

What is the Best Space in Your Case?

Miura Mao (NIT (KOSEN), Tokuyama College)

The new coronavirus changed our lives. For example, I spend more time at home, take online lessons, and only go to school a couple of times a week. I take most lessons in my room at home. Well... sometimes in the living room, sometimes in the dining room, or even at the kitchen counter.

Nowadays, if you have a computer or tablet, you can take classes or work anywhere you like: at home, in a cafe or even in a park, as long as you have access to WI-FI. In such a time, what type of space do we need in a house?

Please look at this photo. This is the "Farnsworth House" designed by a famous architect, Mies van der Rohe. This is neither a public facility nor a work of art. It's a villa. Originally built as a weekend home for a female doctor named Edith Farnsworth, it still stands quietly in a green suburb of Chicago. When I first saw this photo a couple of months ago while staying at home, I thought, "Is this a house?" because there is no outer wall and it is entirely covered with glass. People outside can see where you are eating and dozing, right? There is only a core with a bathroom and toilet in the center of the building, and there is no inner wall to build a "room." Does such an open, studio-type building really have the function of a house for people to live and feel at ease?

The concept of this building is "universal space": the residents, not the designer, use partitions and furniture to create a space that fits their needs and mood. The building had a great impact on me and I came to think housing should be with more universal space like this house, which would provide more freedom to connect with anyone. However, what do you think? Is this really an ideal house? Think about families. Think about having roommates. You may want to talk with them freely without having a lot of walls. At the same time, you may think you want to have your own personal spaces. There, you have a conflict and you need a designer to solve it. And that's me right here.

You know? I have an idea. How about making a step in the shared space by lowering part of the floor? The step will become a kind of invisible wall that can also serve as a chair, creating a comfortable space where people want to gather. On the other hand, if you raise the floor to make it look like a loft, it will be difficult to see into that part of the room, providing a private, solitary space.

We spend more time at home, and there is an increasing demand for housing that enables us to live comfortably and have a good rest. Even though the spaces in this drawing are connected, the spiritual space is loosely divided. I think this is the style of housing that is needed today. It would be exciting to have such a future where we can design our own spaces, wouldn't it?

What's the best space in your case? Thank you for your kind attention.