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## “EXPERIENCING ARCHITECTURE” –ARCHITECTURE THAT TALKS TO YOUR EMOTIONS

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**Abstract:** In this fast going world, where people are living, the ways has changed in which architects design and build. The development of construction techniques and innovation of new building materials has left architecture without materiality. The senses other than sight have been neglected results in a lack of sensory experiences. Now a day's architecture built is more concerned about the looks of a building, its shape and form more than the experience within it. But it is not inviting. The power of the senses in engaging person in the experience of space is put aside, and without it, architecture becomes dull and meaningless. This paper tries to understand, how buildings transmit emotion, or evokes emotion through a study of 'Model of emotion'. Also how one can achieve a sense of belongingness, a sense of place, by proper application or use of architectural means in architectural designing. Also how one can experience the space through the senses.

**Keywords:** Architectural means, Engaging the Senses, Experiencing Architecture, Model of Emotion.

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**Introduction:** It is impossible to explain precisely what architecture is, its limits are by no means well defined. Art should not be explained, it must be experienced. Common people mostly relate architecture with the design of beautiful buildings. But architects understand that architecture is about creating functional and beautiful spaces, but most importantly, they understand that architecture is for its users, for people. Architecture is about designing beautiful and functional spaces for people... but to be understood, architecture needs to be experienced, to work in the context where it is conceived, to incorporate the local popular culture, to manipulate and take advantage of the elements, both natural and architectural, to its favor, and most importantly, it needs to be able to transmit emotion and be life enhancing.

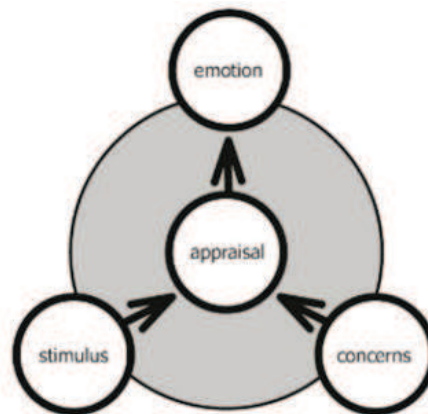
**Experiencing Architecture:** According to the Roman architect Vitruvius in the early 19th century AD, a good building should satisfy the three principles of firmitas, utilitas and venustas. Firmitas i.e. durability relates to the ability of a structure to stand up robustly and remain in good condition. Utilitas i.e. utility, it should be useful and fulfill its purpose. Venustas i.e. beauty, it should delight people and raise their emotions. It should be aesthetically pleasing. The first two principles, durability and utility are straight forward and rational objectives. They relate to the practical requirements that a building should meet in order to shelter and protects its inhabitants. It is the third principle, beauty which appears to be more complex. Venustas relates to the ability of a building to delight people and raise their emotions and appears as a much more complex architectural objective when compared to the practical nature of firmitas and utilitas. Delight is an emotion, a feeling, and hence an 'intangible phenomenon'. The task of an architect to achieve delightful buildings raises questions of perception, as experience is subjective. The ability of a building to induce an emotional reaction will of course depend on the individual.

**Emotions / Feelings:** Although related, there is a difference between emotions and feelings, and they both serve us in their own unique way. Emotions are attached to every object in the universe. Emotions offer the sense of life itself. Emotions deliver the message. Emotions are an abstract, metaphysical state of mind; they are essential impressions of the world, and your relationship with it. An emotion establishes your attitude toward reality, and provides your drive for all of life's pleasures. As the objects in your world induce emotions within you, they are collected in the subconscious and begin to accumulate. This is especially so when similar events are repeatedly experienced. Ultimately they form a final emotional conclusion about life, how to live it, and more importantly, how to survive physically

and mentally in a world of chaos. When this happens a feeling is born. Feelings are products of emotions. But unlike short term, intense emotions, feelings are: low-key, stable and sustained over time. The Differences of Emotions and Feelings in a Nutshell: Feelings tell us “how to live.” Emotions tell us what we “like” and “dislike.”

**Architecture, That Talks to Your Emotions:** Architecture represents one of the ancient forms of fine arts and there is absolutely no doubt about this. Just like any other art, architecture itself as well as the results of an architect’s creative process is targeted at human feelings and emotions. Unique, unlike others, fancy- these are only a few attributes, which appear in mind while looking at the some interesting architecture works? The emotional trace of such architecture is distinct – it amazes, surprises, and astonishes from the very first glance. Even looking at the pictures of the architecture masterpieces the idea and desire of an architect to communicate a particular message through his work gets clear and obvious. Unfortunately, buildings do not speak any human language. That is why, architects use a particular language to enable communication between buildings and people; and this language use geometric shapes, dimensions, colours and textures to express the idea and arouse necessary emotions in the human soul.

