

Experience of space/time in Tadao Ando and Carlo Scarpa's narrative architecture: The embodied-enactive view

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I. EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Architecture as an existential art accommodates at the same time both the living and the lived body: it houses the biological organism as well as man's world of ideas and memories because it is inextricably linked – through our embodied existence – to the way we think and behave (Mallgrave, 2013; Pallasmaa, 2013). In this sense, architect's design intentions are to be understood not only as a solution to functional requirements, but also as a scenario for users' emotional experience and physical expression of being-in-the-world.

This capacity for structuring our experience of space and time is nowhere manifested as strongly as it is in the case of narrative architecture – a design strategy of gradually unfolding spaces and views, which is with human movement transformed into a sequence of time (Arnheim, 2009). By employing such design principles, architectural masterpieces by Tadao Ando and Carlo Scarpa, like the Water Temple (Figure 1) and Brion Cemetery (Figure 2) respectively, invoke in the visitor intense emotional and memorable experiences.

By embracing the embodied-enactive perspective (Thompson, 2007; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991), we examine the relationship between the experienced passage of time and narrative spatial configurations with two aims in mind: first, to shed light on underlying bodily and emotional mechanisms, and second, to highlight significance of the subjective time component in understanding how people navigate in architectural environments. Therefore, starting from the premise that architecture is a designed interaction between life and form, we describe architectural experience as originating in the (pre-reflective) architecture-body communication, where the experiencing subject is conceived as enactive, embodied, emotional, and situated agent interacting with design intentions as spatial affordances (Jelic, Tieri, De Matteis, Babiloni, & Vecchiato, 2016; Rietveld & Kiverstein, 2014).

Accordingly, in the case of Ando and Scarpa's architectural works, the aesthetic experience of spatial narrative is identified as an anticipatory process of sense-making, where the subjective experience of time for each spatial sequence corresponds to a particular pattern of emotional activity (that can in turn modulate subsequent navigation choices), slowly building from the feelings of suspense to awe/wonder as the visitor moves through space. Thus, the perceived time dimension might be indicated as one of the key determinants of the overall quality of architectural experience.



FIGURE 1 (LEFT): TADAO ANDO'S WATER TEMPLE

FIGURE 2 (RIGHT): CARLO SCARPA'S BRION CEMETERY

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3. AUTHOR BIOS

Dr. Andrea Jelic holds a PhD in architecture from Sapienza University of Rome for her dissertation "Architecture and Neurophenomenology: Rethinking the Pre-reflective Dimension of Architectural Experience" (2015). As an architect and researcher, her work focuses on the intersection of architecture, neuroscience, and philosophy, aimed at investigating issues of experience, imagination, and pre-reflective place-making in architectural and urban environments. Together with Dr. Vecchiato, Dr. Jelic contributed to this emerging interdisciplinary field through publications in scientific and architectural journals, including *Frontiers in Psychology* and *Cognitive Processing*.

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