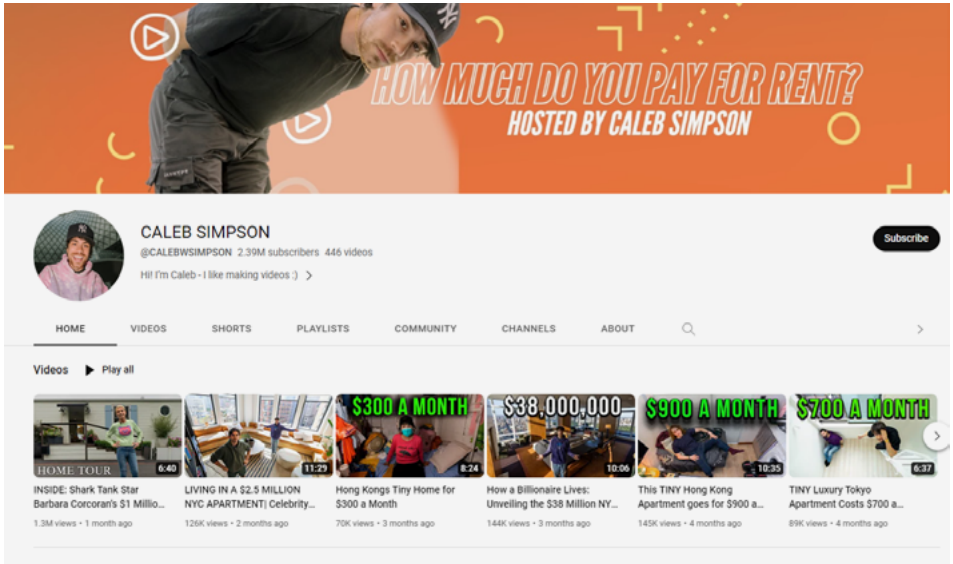
Humans have always been curious creatures with a deep-seated desire to understand and connect with others. This curiosity extends to the most intimate and authentic Space of human beings in the contemporary world- their homes. To live is to leave traces (Benjamin, 2002, 1935); thus, domestic spaces are more than just brick and mortar; they are a reflection of personal stories, tastes, experiences, and memories.

In the interior, these are emphasized. An abundance of covers and protectors, liners, and cases are devised, on which the traces of objects of everyday use are imprinted.

The traces of the occupant also leave their impression on the interior. The detective story that follows these traces comes into being... The criminals of the first detective novels are neither gentlemen nor apaches but private members of the bourgeoisie (Benjamin, 2002, 1935, p. 38).

In the age of content creation, this private narrative has become a public spectacle, fulfilling the audience's desire to peek behind closed doors. The domestic space has transcended its traditional role. It's no longer just a place of residence; it's a narrative, a story waiting to be told and shared. The phenomenon of *peeking into privacy* underscores the human desire to connect, understand, and explore by a glimpse of domestic spaces of others.

A prime example of this trend is the content creators would ask random people on the street for a tour of their homes. These housing tours range from top-of-the-line apartments overlooking Central Park to converted mobile homes for parked buses, from quality design apartments with superior taste to messy and dirty shelter of depressed people. These tours provide insights into their personal lives, tastes, and choices, making the audience feel more connected to the house owner. Each episode is not just a culinary journey but an exploration of a unique domestic space, each telling a different story. Domestic space becomes a stage where personal narratives unfold (Fig. 2). The popularity of such content is not just about the different house tours; it's about the allure of seeing a deeply personal space and understanding the individual or family that inhabits it.



**Figure 2.** Caleb Simpson, *How much do you pay for rent?*, content creator who asks random people on street for a tour in their house and about how much they pay for rent, 2023. (Screenshot of YouTube page @calebsimpson).

The blurring of boundaries between personal and public spheres can erode the sense of privacy and sanctuary that homes traditionally provide.

## 5.2. The Allure of the Mundane

In the vast expanse of the digital realm, amidst the cacophony of viral challenges and sensational content, there lies a unique genre that magnifies the mundane: the amplified daily activities. From systemizing a pantry to folding laundry, everyday domestic chores are attracting hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of viewers (Fig. 3). But what drives this fascination, and more importantly, what does it reveal about the architectural value and significance of domestic spaces in contemporary society?