#### Basic Model of Emotions:



**Fig. 1:** Pieter Desmet’s Basic Model of Emotions for His Research (Designing Emotions)

People differ with respect to their emotional responses towards a given building. Nevertheless, in spite of these interpersonal differences, the process of emotion, i.e. the way, in which emotions are elicited, is universal. The model of ‘Pieter Desmet’ describes the eliciting conditions of emotions with the use of three underlying key variables: stimulus; concern and appraisal. These three variables, and their interplay, determine if a stimulus elicits an emotion, and if so, which particular emotion is experienced.

**Appraisal:** According to appraisal researchers, all emotions are preceded and elicited by appraisal. An appraisal is a non intellectual, automatic evaluation of the significance of a stimulus for one’s personal well being. Because appraisals mediate between products and emotions, different individuals who appraise the same product in different ways will feel different emotions. A given individual who appraise the same building in different ways at different times will feel different emotions.

**Concern:** Every emotion hides a concern; it can be regarded as points of reference in the appraisal process. This also applies to architecture; a building elicits an emotion only if it is appraised as relevant to a person’s concern. The number and variety of human concerns is vast. Types of concerns reported in the research literature are e.g., drives, needs, instincts, motives, goals and values. Some of our concerns are universal e.g. the concern for safety, for love and for self esteem.

**Stimulus:** Any perceived change has the potential to elicit an emotion. This can be some event, e.g. someone saying something to us or encountering something in a space. Not only actual events but also remembered or imagined events have the potential to elicit emotions.

