

Touch

|

the Ideal Allusion

Abstract

This research employs theories of aesthetics as a method of inquiry to examine architecture as the expression of thought(s). It addresses three key questions. First, what constitutes architecture as the 'the ideal allusion'? Second, how can architecture as the aesthetic experience of phenomena exist beyond ethics? And third, can architecture, as a mode of representation, inform an aesthetic experience of space?

In order for the aesthetics of human space to be actualized designers must begin to question their intentions. The nature of architecture is only recognizable as an "ideal" reification because the allusion is bound to the maker's intentionality. The "ideal" is the realization of phenomena therefore without architectural ideas it is not possible for phenomenology to inform the built environment. The "ideal" is what allows architects to explore the potential of phenomena to affect the built environment because buildings are the embodiment of societal and culture values. Design – as a mode of representation – differs from architecture because design is the actualization of phenomena thus design is the work derived from the "ideal".

This presentation locates architecture as a corporeal form and the value of meaning derived from the exploration of architectural ideas. Many scholars have focused on the concretization of thoughts regarding building materials and how they are used to produce ideas. However, there exists a gap in the scholarly literature regarding the experience of and how architecture is formed. The experience of phenomena as natural regarding architecture differs from the inevitable residue of economy that is the built environment. However, aesthetics as a means to understand how humans perceive surfaces assist in the exploration, expression and touch of experience that locate cultural codes relative to the allusion of architecture. The expression of architecture is engendered by cultural constructs that are bound to the natural environment in order to exist as such.

Discussions among architects and landscape urbanist suggest that designer must address how the urban environment will be situated in the future. This study initiates and invites a discussion about what aesthetics mean in the context of architecture, as well as the very nature of architecture itself.

Introduction

Design endeavors to express the potential of thoughts, while architecture is the surface attempting to leave an impression upon the human mind.

This research considers three key questions regarding representation, intentionality and identity as sub-fields of aesthetics. First, what constitutes architecture as the “the Ideal Allusion”? Second, how can architecture as the aesthetic experiences of phenomena exist beyond ethics? And third, can architecture, as a System of Ideas, inform an aesthetic experience of space?

The collection of thoughts herein reflects the nature of architecture as an act of design – not the works of documenters. I advance this as the actuality of architecture because in reality the majority of buildings are not acts of design. If the majority of acts are not design, then the majority of works are unethical by nature. This work is situated in a continuum of thoughts considering what constitutes design, designers, and architecture therefore suggesting design is a “moment of touching.”

I will speak of design, not architecture, as a way to discern capital versus content. Content of design is derived from thought, reflection and making. In the case of capital the term architecture allows constituents currencies that do not assist in **ideal reification** – experience of collective thought. Beyond capital, design is a means to recognize the limits of the **reification of ideas** – merely the impression or image – while acknowledging the purposiveness of something by design.

The conception of strategies that allude to situations and phenomena allow for the emergence of ideal reification. Phenomena are bound to a maker’s ability to express thoughts regarding something within the immediacy of a corresponding moment. Corresponding moments are the reality of design because they convey meaning(s) derived from thought(s) only imagined by designers.

In order for the aesthetics of human space to be actualized, designers must question their intentions. The nature of design is only recognizable as ideal reification because design is the allusion bound to the makers’ intentionality. Ideal reification is the realization of **Forms** – patterns or ways one acts – the **phenomena of thought**. It is not possible for phenomena to inform the built environment independent of design thoughts. Thought allows designers to explore the potentiality of phenomena, which can inform the built environment. Buildings are the realization of cultures. Design – not architecture – is the allusion (suggestion) of phenomena.

I. Informing (ALLUSION | DESIGN) – Becoming the expression of something meaningful.

Techniques used to construct buildings are the illusion of design because construction techniques are merely arranged and rearranged by architects. However, design is the potential exploration of thought which could inform how corresponding moments can affect the physical environment. The correspondence of thought, reflection and making engenders an informed built environment that is the expression of something meaningful to all.

1. Technique – the culture of buildings.

Buildings are the realization of culture because they merely represent the drive of capital as crafted utilizing techniques – systems – of building construction. Architects, to reinforce the image of capital, rearrange techniques and manage cost. Design, not architecture, is the allusion – what is noticed – of Phenomena. Corresponding moments are the reality of design because they convey something meaningful. Meaning in the form of a building is a depiction of culture not the expression of “form”. Design, not architecture, is the exploration of thoughts that inform how designed Phenomena could affect experiential moments. Moments are the correspondence or reality of design because they convey meanings. The meanings conveyed are directed at the subject not the designed object. The subject is the only figure to experience meanings as intended. Others experience the potential of ideas as a third thought (viewer).