**Figure 3.** Clea Shearer and Joanna Teplin, *Home Edit*, social media account posting videos of organizing pantry in an extreme organized and satisfaction way, 2021. (Screenshot of Instagram profile @thehomeedit).

At first glance, it might seem paradoxical. In an age of boundless digital content, why would someone choose to watch another person organize their pantry or clean their living room? The answer lies in the inherent satisfaction derived from order, systemization, and the transformation of Space. These contents speak to broader cultural and societal trends. In a fast-paced world, there's a growing desire for simplicity, authenticity, and a return to basics. Watching someone engage in a simple domestic chore offers a moment of respite, a break from the complexities of modern life. It's a reminder of the beauty and satisfaction found in everyday spaces and

the tasks in which they unfold. The phenomenon of amplified daily activities in the realm of content creation offers a unique lens through which to view and understand domestic spaces. It underlines the value of these domestic spaces, not just as static entities, but as dynamic, adaptable canvases that reflect and respond to human needs, desires, and routines. As social media continues to shape our perceptions and interactions with our domestic space, it's essential to recognize and celebrate the profound narratives embedded in mundane and everyday theater.

### 5.3. Familiarity vs. Conflict

As content creation emerges as a dominant force in the labor market, there's a fascinating trend that juxtaposes the familiar with the strange, creating a unique narrative that resonates with audiences worldwide. The allure of *Familiarity vs. Conflict* in content creation, exploring how the unconventional use of domestic spaces has become a hallmark of digital success. Domestic spaces, by their very nature, evoke a sense of familiarity. They are places of comfort, safety, and routine. When viewers watch content set in these spaces, there's an immediate sense of relatability. It's a kitchen, a living room, a balcony, a bedroom- spaces that most viewers have personal experiences with. This familiarity creates a connection, a bridge between the content creator and the viewer.

While the setting might be familiar, the activities that unfold within these spaces in the realm of content creation are often anything but. Cooking on a balcony, for instance, (Fig. 4) while engaging in conversations with neighbors by yelling, adds an element of familiarity together with conflict.





**Figure 4.** Ruben Bondì, *Aò, che te voi magnà oggi?!*, Chef TikTok became famous for cooking Italian dishes required by neighbors on balcony, 2022. (Screenshot of TikTok profile @cocinaconruben).

In some context, like Southern Italy, it is something rooted in the tradition, and it represents a cultural symbol; but in the other context, it is something unexpected, unconventional, and breaks the norms of what one might anticipate in such a setting. Similarly, platform like Onlyfans provide an easy access for everyone to benefit from amateur adult videos, usually set in familiar, everyday domestic spaces challenge conventional aesthetics and expectations, adding a layer of raw authenticity and fantasy that are both familiar and conflictual that professional movie production settings often lack.

The success of content creators leveraging the dual appeal of *Familiarity vs. Conflict* underscores the evolving narrative of domestic spaces in the digital age. These spaces, once confined to conventional activities, are now stages where a myriad of stories unfold, each more intriguing than the last.

## 6. A Future of Architectural Design

The influence of social media on domestic spaces is profound, turning homes into a scenography on the stage for the everyday theater. As we create our spaces for this new narrative of activities, it's crucial to find a balance, ensuring that our homes remain places of genuine comfort and authenticity, even as they play a role in the global digital theater.

The influence of social media on the narrative of domesticity is undeniable. As work models evolve, so do our domestic spaces, reflecting the multifaceted roles they play in our lives. While this new narrative offers exciting possibilities, it's essential to strike a balance, ensuring our homes remain places of genuine comfort, rest, and personal expression. The characteristics of these shift to a new domesticity can be underlined by some key aspects:

- **Relatability:** The familiar setting of domestic spaces offers viewers a sense of comfort. It's a space they recognize and understand, making the content immediately accessible.
- **Curiosity:** The unconventional activities that unfold within this familiar settings pique viewers' curiosity. It's a deviation from the norm, and this strangeness keeps viewers engaged, wanting to see more.

- **Authenticity:** In a digital landscape often criticized for its curated perfection, the combination of familiar settings with strange activities offers a breath of fresh air. It feels real, unfiltered, and genuine.
- **Narrative Depth:** The juxtaposition of the familiar and the strange adds depth to the narrative. It tells a story, not just of the activity itself but of the broader context in which it unfolds. It speaks to the adaptability of domestic spaces and the myriad ways in which they can be used and interpreted.

