

# Architecture, Light and Emotion: The Brennand Chapel by Paulo Mendes da Rocha, in Recife, Brazil

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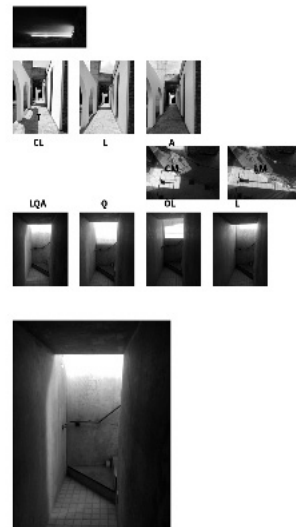
## ABSTRACT:

The manipulation of space by the architect can generate empathy and creative sensibilities in man, engendered by the invocation of the so-called "atmospheres". According to Mallgrave (2015), one of the main tasks of architecture is the creation of empathy. In this way, this paper explores the relationship between natural light and matter in religious spaces and their human emotional responses. In what ways light and matter are interrelated in order to create these architectural atmospheres (conscious or otherwise)?

Designed by Paulo Mendes da Rocha, one of the most distinguished Brazilian architects, in Recife-PE between 2004 and 2006, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Conception, also known as the Brennand Chapel, is an exemplary case for analyzing these atmospheres. Mendes da Rocha reused the ruins of an existing old building, restoring it, inserting new symbolic elements and exploring new natural light sources. The dialogue he promoted between stone, concrete, glass and light provokes sensations to the user. The interaction between the hardness of matter and the lightness of light is a crucial factor for the architectural experience of man.

These aspects can be discussed with the support of phenomenology and neuroscience, associating the records of forms and types of light effects inside the chapel, as well as the capture of the emotions aroused by the spatial and sensorial experience of the religious space. For this, we have applied methodologies based on Moustakas (1994), McCarter and Pallasmaa (2012), which maintain that the experience is the most complete way of expressing the sensorial dimension, since these sensations can only be perceived in their integrity when personally experienced by the passerby. Authors such as Holl (2006), Plummer (2009) and Millet (1996) were also instrumental in understanding the effects of light in space.

**Keywords:** Natural Light, Neuroscience, Phenomenology, Architecture, Paulo Mendes da Rocha.



Photographs by Rafaela Paes

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