2. Design – the potential exploration of thought.

Design allows for collective exploration of potentialities regarding an actuality of “forms” that are the interpretation of thought. The potential expressions of meanings are derived from first thought, not the production of images, which registers the impression of meaning. Design critically engaged makes and makes use of designed artifacts in order to survey cultural practices. The design of potentials is the exploration of thought, reflection and making things and can only occur within a reflective practice. Reflective practice can inform how designed phenomena potentially affect experiential moments. Corresponding moments are the correspondence or reality of design because they convey meanings. The meanings conveyed are directed at the subject not the design object. The subject is the only figure to experience meanings as intended. The subject experiences the potential as imagined phenomena. “Forms,” as imagined, locate design, which is what design seeks to interpret in order to express something. Others experience the actuality of ideas as a 3rd thought (viewer/ observer).

II. **Phenomena** (IDEAL | **thought**) the sketch of forms one can sense or minds notice.

Phenomena are experiential moments that allow for the conceptualization of surface. Mindful humans who notice something sense phenomena as if to TOUCH. The conception of surfaces is the expression of thoughts regarding the articulation of meanings. Meaning is bound to a maker's ability to interpret thoughts as a **system of forms**.

Moments of Correspondence

1. Thoughts regarding external stimuli... The System of Forms.
2. Idea about ones' thought.. Mode of intentionality.
3. The utilization of strategies... (Variable X.), (Variable Y) & this (Variable Z) to conceptualize – organize thoughts – in order to design a mode of intentionality.
4. A Mode of intentionality is the expression of thoughts regarding... The System of Forms.

The articulation of thought is bound to a maker's ability to express thoughts The System of Forms regarding Forms within the immediacy of a corresponding moment.

Thoughts as moments:

First thought is the system of ideas resulting from an awareness of external stimuli.

Second thought as the potential Form seen as a mode of intentionality derived first thought.

Third thought as the actuality of ideas reified as phenomena via the affects of surfaces. The awareness of knowing the surface – not the knowledge of space – is the experience of phenomena.

I. **Exploration** – the articulation of thought.

The Root of the system of forms is the first thought – internal form – regarding the design site. The first thought of design is the mind responding to external stimuli. The response of external stimuli of sited conditions such as history, culture, topography, context, typology, etc. is a variable only determined by the one designing. External stimulus is crafted in the mind as something from which design can occur. A designer's capacity for reflection determines the degree to which first thought can be recognized as something from which exploration can occur productively. Design can occur unproductively if one cannot recognize order of the mind. Thought as constituted within the system of thought requires knowing

something in order for meaning to exist in time. Meaning is not recognized in first thought because first thought is not the form of meaning but it is the system of forms. Recognition of first thought demands an articulate response as a “form” of thought.

2. **Expression** – drive from meaning.

The “form” of thought derived from first thought is second thought. Second thought is the internal form regarding potential design objects. Second thought of design is the interpretation of first thought. Designer's capacity to reflect upon first thought allows the interpretation to become actionable (potential) in form. Forms – mode of intentionality – are patterns or ‘ways of doing’ things or ‘ways of seeing things’ that are unique to the designing subject. An awareness of forms reveals the second object of design. **The first object of design is the designer. The object of design is never a building unless “building” is the form one seeks to express as a system of forms. Architect will posit that buildings are the objects of design. If a building were the object of design then designers would be attempting to express forms – the interpretation of thought – regarding buildings.** Few designers, if any, contemplate the nature of buildings as a means to express something. I would assert that most architects have never questioned what a building is therefore most would have no grounds to assert their efforts have actualized the expression of a building form. The expression of a building form is the interpretation of thoughts. The interpreted thoughts have inherent meaning because forms are derived from thoughts bound to external structures (social, political, religious, etc.), which are bound to culturally constructed value systems. Meaning is the drive of expression because meaning, as designed in form, seeks to express thoughts regarding the system of forms.