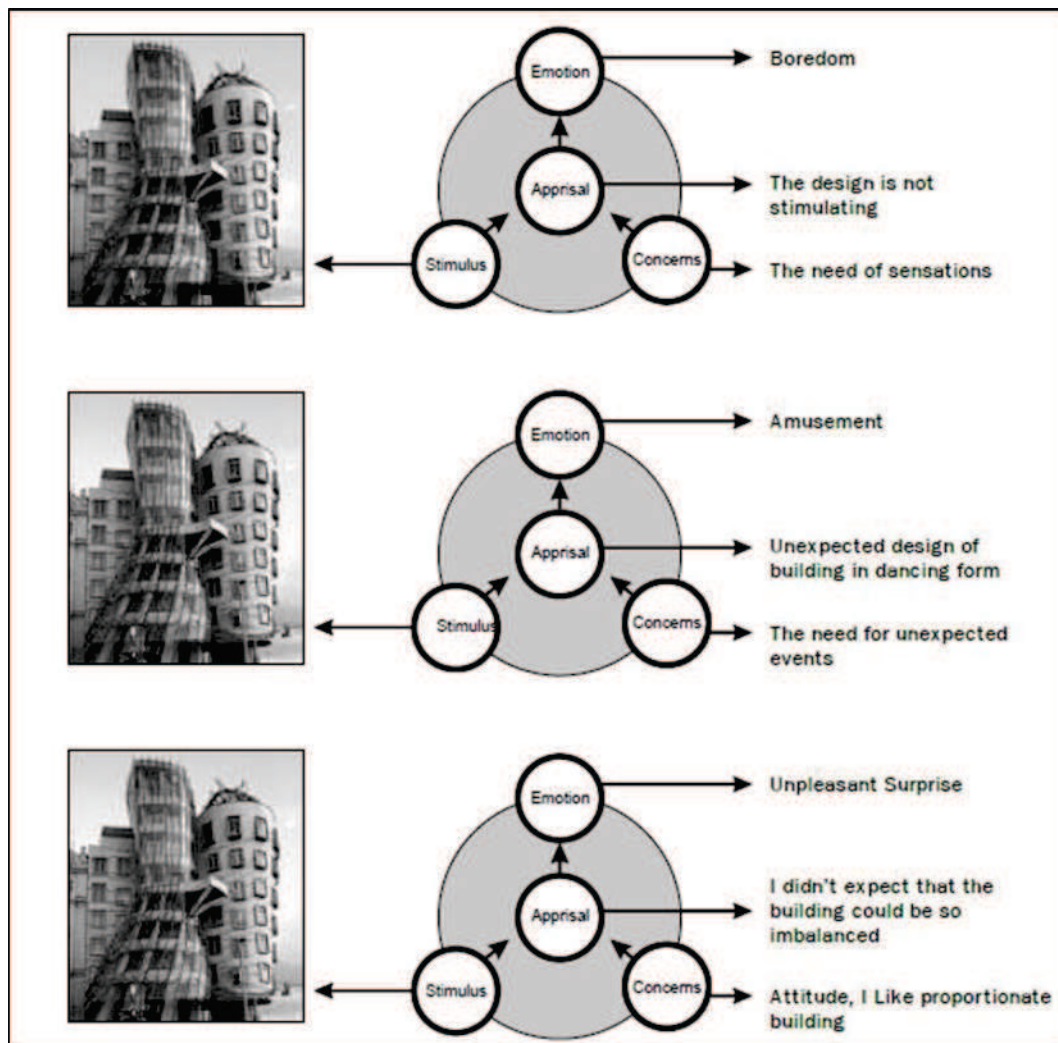


Fig. 2: Examples of Basic Model Showing Different Emotions

**Engaging the Senses:** People experience space through the senses: which perceive, store and process responses, become integrated through the body, and connect people to the world. In the experience of architecture the users are able to perceive the interaction and fusion of sounds and smells, colours and textures, lights and shadows, the relations of scale and proportion and even the passage of time; only architecture can and must address simultaneously all of the senses, for it is a multi sensory experience. A space is thought of as beautiful for its form, perceived by the eyes, it can be equally enjoyed for its acoustic qualities, its echo, vibrations and resonant sounds perceived by the sense of hearing. The "taste-smell system", which is only natural given that both senses are deeply connected; Smells in buildings come from the materials of it, as well as from the activities taking place within it, and the surrounding environment; therefore, different places will have different smells. The sense of smell has the ability to trigger behavior, memory and mood, as it is linked to parts of the brain that deal with emotions. Sense of touching makes the visitors feel part of something. The best way to incorporate the sense of touch in architecture, and with this, engage the users in the experience of the space, is by the use of materials and textures that not only bring life to space but also create a unique and richer experience for the senses. With sense of sight people first notice about buildings, exactly how they look. The sense of sight is very important in architecture: with the eyes people are able to perceive the form, size, depth, colour

and texture of a space; Sense of place is capable of leaving a mark on us, in our bodies and our minds, it is said to have a strong sense, basically people develop a sense of place through their experience of it. It has to do with the knowledge of the place and its culture, but most importantly it has to do with the memories of it, the ones people create there.

**Architectural Means:** Buildings can evoke good or bad emotion and when those that surround us make us feel good, they create within us a positive kind of feelings that makes our responses to the world warmer, kinder and more positive. Using form, materials and colour, buildings can be designed to evoke responses from our inner senses. Even if we don't realize it, or are aware of it, the way a building is designed definitely affects the collective unconscious and even our subconscious. There are some basic concerns which all humans share. Humans have the need for prospect and refuge, the need to explore and the need for thrill in architecture. But we need to remember that users also have specific concerns related to specific situations. Now the objective is how we can make architecture attuned to the concerns of the users. Which architectural means do we have to achieve? And how can we create specific atmospheres that can elicit specific emotions? There are different architectural means such as use of material, form, light, colour etc. which created the certain architectural atmosphere that influence our emotional state;

1. **Form:** The architecture of the building must stand out visually - this is what entices the subconscious to release a host of emotions such as curiosity or awe, gratification or empowerment OR maybe disgust and rejection - but our attention is drawn towards the building.
2. **Material and texture:** Impressions of hardness and softness, of heaviness and lightness, are connected with the surface character and materials.
3. **Appearance:** A building can be made to appear heavier than it actually is, and it can also be made to appear lighter than it is. This can be achieved with material expression, patterns, form and colour. How a material is treated, placed and which shape it is in, influences our experience of the material.
4. **Scale and proportion:** In history there have been many theories about order, scale and proportion in architecture. And as a result of this, there have been many attempts to incorporate mathematical principles into the proportions of architecture. This all is due to the fact that people have an affinity for order.
5. **Light in architecture:** "Light is of decisive importance in experiencing architecture. The same room can be made to give very different special impressions by the simple expedient of changing the size and location of its openings."-RASMUSSEN, S.E. (1962) *Experiencing Architecture*. The lighting has a great effect on the success of a building. An architect can employ it blandly, or with dramatic effect.
6. **Colour in architecture:** Colour is a very powerful means in architecture. Association plays a very important role with experiencing colours, we do not only associate blue with cold water and red with fire, but also red shingles with bricks. Colour can also have a very symbolic meaning. Another interesting aspect of colour is their psychological and physiological effect on people. Warm and cold colours play an important role in our lives and express very different moods and emotions.

**Conclusions:** Architectural means such as material, form, light, colour, scale and proportion creates certain atmosphere that influence our emotional state. And our experiences with those architectural means are the result of our perception with the senses. We can experience the architecture by what we see, what we hear, smell, taste and touch. Though the sense of sight is more dominant in architecture, other senses too are important for getting total experience of a space. Using basic model we can find out different emotions of the same stimulus.

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