News Release

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Lisa Heschong Shares Data on Benefits of Daylighting at FGIA 2021 Virtual Summer Conference

SCHAUMBURG, IL – Lisa Heschong, author and scientific researcher, took to the virtual stage during the Fenestration and Glazing Industry Alliance (FGIA) 2021 Virtual Summer Conference to share her findings on the benefits of daylighting and window views. A licensed architect, Fellow of the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) and a Founding Principal of the Heschong Mahone Group (HMG), Heschong spoke about the many benefits of daylighting and how the fenestration and glazing industry is poised to take advantage of these attributes, all of which is covered in her book [*Visual Delight in Architecture: Daylight, Vision and View*](https://www.routledge.com/Visual-Delight-in-Architecture-Daylight-Vision-and-View/Heschong/p/book/9780367563233).

“My journey in daylighting has involved interviewing factory workers and others about lighting quality,” said Heschong. “I did a series of studies on the impact of daylighting on human performance, including in schools. I tried to quantify the impact of daylighting on worker performance. ‘View’ was the big winner in my daylighting studies.”

**“Seeing is Believing”**

Heschong noticed that simulated lighting products started to crop up in the marketplace, billed as “dynamic lighting” or “circadian lighting.” “Research groups around the country looked at integrated office systems that simulated views or created ‘integrated environments,’” she said. “They are stealing your [fenestration products’] value and selling it.”

Heschong noted that the level of sophistication in that industry is moving quickly. However, she said that while we would all like to work in a healthy building, “do we want simulated health, or the real thing? Our desire for healthy environments is being translated into a simulation. We are providing reality.” Humans, stated Heschong, are inherently visual animals. A large part of the human brain is devoted to visual processing. “’Seeing is believing’ and how we construct our understanding,” she said.

**Eye Health and Technology**

About 20 years ago, scientists identified cells in our retinas that are especially sensitive to blue light, or the type of light often produced by digital screens, explained Heschong. These cells signal directly to the brain, and they impact almost all aspects of human health.

When it comes to eye health, the retina is the most energy intensive tissue in the body, noted Heschong. “One hundred years ago, less than 2 percent of people were myopic, or near-sighted,” she said. “Now it's much higher. Again, it's connected to circadian stimulus.”

Heschong relayed some current solutions in places like parts of Asia include measures such as ensuring children spend at least two hours a day outside. “I believe looking out windows more will also help with this,” said Heschong, acknowledging that studies are still being developed on the matter. “We get headaches and eye strain when our eyes stop tracking or moving,” she said. “Views help with this. We need interesting things to look at.”

**Views and Architecture**

People are often unconscious of glancing out a window, noted Heschong. “They will glance out a window for about 50 percent of the time while they are working, if they have the opportunity to,” she stated, and the action results in larger working memory and long-term memory consolidation. “This is supportive of cognitive function.” Architects know this, she said.

“Great architecture celebrates the view,” concluded Heschong.

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