When Every Design Looks Good, How Do We Recognize a Good Designer?



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AI is having a massive impact on architecture and interior design right now. It lets designers explore concepts faster, generate a wide range of visual options, improve presentation quality and help clients visualize spaces more effectively. But there is an important distinction we should not overlook:

AI can make a design's representation more professional. It doesn't in any way automatically make the design thinking any more professional.

Today, two designers can present equally impressive images. One may have years of experience in proportion, circulation, materials, construction, lighting, regulations, sustainability, and human behavior. The other may know how to generate a convincing image.

To the client, both may look equally strong at first.

This is where the real question begins.

AI has democratized beautiful images. It has not democratized experience.

Architecture is not created from an image alone. A successful project results from reality. understanding people, place, and consequence.

An experienced architect reads more than what appears on screen. They observe how a client lives, what they like and dislike, how they move through a space, what makes them comfortable, and often even what they cannot clearly express.

They also read the site itself: its orientation, climate, surroundings, views, privacy, noise,s unlight, humidity, and local conditions. They understand that the same concept cannot simply be repeated from one place to another. AI can generate possibilities.

The architect decides which possibilities deserve to become Materials are another clear example. A finish may look beautiful in an AI-generated image, but will it perform well in that climate? How will it age? Is it appropriate for heat, humidity, or heavy use? Is it available locally? Can it actually be installed correctly? Then, of course, there are the regulations, the technical constraints, and the realities of construction.

A concept can look absolutely perfect on paper and still be unapprovable, unconstructible, or unmaintainable.

This is why one principle remains essential.AI can process what we give it.

Human judgment notices what was never entered.

There is also another challenge. The best communicator is not always the best designer. A highly experienced architect may not always be the strongest self-promoter, while someone with less experience may be excellent at presenting, marketing, and generating impressive visuals. In an era where AI can enhance almost every presentation, clients need to look beyond the image.

They should ask deeper questions:

— Why was this solution selected?

— Can it actually be built?

— Does it respond to our real needs?

— Does it suit the climate, the context, and the regulations?

— How will the materials perform over time?

— What happens during execution when problems arise?

These questions reveal experience very quickly. Images are not spaces.

A beautiful image can inspire, communicate, and accelerate a decision.

But architecture carries responsibility. It must function, perform, endure and respond to real people in real environments. The future of architecture is therefore not a competition between humans and AI. It is about who knows how to use AI without surrendering judgment, experience and responsibility.