The sight of thought instigates exploration within the system of forms. The sight of forms drives designers to express something essential. Because designers have an inherent drive to express that, which is meaningful to them. That which is meaningful to a designer can potentially affect others. The potential affect of forms is the experience of surfaces touching others.

3. **Touch** – the affects of forms.

What are the Phenomena of Design? The process of making meanings is actualized through utilization of strategies. Phenomena are the conception of strategies – a plan of action – that alludes to conditions that enable potential to emerge. Design strategies are fashioned in order to conceptualize – organize thoughts – forms. The conceptualization of form as a ‘way of seeing’ something meaningful allows for the recognition of phenomena. Therefore form, the imagined something, is the Phenomena of Design as conceptualized. Phenomena are the exploration of thought, reflection and making of surface because the experience of surfaces is what we sense or notice about design. The allusion is what is touched (noticed) as the surface –

not the space of things. A moment of touching – sensing – is a sense of one's first thought.

There are two types of forms as interpretation of thoughts. The first category, internal forms, has meaning inherent as derived from first thought. Internal forms have the potential to affect one's perception of space via surfaces. The design of surfaces is how a designer expresses thoughts imagined. The second category, external forms, has meaning endowed. Meaning is endowed because the design forms eclipse meaning as the depiction – image – of culture not the expression of meaningful thought. The depicted leaves the impression of knowing something upon the mind. That which is known is systems and strategies of technique not the potential of forms.

III. **Intentionality** (IDEAL | **TOUCH**) the acknowledgement of something mindful?

Is a building recognized as the nature of architecture? Is architecture the nature of building design? Is a building what one is designing when one designs a building? The Image (split nature) of Design – not architecture – is only recognizable as Ideal Reification because any endeavor of a designer is meaningful as a derivative of design intentions. Designers' intentions are articulated through the use of design strategies. The use of design strategies allude to conditions allowing for a purpose to emerge, as the expression of thought not the **Reification of Images** used to impress or leave the impression that one knows something.

I. Image - as the impression of something?

“The signified is the concept, the ideal meaning; and the signifier is what Saussure calls the “image,” the ‘psychical imprint’ of the material, physical—for example, acoustical—phenomenon.” (JD 10)

Herein the terms Image (representation of external form) and Impression (a graphic representation of something) will be used to discern what design is. I assert that design as currently constituted is artificial. The terms Image and Impression will be used to clarify what, why and how designers utilize effects and affect humans. What is an Image in the context of Design? I would state that an Image is something that is external to meaning. If the image of something is external to meaning then the object in question is purely a graphic depiction because it is formed without discernable thought or form. Conscious thought is a necessity for meaning to exist because meaning is derived from something explainable within a system of communication. Therefore the subject (designer) and the object (design idea) exist within a system bound to thought. I contend that first thought is a System of Ideas – Knowledge of Ideas – from which design is a potentiality of expression.

The question 'WHAT IS' attempts to locate something in or to locate another. Exactly what Architecture is beyond the term remains unimportant. Architecture, in its lack of import is nothing more

than the trace of capital used to garner currency. Capital being various currencies registered by various societies as relevant and valuable but what is valuable Architecture? Who knows, because, in general, architects tend to lack an expressive acumen beyond the use of computer-generated depictions simulating something? As a designer or architect or teacher of something I state generating something because architects rarely, if ever, utter anything worthy of a response. The utterance I allude to does not rely upon speech acts. The utterance of architecture allows for the expression in clarity of forms.

So, I question 'WHY' as a means to begin to locate a semblance of meaning or mindfulness or intentionality from a collective termed architects captivated by the Reification of Images. The images produced as works of design – text of design – are merely the efforts of laborers because the work is the illusion of design. The images are artificial because they are endowed with meaning via the term ARCHITECTURE. The term represents the industry of building production not meaning content. I would suggest that the Reification of Images is similar to the Reification of Ideas in that PRODUCTION is the means through which the impression is manufactured. In the case of the practice of architecture buildings are simply the impression of design. **In the academy the computer-generated renderings or perspectives represent the impression of content. What is presented is the impression of content and design.** The impressions being produced are graphic representations of something, but what? The representations are typically formed without conscious thought because if formed consciously then one could explain said thought in order to recognize something meaningful. Recognition would allow for one to make things purposefully. Many may argue a semblance of intuition as a means to design meaningful things. I would argue that intuition relies upon aesthetics as a matter of judgment. Kant suggests that experiences of beauty are beyond merely intuited. Judgments regarding beauty are simultaneously sensory, emotional and intellectual. The intellectual capacity to render judgments has been dismissed by architects as something academic while designers continually assert to know something bound to thought and reflectivity. Without engagement in a reflective practice how can one discern the potential of any thought?

