

Unfolding Architectural Assemblages: Mapping Contemporary Spatial Objects' Affective Capacity

Authors : Panagiotis Roupas, Yota Passia

Abstract : This paper aims at establishing an index of design mechanisms - immanent in spatial objects - based on the affective capacity of their material formations. While spatial objects (design objects, buildings, urban configurations, etc.) are regarded as systems composed of interacting parts, within the premises of assemblage theory, their ability to affect and to be affected has not yet been mapped or sufficiently explored. This ability lies in excess, a latent potentiality they contain, not transcendental but immanent in their pre-subjective aesthetic power. As spatial structures are theorized as assemblages - composed of heterogeneous elements that enter into relations with one another - and since all assemblages are parts of larger assemblages, their components' ability to engage is contingent. We thus seek to unfold the mechanisms inherent in spatial objects that allow to the constituent parts of design assemblages to perpetually enter into new assemblages. To map architectural assemblage's affective ability, spatial objects are analyzed in two axes. The first axis focuses on the relations that the assemblage's material and expressive components develop in order to enter the assemblages. Material components refer to those material elements that an assemblage requires in order to exist, while expressive components includes non-linguistic (sense impressions) as well as linguistic (beliefs). The second axis records the processes known as a-signifying signs or a-signs, which are the triggering mechanisms able to territorialize or deterritorialize, stabilize or destabilize the assemblage and thus allow it to assemble anew. As a-signs cannot be isolated from matter, we point to their resulting effects, which without entering the linguistic level they are expressed in terms of intensity fields: modulations, movements, speeds, rhythms, spasms, etc. They belong to a molecular level where they operate in the pre-subjective world of perceptions, effects, drives, and emotions. A-signs have been introduced as intensities that transform the object beyond meaning, beyond fixed or known cognitive procedures. To that end, from an archive of more than 100 spatial objects by contemporary architects and designers, we have created an effective mechanisms index is created, where each a-sign is now connected with the list of effects it triggers and which thoroughly defines it. And vice versa, the same effect can be triggered by different a-signs, allowing the design object to lie in a perpetual state of becoming. To define spatial objects, A-signs are categorized in terms of their aesthetic power to affect and to be affected on the basis of the general categories of form, structure and surface. Thus, different part's degree of contingency are evaluated and measured and finally, we introduce as material information that is immanent in the spatial object while at the same time they confer no meaning; they only convey some information without semantic content. Through this index, we are able to analyze and direct the final form of the spatial object while at the same time establishing the mechanism to measure its continuous transformation.

Keywords : affective mechanisms index, architectural assemblages, a-signifying signs, cartography, virtual

Conference Title : ICVAD 2019 : International Conference on Visual Arts and Design

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : April 22-23, 2019