



## Sensitive Design Hits Home

Kudos to Asha Hedge for her “Sensory Sensitivity and the Built Environment” article (*LD+A*, January). Having spent the past three-plus years designing K-12 schools, many of which required careful attention for special needs classrooms, I’m aware of design issues that in the past had not been considered in typical classroom designs. For instance, one colleague designed a hanging sling chair for special needs students who were calmed by the slow bouncing motion, and also relocated a restroom hand dryer because the vibrations disturbed students with sensitivity conditions in the adjacent classroom. I’ve also come across color-changing fiber-optic “Sensory Lighting Kits” and ultraviolet illuminated playmats that are supposed to provide visual stimulation as well as a calming effect for children, and adults, with sensory sensitivity and other anxiety disorders.

The timeliness of the article really hit home with me for another reason. Although it was not one of the conditions mentioned in the article, I have a sensory sensitivity condition called misophonia (which literally trans-

lates to “hatred of sound”). It is also referred to as 4S or “Selective Sound Sensitivity Syndrome,” however I think a more appropriate term would be 3S “Selective Sensitivity Syndrome,” because for many people like me, this condition is not just triggered by sound stimuli, but also visual, tactile

and even olfactory sensations. When I learned of this condition two-and-a-half years ago, there wasn’t much literature available about misophonia yet (the term was only coined in 2001). So, I created a website called *SenseHaven.com* to serve as a central information resource for this sensory sensitivity condition. In the two years since, nearly 75,000 unique visitors have viewed the site, and dozens of people around the world contacted me for help on how to deal with their environment sensitivities—not just in schools, but in the workplace as well. Sensory sensitivity conditions are much more prevalent than people realize.

I challenge readers to take what they learned from this article to not only consider sensitivities in classroom designs and workplace environments, but in all project types. Yes, I know this is a tall order and it’s up to the designer to determine which situations warrant it more than others, but now that sensitivity conditions (like ADHD, ASD, SPD and even misophonia) are becoming more widely understood by the public, people who previously thought they just had some quirky pet peeves are realizing that there may be a more significant



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medical reason for their discomfort. Designers need to keep in mind that these sensitivities are not just limited to schools or offices. This is a part of every aspect of our lives. It affects us where we shop, where we go out to eat, in transportation venues (don't get me started about airports) and even in the "comfort" of our own homes.

Emlyn G. Altman, LC  
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## A Healthy New Look

The redesigned *LD+A* January 2015 issue could not have come at a better time

when the lighting industry worldwide is planning grand events to celebrate the International Year of Light 2015. While the content, design and layout of the issue are definitely a breath of fresh air, the article by Karyn Gayle ("The Future Feels A Lot Like 1984") gathered my attention. As a researcher and practitioner, I have been gathering practical examples to support the biophilia hypothesis, and this article is a valuable addition to the evidence. Hope this issue will be the absolute teaser to what is in store for the rest of IYL2015.

Amardeep M. Dugar, IALD, SLL  
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I really must say the new design of *LD+A* is a home run. [The January theme] "Light and Health" is a topic I am very passionate about and I am going to read this issue

from cover to cover. (And I have been telling friends and associates to do the same.) Keep up the excellent work.

Robert Nadel  
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I just wanted to send you a quick note to let you know that I really like the redesigned format of *LD+A*. The "In Brief" section, with its quickly accessible infographics, is great, and the new font and use of bold and normal text give the magazine a contemporary look that is not too trendy. I really like the inclusion of the "Emerging Professionals" column too. "Kudos" to you and the art department for the new look of the magazine ... well done!

David Orgish, LEED AP  
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## Rage Against The (Printing) Machine

I realize I now have both the disposition and the eye-sight to qualify as a geezer; nevertheless I object to the use of vanishingly small, thin, faint, colored type in *LD+A*. That it is a lighting magazine makes the irony corrosive. Pages 36 (faint green), 59 (faint red), 60 (unreadable important references), 65/66 (faint blue) are egregious examples in the January issue. Surely the need for form to follow function should trump whatever the latest design sensibility happens to be.

I can only admonish (Dylan Thomas, forgive me!): Do not go gentle into that light type. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

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**Editor's Note:** *LD+A* appreciates the feedback on the new design—both positive and negative—and has darkened several of the type faces mentioned in the previous letter, beginning with the February issue.

## This Is What's In It For You

I want to thank Paul Mercier for the Balancing Goals topic in his recent "President's Perspective" column. As a longtime member (30 years this spring), I could especially identify with the second half of the article, and particularly the last three paragraphs, which answer nicely the "what's in it for me?" question.

My years of IES participation have been so very valuable to me in my career, which has involved several job changes, and I have been fortunate enough to have had the support of every one of my employers for my various IES activities. Furthermore, on more than one occasion my IES connections helped me when a job search became necessary. This was not something that I considered when I joined, but then we can't always predict the future impact of today's decisions. My advice to our members: Jump in with both feet; your future benefits await!

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