2. Image Reification – the potentiality of expression.

Design is the impression of something. Designers are engaged in the Reification of Images. The Reification of Images – graphic depiction – is merely the impression of design accepted as design because design cannot exist independent of thought and reflection. The current culture of images represents external forms or the artificial nature of design.

Representation (the interpretation of thought) is not directed toward an object (design idea) but at the subject – the designer. In the case of design the subject is the individual designer of expression. The objects of design – the expression of thought – exist so that designers can contemplate and re-craft

thoughts. The objects or text of design are sketches, drawings, watercolors, painting, projections, and physical models abstract and literal etc. The texts – objects of design – are the primary means, which the potentiality of expression is experienced. Design is not a matter of images because the possibility of phenomena that can inform the built environment can only be experienced within the text of design.

3. **Unintentional** Images - the lack of purpose.

Images, as a means to represent design, are external forms beyond meaning – because they exist merely to facilitate the drive of capital. If the primary intention of forms is capital and not the expression of something meaningful, then designers of such forms are amoral.

a. Capital as the purpose?

What are the forms designers must represent? Is thought a form? Is meaning a form? Is a building a form? Is capital a form? What is the final form? If one's purpose is to design a building then one is not aware of the nature of design. In order to design a building one only needs to be aware of the systems required to competently build buildings. This is not design; this is Architecture = Buildings. **Architecture, as currently constituted, is not the impression it is simply meaningless. Architecture is used to impress those who know nothing and question nothing.** The lack of thought and reflection is due to the necessity of efficiency inherent in capital driven systems. Contemplation is bound to an individual's capacity to process stimuli into something actionable. The something actionable is Ideal Reification, which is not valued in business models bound to intention of labor rather than articulation of thought.

If questioned regarding a design based on capital acquisition as primary intention, one could not present an articulate explanation of thought. Contemporary design rests within a collective regarding building systems propagandizing climatology and resource management in order to politicize the virtue of that which should be known to anyone educated as an architect. Design based on building systems designed by another (e.g. manufacturers) means nothing but capital. Acquisition of capital or drive of capital for design renders the designed object meaningless as an object of design. The object is meaningless because meaning is derived from the maker's intention to express something. If one intends to express something then one could explain one's thoughts as a System of Ideas using strategies to conceptualize. The conceptualization of Ideas contemplated would allow the designer to express something beyond building systems. That which is beyond capital is meaning.

b. The purpose is to impress?

Meaning is beyond capital and is primary to an understanding of design, which is thought. When building systems derived from manufactured technologies is the root of design the purpose shifts from

expression to need to impress. Designers use images – computer graphics – as the depiction of design. **Design in all realms is beyond criticism because only a few can criticize work based in thought. The majority of so-called designers, architects and teachers merely present images with the intention to impress or leave the impression that one knows something. The images are endowed with unknown meaning because designers produce them. The work produced has no architectural or design value because architects cannot articulate the relevance of works produced.** Equating works to mass-produced articles of consumption only reveals the lack of value inherent in made articles.

IV. Conclusion **Purposeless** - image of morality is amoral.

If architecture is reduced to the few that do something meaningful then we should not speak of architecture. Architecture, as currently constituted, is the domain of many – not the few who seek to express thoughts regarding something meaningful to them. When a designer seeks to express thoughts regarding something – anything – meaningful, then they are operating with the implicit intent to affect others. If one's aim is to affect then the potential of said acts will likely be thoroughly examined in order that they may in fact affect. The work of the majority of architects, if not for expression of something, does exist for something. I would advance that the majority of architects are amoral and unethical. The basis for morality exists in collective acceptance of an ideal. In form the majority merely uses the title "Architects" as a means to garner multiple currencies. I would suggest that the majority of architects are simply glorified draftspersons or contractors. These unwitting agents utilize the term "architect" to perform and/or impress. This is problematic if we seek to critically engage the text or that which is built in the future. The potential of thought to inform how aesthetics can affect humans rests in a collective that is not aware that special effects are not so impressive. How can you inform when you do not do things because you do not know things?
