*International Journal of Modern Achievement in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJSET)*
ISSN 3023-459X
DOI: 10.63053/ijset.104

# Examining the Relationship Between the Language of Art and Architecture in the Process of Understanding Urban Space

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## ARTICLE INFO

***Keywords:***
*Architecture, Spatial Perception, Urban Environment, Sensory Experiences.*

## ABSTRACT

This research explores the relationship between the language of art and architecture in the process of understanding space in urban environments. Given the importance of visual aspects and sensory experiences in urban spaces, the role of art and architecture in creating and shaping these experiences has been examined. This paper investigates the role of art in creating aesthetic experiences and emotions in urban spaces, as well as the impact of architecture on the process of spatial perception and experience. The results of this study may help architects, artists, and urban planners identify the best methods for integrating art and architecture in the design and creation of urban spaces to enhance the experience of citizens. Consequently, this research particularly aims to answer how this interdisciplinary approach in architecture can strengthen our understanding of the non-visual aspects of space and stimulate architectural creativity. Thus, integrating artistic elements into architecture, and vice versa, can improve citizens' experiences of urban spaces, making urban life more beautiful and attractive. Therefore, utilizing collaborative tools to create suitable and pleasant urban spaces is of great importance. This interaction between the language of art and architecture can contribute to the creation of dynamic, creative, and unique urban spaces, instilling a sense of beauty and connection with their living environment in citizens.

## 1. Introduction

The connection between space and other disciplines is a topic that has garnered attention in recent years across various fields, including arts, philosophy, social sciences, and more. The inefficacy of existing theories on one hand, and the dominance of the postmodern paradigm on the other—with its emphasis on relativism, uncertainty, pluralism, and localism—has made the discussion around language and its impacts on daily life appealing to scholars from various domains. However, in urban planning and architecture, the introduction of approaches and analyses of the relationship between art and space has manifested differently. In architecture and urban planning, this relationship has been primarily articulated in a one-sided framework, where scholars have elucidated the unidirectional connection of this inherently two-sided and profound dialectic [1]. Space can be defined by surfaces, lines, and points, but beyond these physical characteristics, there is also the nature of space, which is not easily measurable. This is referred to as phenomenological space. Our human experience of space is quite different from the hypothetical concept of absolute space, as we are embodied beings who experience our environment with all our senses. The renowned philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty alludes to this by stating, "We are all part of this space, and together we form a unified entity with it." Similarly, Charles Landry describes that "people are part of the urban fabric; otherwise, the physical body of the city remains like an empty shell." This statement implies that personal experiences related to space reveal the sensory nature of architecture [2].

Sometimes architecture and, more broadly, art itself are utilized to provide an experience that makes us aware of the world and our sense of self. This also helps us to experience the spiritual nature and embodied existence we possess. This clear explanation comes from the renowned theorist and architect, Juhani Pallasmaa. Drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological concepts, he says: "Architecture is the art of reconciling us with the world, and this mediation happens through the senses." His proposal was that architecture should be interpreted in deeper forms as a description of our relationship with the world and not merely as a practical and functional aspect of life that provides shelter, workplaces, schools, and other utilitarian spaces [3].

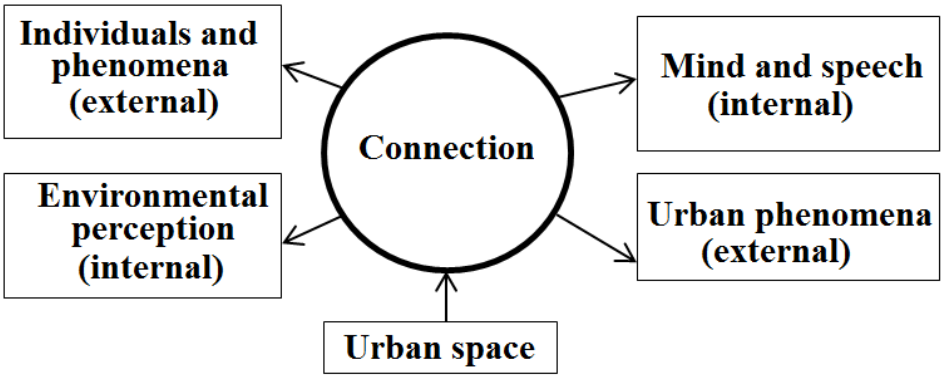


**Figure 1: Spatial perception explanation in urban environment.**

## 2. Language and Urban Space

Human beings, essentially, are spatial entities. Basically, anything that has length, width, and height is spatial, meaning it occupies a portion of space. Therefore, the concept of spatiality or being spatial emerges. The important issue is that being spatial is conveyed through conceptualization, and this conceptualization can condition the mind and influence our perception of space. As agents and actors, although we come into the world in a pre-existing space, we also participate in its creation [4]. As a result, a dialectic emerges in which we are created in a space on one hand and, on the other hand, our life is conditional in that space, yet at the same time, we also have the possibility of agency in that space and influencing its creation.

