THE ROLE OF AURA IN ARCHITECTURE: AN ANALYSIS OF AURA AS SPECIAL TRAIT IN ARCHITECTURE

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Abstract. The present article focused on a long neglected factor in architecture. It may be the replacement of the term seeing by eye with seeing by nose. The purpose is to study the complex and formal role of smell (aura) in architecture, as it is for a long time which aesthetic factors such as form, color, light, pattern, composition have been subject to change, while all of these factors are accessible through the visual sense. Therefore, it may be better to look at the matter as a blind architect. As in the perception of a material, the sense of touch, its warmth and coldness helps the visual sense, or as the hearing sense makes the sound of walking on a wooden floor, the olfactory can also be involved in spacing and even further become part of the design. The present paper focuses on the different phases of aura in architecture, and finally some recommendations are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

Many of us have stored the space around us with auras, though we have not paid attention to so far. For example, when we think of our home yard or some other familiar things as an ordinary person not as an architect, the first thing coming to our mind is the framework of that space with its colorful elements.

For instance, a specific tree, the pond, the parking, etc. But, when we consider the matter with more precision, the image in the mind has a date and time, that is, we remember that space associated with specific time and date. As an instance, I remember our home yard in summer night with its artificial lights.

The main point is that for some other locations another factor stimulates the mind, which may in fact enter the mind before others. For example, if instead of remembering the formal body of a plane or a bus, we remember the moment of getting on, one of the first factors of these two spaces is their particular auras. So, there is the aura of coffee in coffee shops, the smell of flowers at night in old home yard, the aura of cooking oil in certain restaurants. In the following, the point will be dealt with more technically.

What is smell or aura

First, I should mention that I do not intend to get into a specialized discussion of olfactory system, its nervous structure and related matters. But, answering the above question for reaching to appreciate result is necessary.

Aura or smell is produced by one or several evaporative chemical compounds, which generally have very low density. My emphasis on this definition is for this reason that all commercial smells around us have this quality but each unique to its own. So, each leaves in our memory its special effect which may be familiar or strange, desirable or undesirable, but of course accessible.

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The relation of aura (smell) to architecture

Probably we have noticed every home or shop or generally every place or location has its own smell or aura. Even a city has its aura, or at a lower level, the automobile of each person has its own aura or smell, whereas all cars when in factory have the same smell. This experience reminds us of a latent or covered point and that is individual differences.

In fact every person, according to his specific mechanism of his body, dietary, genes, heredity, kind and quantity of his activities, has his unique bodily moisture which is familiar to him and his acquaintances, yet it is covered. However, when you encounter him or her and the surrounding space, you distinguish that smell from what you have in your sensual memory.

But, of course, two other factors are also involved in this matter. Other objects in that physical space also affect the aura of that setting. For instance, a dashboard polymeric coverage in a car when exposed to sunlight would diffuse a gas with aura in the car. Another factor is the continuous diffusion of chemical compounds such as sprays of different kinds, scents, tobacco, and the likes. We all have this same experience in greater extent in the homes of relatives and friends.

The extent of the effect of aura

Most students of architecture in their introductory courses in design have encountered the strange, complicated yet beautiful sketch of music and have become familiar with its extremely complex and formal conditions in design. Now, let us have an analogy between this sketch with the sketch which is the aim of this article.

If the sketch be started with the recall of a smell from our sensual memory, rather than by listening to music, the sketch will experience a much more complicated space, and the space will of course, encounter a theoretical conflict: remembering a smell or the memory of remembering a smell. In fact, either the complicated and formal smell will be sketched or the memory of that smell will be sketched.

Now, to see the extent of the effect, let us make the sketch more similar. The sketch is designed simultaneously with the heard perceived feeling, meanings and definitions first, and then suppose the sketch in designed in an atmosphere of city’s garbage compounds, or in a space full of the aura of coffee, mild or strong scents.

Now, let us make the sketch more similar to see the extent of its effect. In that sketch, designing takes simultaneously with perceived listened feeling and formed meanings and definitions. Now imagine the sketch starts in city’s garbage damping location or in a space full of the aura of coffee, light or heavy smell.
Now, note that the understanding of this subject matter is the effect of aura on design, but in fact, we refer to the reverse of this point.

The Reverse

In fact, we want by knowledge of different spatial construction of sensual memory to add a new factor to space, that is, instead of a smell or an aura to cause a design, the smell itself enters the design space and is remindful of that space. It was explained that smell (aura) like chemical scents, has chemical compounds.

The architect has the mission to consider a special chemical compound for the space so that the perception of the meaning and the special philosophy of the space of the setting be completed with the smelling of that smell.

This point may seem out of mind and unreachable but we should note when we talk about architecture and not about mere construction, we see that the architect goes so far that not only sketches the internal design of a home, but also gets involved in the selection of the construction of a picture framework (or paintings). Also, their appropriate locations in design is to the extent that if the owner wants to do some alterations, he has no choice but to consult with the architect, because architecture in its actual status is the product of the art of the artist.

Therefore, to improve the aesthetic quality of architecture, the architect should consider a specific smell as a factor of that space. This may seem somehow vague but it has its own solutions and strategies.

CONCLUSION

In general, the smell (aura) of any place is a rich and colorful index among many indices which reminds us of that space, in which related people has a significant role in the creation of the situational personality of that place. Also, as the architect tries to improve the quality of people’s life, the decision and selection of the condition are regarded as the main objective.

Therefore, if the architect strengthens his smelling memory as he considers different colors and their relevant feedbacks, if he considers and assigns a specific smell, among other smells, for a specific space under relevant conditions, he has made smell a strong element and tool of architecture.

In fact, if we accept this point that we as humans respond psychologically to different colors and react differently to different smells, which in some cases this reaction is rather strong, we should accept that, because of the difficulty of using this tool, the application of this strong instrument which has been left out of the circle and it may be said that even the thought of its use has been left to distant and unknown tomorrow.

Finally, in the final section, some strategies and approaches have been proposed, but they are merely examples to open new looks and directions into an area with great potential for growth. Of course, these propositions are definitely not the best to include smell in architecture, but may act as stimulants for the interested minds to consider the point and lead it to useful and effective end.

Recommendations of the study

As it was already mentioned, smell or aura is a chemical compound and attainable. So, if the architect knows for the completion of the space under design what aura is needed, he can add it to the design. This can be done by installing appropriate filters at the entrance of the ventilations system, or in smaller steps the use of selected aura spray spreaders. In other words, in this
approach, there should be some kind of material to be used to spray the smell. And, this material can be installed in a wall or in a partition.

Another strategy is to make use of the already available aura of baking bread, cake, chocolate, etc. which already exists. The point is how to design the structure so that that aura to spread in the appropriate directions, where to place the openings, and what to do with undesirable odors.

On the other hand, it is not necessary for the smell to create an artificial space. For example, Daniel Libeskindin, the designer of Jewish Museum when he wanted to double the effect of metal statue on visitors, it was sufficient to request the management of the museum to pour some water on them once every month. But, a better solution was to place the statues in the direction of humidity so that the smell of rusting iron by means of creating perception of what he intended to do for that art work.

REFERENCES