Interior architecture plays a pivotal role in this transformation. Designers must now consider how spaces can be optimized for various activities, including work, leisure, and content creation. This involves a strategic layout of spaces, innovative use of furniture, and incorporation of technology to create adaptable and dynamic environments. The focus is on creating spaces that are versatile, visually appealing, and supportive of digital lifestyles.

The methodology in redefining these spaces involves a holistic approach, integrating architectural principles with insights from social media trends. Architecture must understand the evolving needs of inhabitants who engage in social media-based activities. This understanding informs the selection of materials, colors, lighting, and spatial arrangements, creating environments that are not only functional but also conducive to content creation and online engagement.

## The Evolution of Functional Spaces:

- **Work and Living Integration:** with the advent of social media-based work, the traditional separation between living and working areas is blurred. Interior architecture must now design spaces that are both comfortable for living and efficient for work, incorporating elements like ergonomic furniture, soundproofing, and effective lighting.
- **Aesthetic Considerations for Online Presence:** the visual appeal of a space becomes crucial when it doubles as a setting for social media content. This requires a thoughtful selection of colors, textures, and materials that are not only trendy but also photogenic and capable of creating a distinctive online image.

## Technological Integration:

- **Smart Home Features:** the incorporation of smart technology into domestic spaces is essential. This includes automated lighting systems, voice-controlled appliances, and integrated workstations, enhancing both the functionality and aesthetic appeal of the space.
- **Adaptable Spaces:** the design of transformable and multi-purpose areas that can easily switch between a personal living space and a professional backdrop for social media is key.

## Methodological Approach:

- **User-Centric Design:** Understanding the specific needs of individuals who work from home and use social media

regularly is crucial. This involves engaging with the latest trends in digital work, lifestyle, and content creation.

- **Sustainability and Well-being:** integrating sustainable design principles and focusing on the well-being of the inhabitants is increasingly important. This includes using eco-friendly materials and ensuring that the design promotes a healthy work-life balance.

The intersection of technology, social media, and architecture offers a rich tapestry of opportunities and challenges. As we move forward, it's essential to approach design and research with a holistic perspective, understanding the multifaceted roles domestic spaces play in our lives. The future of architecture lies in its ability to adapt, innovate, and resonate with the evolving narratives of the digital age.

## 7. Challenges and Criticisms

In today's digital age, the merging of work and home environments has become increasingly prevalent, offering unparalleled flexibility and convenience. This fusion, facilitated by technological advancements and the rise of remote work, allows individuals to tailor their work schedules around personal commitments and preferences. However, this blending of spaces and roles is not devoid of challenges. The diminishing boundaries between one's personal and professional life can often result in an overwhelming sense of continuous work, leading to burnout and a diminished sense of work-life balance.

Furthermore, with the omnipresence of social media and its emphasis on visual aesthetics, there's an added pressure on individuals to maintain homes that aren't just functional but

also picture-perfect. This constant need for a visually appealing backdrop for virtual meetings or social media posts can be mentally exhausting, adding an unspoken stress to daily life. Critics have voiced concerns over this evolving narrative of domesticity. They argue that the portrayal of homes on platforms like Instagram or Pinterest often promotes a superficial understanding of what a home should be. Instead of being spaces of genuine comfort, relaxation, and personal expression, there's a growing emphasis on homes fitting a certain aesthetic mold, often sidelining the true essence of well-being and personal comfort.

Moreover, the concept of the *Scenography of Everyday Theater* further complicates this dynamic. While it undoubtedly offers avenues for creativity, personal branding, and self-expression, it also comes with its own set of challenges. The continuous need to curate one's life, to present a certain image or narrative, can lead to mental fatigue and a sense of detachment from one's authentic self. In essence, while the fusion of work and home has its merits, it's essential to navigate this landscape with awareness, prioritizing genuine well-being over digital perceptions.

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She has worked with participatory processes through design workshops, creating synergies toward endogenous forms of development, design and autonomy.

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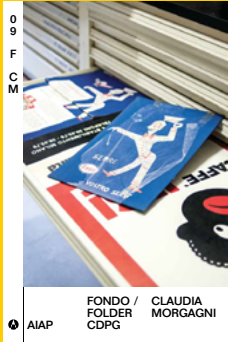
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