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PRESENTER ABSTRACTS
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On Mood and Aesthetic Experience in Architecture

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Mood is the medium of artistic exchange between architects and their audience. In architecture, embodiment allows us to have an aesthetic experience when encountering an atmosphere, where the physiological result is mood. Architects know buildings are measured with the whole body, with empathy. Embodied simulation, the new empathy, is the aesthetic experience of real architecture that is tacit as mood. Architecture (the art of building) and neuroscience (the biology of the brain) converge in aesthetic experience as a re-creative act. This presentation navigates phenomenological and scientific views of aesthetic experience demonstrating that the intersection of architecture and neuroscience is the re-creative experience known as mood.

1. EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Mood is the medium of artistic exchange between architects and their audience see Figure 1. In architecture, embodiment allows us to have an aesthetic experience when encountering an atmosphere, where the physiological result is mood. Architects have long known buildings are measured with the whole body see Figure 3; it is called empathy. Embodied simulation, the new empathy, is the aesthetic experience of real architecture that is tacit as mood, the pervading tone of a person's state of mind. Architecture's creative desire and neuroscience's biology of experience meet in mood, where the audience can participate in the re-creative act.

Artists tap into such awareness, as Arthur Koestler demonstrates in *The Act of Creation*, by managing characteristics of our ability to feel and think to achieve aesthetic affect (1964). Architectural design, as a creative act, relies on the mechanism of embodied simulation to achieve re-creation in its audience. Meaning that, the ability to comprehend space aesthetically can exist only when our perception is manipulated through an embodied dialogue with the environment leading to a re-visioning of the work, much like getting a joke, a theory, or a dramatic character. Architecture (the art of building) and neuroscience (the biology of the brain) converge in aesthetic experience. Two architects can give perspective to the art of embodiment. Juhani Pallasmaa's buildings and theory of the seven senses each convey a phenomenological portrayal for experiencing architecture (Pallasmaa, 2009). Harry Mallgrave in *Architecture and Embodiment* surveys the sciences and humanities concerning our human natures, and traces the path of scientific existentialism from utopian experiments of the early 1900's to the present discussion of aesthetics in neuroscience (2013). The application of these tactics is to return architectural design to its biological foundation. Vision expert Semir Zeki claims that no new understanding of the biology of aesthetics can come without the assistance of neuroscience, to wit, he invents neuro-aesthetics (Zeki, 1999). Allied, Vittorio Gallese is led by how mirror neurons work to a Merleau-Pontyian view of the nature of perception; showing that we are present in the world as a multisensory bodily whole, a mobile nervous system perceiving the world through simultaneously glittering 'consciousnesses' (1999). It is instructive that when perceiving architectural space, scientists and architects converge in a phenomenological, multi-sensory hypothesis.

This presentation navigates phenomenological and scientific views of aesthetic experience demonstrating that the intersection of architecture and neuroscience is the re-creative experience of mood see Figure 1, which is the measurable physiological component of aesthetics.

2. REFERENCES

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FIGURES/ILLUSTRATIONS/IMAGES



From left to right: Figure 1: Diagram of the aesthetic experience of architecture, cycling between a created atmosphere, to a re-created mood. Figure 2: A recognized masterwork of aesthetic atmosphere is Louis Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum (Fort Worth), where the architect sought to establish a "silver light from above." Figure 3: At the birth of architecture's aesthetic purpose, circa 4000 BC, on the Irish Burren, stands Poulnabrone Dolmen (County Clare): a portal tomb built to impress, that ostensive proclaims tribal boundary and magical powers. It continues to astonish to this day.

3. AUTHOR BIOS

Prof. Bob Condia, AIA, is an architect and design partner with Condia+Ornelas Architects (1983 – present). A professor of architecture at Kansas State (1989 – present), he teaches architecture as an art form with due considerations to: beauty; coaching expertise; structural determination; the ancient works of man; a building's terrestrial and celestial alignments; phenomenology of perception; poetics of space; and the perception of constructed space from neuroscience. In 2008 he received the Kansas State's Commerce Bank Distinguished Teaching Award. His publications range from monographs on progressive architects; theoretical articles on the experience of space (focusing on Louis Kahn and Alvar Aalto); to a catalogue of his own surrealist illustrations; and discussions of creativity and expertise. His advanced seminars in perception combine architectural theory, analytical philosophy and the neuroscience of aesthetic experience. Prof. Condia earned his Master in Architecture and Building Design at Columbia University 1983, and a Bachelor of Architecture at California Polytechnic State University, 1980.

Michael Luczak, MArch. Kansas State University, 2014. He has spent his academic career exploring issues of tectonics in architectural design through construction and experimentation with concrete and through sculpture with wood. As a parallel study, questions of event segmentation and neuroscience have surfaced to inform how the body interacts with architecture. Philosophical inquiry engaging Roger Scruton, Peter Zumthor, and Paul Ziff (to name a few) has led him to a concern for the role of architecture as it defines human experience from the banal to the sublime.