

AUT

A FUTURE IN
SPATIAL DESIGN





WHAT IS SPATIAL DESIGN?

Spatial design is the design of human environments, particularly interior environments.

Working from the inside out, spatial designers think about how spaces feel, how they are organised and how they might enrich the lives of those experiencing them. What makes a space intimate, culturally relevant, or public? What makes space feel right in these different contexts? Spatial designers study how people move and interact in the spaces that matter to them, then design ways to improve them. This includes looking at how we interact with and are affected by space as well as the appearance of these spaces.

Typically people adapt to the particular limitations of settings and environments they find themselves in, accepting these as given. Yet every setting is rich in renovative possibilities, harbouring changes that can make a world of transformative difference.

With each project spatial designers research and develop a deep understanding of existing places, people, stories, and activities. They look for innovative, sustainable ways of working with materials, adapting

and reusing wherever possible. They collaborate with other designers and community stakeholders, while bringing their own cultural and personal perspectives.

Design is a rapidly growing multi-billion-dollar industry in New Zealand—and internationally. Spatial designers work in the building industry, particularly interiors, and also in exhibition, theatre, film, furniture, exhibition, visualisation, event and urban design.

Space is endlessly shaping us. Have you ever wondered why one particular room or space is relaxing to be in, yet another is just plain uncomfortable? Spatial designers devise strategies to improve the uncomfortable room, but more significantly they can re-think the relationship of that room to the world it is connected with.

Are you fascinated with the places and spaces in which we live, work and play? If you love to imagine, experiment, create and plan, if you have an eye for detail and another for exploration, if you care about the built environment we share, spatial design could be the right field for you.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Design of the future

Diversity, cultural richness and technological integration are a central part of the future and design is emerging as a key way to draw the best from these dimensions. Spatial designers develop this via:

- Interiors (residential, commercial, hospitality, health, educational, cultural, experimental)
- Re-use of existing environments (renovations, refits, repurpose, heritage)
- Urban spaces (streetscapes, shared spaces, urban parks)
- Production (film, television theatre installation and exhibition design)
- Event Design (festivals, musical, corporate events)
- Material Design (installation, bespoke surface design, furniture, object)

Multi-disciplinary team approaches

Increasingly, spatial designers are becoming an integral part of multidisciplinary teams that collaborate with community and cultural stakeholders, clients and other art and design specialists. Spatial designers fit well by bridging the boundaries of traditional design disciplines.

Urban renewal

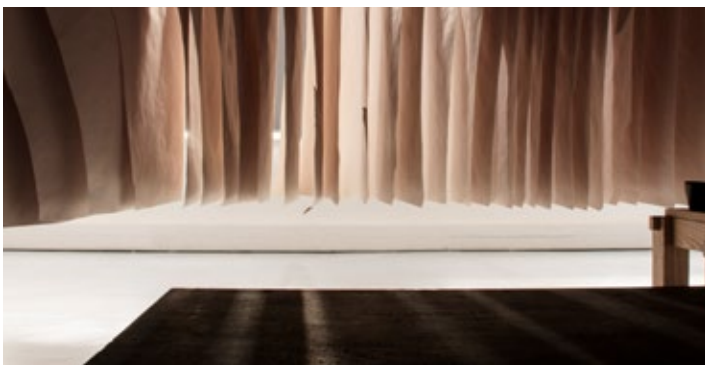
A key focus for spatial design is urban renewal with an increased emphasis on refitting and refurbishment of existing buildings. As the pressure for housing and commercial space in major urban centers increases, New Zealand's building industry will continue to grow and provide a broad range of employment opportunities for those with design abilities.

Digital spatialisation design

Designers skilled in digital techniques will be increasingly valued as more design work, fabrication and manufacturing occurs through digital modes, eg, 3D visualization of historic interiors, digital animations of planned spaces and the embedding of digital information in existing built spaces.

Activity Based Working Solutions

The expectations of younger generations of workers is impacting on materials used in an office environment and an increased emphasis on the importance of mobility within a workplace. (Simon James Design)



SPATIAL DESIGN THEMES

Intimate Space

Re-imagining the familiar, objects and settings of everyday life in anticipation of a richer sense of living. For example, domestic environments, but also personal spaces in workplaces, educational settings or favourite public spaces.

Collective Space

Space, like territory, matters not just now, but in the past and over time. Space is the repository of all the life stories and events that have formed there. From houses to cities, back yards to harbours, living richly and happily rests on embracing these connections.

Public Space

Increasingly the future will be urban. The quality of this future rests on getting public collective spaces right. From the local store to malls, from suburban centres to downtown, there are a myriad of opportunities for engaging, inspiring interventions.

WORK SETTINGS

With spatial design incorporating aspects of several professions and industries, designers find themselves working in a wide range of settings, either in established firms and institutions or in an enterprise they have developed themselves.

Graduates may start with a role as a design assistant or junior designer and progress to senior design or management roles, freelance work or running their own business. There are also opportunities to pursue academic, secondary and tertiary teaching or research pathways.

As well as work opportunities in urban design, interior design and architecture firms, spatial designers also often pursue work in film and theatre design, performance design, the creation of exhibitions and events, furniture design, urban design, or the crafting of virtual environments.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Interior designer

Meets with clients to analyse their requirements, then creates design ideas for interior and exterior spaces, furniture, fittings and infrastructure. Prepares drawings, samples, models and costings and collaborates with architects and other designers. Provides advice to clients and information on contractors and suppliers. Oversees implementation of the building works.

Event Designer

Liaises with clients and develops concepts for events or exhibitions, then designs the built spatial components of the event, including plans, documentation and budget. Locates the venue, sources equipment and supplies, negotiates with contractors, arranges staffing. Organises event marketing, deals with enquiries, funding, sponsorship, ticketing and oversees the running of the event on the day.

Healthcare Designer

Meets with healthcare professionals to consider constraints and explore possibilities of rehabilitative spaces. Develops and prototypes design ideas. Prepares drawings, samples, models and costings and collaborates with stakeholders. Assists with implementation.

Production designer

Works with the production team, director, author, actors to turn scripts or production briefs into a built spatial reality. Researches to create scenic environments for the required time, location and mood. Creates possible set design sketches. Collaborates with director, props manager and technical/construction staff or contractors.

Design Educator: Secondary & Tertiary

Engages with and inspires students in their pursuit of design education. Collaborates with colleagues to share ideas, strategies, resources and experiences. Plans schedules of work according to learning objectives. Monitors student progress, provides feedback and maintains accurate records. In tertiary setting, assists with research where appropriate.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Creative capacity to imagine, invent and shape existing or new spaces
- Able to synthesise diverse needs and ideas into a coherent and inspiring whole
- Ability to visualise effective, stimulating spatial possibilities for complex problems/situations
- Capacity to create ingenious designs despite time, resources or other factors presenting barriers
- Ability to communicate convincingly through design ideas, text, personal discussion and verbal presentation
- Experienced in consulting, negotiating and discussing concepts, projects and plans with clients, colleagues, suppliers and industry officials
- Consistently works with accuracy and strong attention to detail
- Most roles require skills with design applications such as Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, Rhinosorus and Revit, as well as AutoCAD software.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Creatively and critically engaged professional
- Collaborative and able to relate well to people from diverse backgrounds
- Able to accept criticism and work positively with it to create successful briefs
- Confident, enthusiastic and able to inspire confidence in others
- Flexible, able to work under pressure and meet deadlines

SALARY GUIDE

	Salary (per year)
Graduate interior designers	\$40,000 - \$55,000
Senior interior designers with five to 10 years' experience	\$65,000 - \$95,000
Managerial positions or own business	\$80,000 +
Event Design Manager	\$40,000 - \$55,000 entry level
1st year secondary design teacher (Starting salary according to quals - Level 7 to Level 9)	\$51,200 - \$56,550

Salaries sources: Designers Institute of New Zealand, Careers NZ, www.payscale.com (NZ) and NZ Ministry of Education.

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (early 2018) and should only be used as a guideline.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

While not a legal requirement, professional registration is desirable with bodies such as DINZ (Designers Institute of New Zealand), ADNZ (Architectural Designers New Zealand) and NZAEP (New Zealand Association of Event Professionals).

THE AUT ADVANTAGE

Spatial design graduates are skilled in the exploration of design projects through critical, historically-aware and ideas-driven approaches with an experiential approach to space design.

There are specialisations in innovative interior design, the urban interior and new approaches to material use and development.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Further study in spatial design is available at Master's and PhD levels within the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies.

Research areas include:

- Design for public spaces and the built environment
- Interior architecture, including event and exhibition design
- Investigation of cultural space
- Performance, screen and installation



EMILY PRIEST

Principal Creative Director, Cheshire Architects Ltd

Bachelor of Design in Spatial Design
& Bachelor of Art & Design (Honours)

"I initially worked for Cheshire Architects as a spatial designer before becoming a principal and creative director in mid-2016. As creative art director I lead a team of designers that push Cheshire's work beyond buildings and into graphic, product, web, furniture, lighting, textile, decorative and costume design.

Some of my lead projects include Torchon Pendant, Freemans Bay and Queenstown residences, The Tooth Company, Britomart, Whites & Co, Food Truck Garage, Tantalus Winery and Dry & Tea (a blow wave bar and tea house). The role's diversity is a wonderful thing – from master plan to apron button.

As a spatial designer, I worked across concept and developed design, construction documentation, liaising with shop fitters and fabricators, to designing wallpapers, fabrics, stools, light fittings etc.

I also freelanced for a year after working here about three years. As a freelancer, I jumped from one contract to another. I was determined to taste a little bit of everything in order to gather as much experience and understanding as I could of the options. I then returned to here."

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"When we employ graduates, we are looking for the self-generated passion that will drive a young member of our studio through the pain and hope and myriad challenges of operating in a high-speed, optimistic design practice. Humility is required to enable the empathy and political deftness to thrive in both studio and client worlds.

Emily is a fiercely determined, sensitive and intelligent designer, who fights to ensure she is learning something new every minute, and who we simply had no choice but to employ.

Graduates applying for jobs ought to keep their message simple and sharp. Stop me in my tracks with your most powerful work, use that work to illustrate the breadth and depth of your abilities, and have it over and done in three pages. Design those pages with the care you would a real project."

Nat Cheshire

Cheshire Architects Ltd

USEFUL WEBSITES

Designers Institute of New Zealand (DINZ)

www.designersinstitute.nz

The Big Idea

www.thebigidea.co.nz

The Art Career Project

www.theartcareerproject.com

New Zealand Association of Event Professionals (NZAEP)

www.nzaep.co.nz

FURTHER INFORMATION

For the most up-to-date spatial design information, visit our website: www.aut.ac.nz/spatial-design

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

futurestudents@aut.ac.nz


 @AUTFutureStudents

CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)

www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

studenthub@aut.ac.nz

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EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For other Future Career Sheets visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets


For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through


<https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>


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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, August 2019.