Another issue that arises from this concept is the concept of place. Primarily, we perceive place as a physical entity and, for example, we say here, there, up, down, etc. These words in the linguistic structure and for describing place borrow from the concept of space. Although these concepts have specific meanings in each individual's mind, we almost universally share the idea that the upper class has a better economic status compared to the lower class, but to what extent and with what quality is a matter that varies among individuals. However, as Habermas says, we arrive at a consensus regarding concepts through an inter-subjective understanding [5].

Currently, "space" is of great interest and research in many fields including urban planning and architecture, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy. One prominent feature of this body of work is the collection of theoretical and empirical contributions from these diverse scientific traditions, with the aim of addressing some fundamental questions. These include addressing the nature of space in language, linguistic relativity of space, the relationship between linguistic spatiality and cognition of the concept of space [6]. Linguistic analyses highlight the nature of multi-dimensional and heterogeneous space, and emphasize the necessity of examining the interdisciplinary concept of space in different contexts .

## 3. Linguistic art in shaping the concept of space

The experience of space for citizens is an actualization of a lived experience; that is, being present in space and the experiences and interactions undertaken by the individual within it provides a basis for the understanding and conceptualization of space in the mind, or, in other words, in language and human thought [7]. However, how the three subjects of space, lived experience, and language come together in a systemic and intertwined relationship can be examined through the concept of "forms of life" and linguistic games in Wittgenstein's discourse. Wittgenstein's views on language are divided into an early and a later period; in his early thinking, he likened language to an "image," and in his later period, he likened language to a "tool." This difference holds great significance in the philosophy of language; an image, due to its nature, represents a specific state, while a tool, by virtue of its own nature, may be used for various purposes [8].

In the second mode, i.e., likening language to a tool, Wittgenstein turns away from the idea that "representation" is the essence of language and resorts to the idea that language consists of various tools for establishing communication with each other [9]. Therefore, Wittgenstein, in his early period, confined language to a limited domain that cannot encompass many concepts, but in his later period, he expanded the scope of language to include other concepts as well. At this stage, instead of formal and representational language, he focuses on conventional language used in everyday conversation and, regarding language as an instrumental concept, he expresses the condition for understanding it as its "use" in ordinary language and, in other words, he states that the use of words is the best way to express their meaning. He says: Understanding a language means being able to use it. Thus, Wittgenstein introduces the concept of "forms of life" and "linguistic games." That is, every language is a form of life, and every form of life has its own linguistic game. Therefore, it can be said that the image of a language is a conception of a form of life .

## 4. Listening to the Voice of the City

"Soundscape is an innovation that prioritizes our sense of hearing over other senses" [10]. Listening to the city was a kind of urban excursion that focused on hearing and was part of an experiential activity introduced to students inside the sound laboratory in collaboration with Christoph Toppolski during the calm city sound workshop (Figure 1).

**Figure 2: (a)(b) Soundscaping in Shipbuilding Workshop**

This unique method of sonic ecology and spatial sound movement has its roots. This method was initially developed in the 1960s by a Canadian composer named R. Murray Schafer and his group of researchers and was called the "World Soundscape Project." This method focused on creating an increasing auditory awareness of the sound environment and examining the space between art and science and our presence in it and our experience of it" [11].

The city's sound environment always fluctuates between regular irregular noises, occasional chaos, and many other sounds that interact with information. We only pay attention to how strange the sound of city silence is when a little aggressive noise hangs in the sound space or when something strange quiets the environment. The soundscape experience focused on listening, then recording, and ultimately analyzing the recorded segments of the city's sound environment. In its final stage, the focus was on sound visualization. Visualizing sound means giving reality to sound and creating a preconception of sounds in specific paths of the city, such as the city center, the industrial outskirts, and the surrounding areas. The city's geography is covered with a symphony of sounds created to reflect it [12]. The city's sound environment. The recorded sounds consist of a wide range of sounds that are of great importance to a specific area. The recorded sounds were selectively chosen to create a complex map of that area [13]. This map included recorded sounds related to every step, along with specific information about that area and the recording location. These recorded sounds were transformed into a reference sound for the city's geographical map and could be used as a kind of recorded music for the city. This sound lab, among other things, draws inspiration from the process of sonic ecology in the 1960s, which promoted this process from the mid-1960s to the 20th century by Murray Schafer and his research group, known as the "World Soundscape Project." According to Schafer, the sound environment is polluted, and Western modern culture has been focused on visual aspects while neglecting the importance of sound perception. Focusing on visual perception diminishes the importance of sound, but Schafer's sonic ecology insists that our environments should be approached like a musical piece [14]. The idea of sonic ecology focuses on the concept of the environment as a piece of music. According to Schafer, analyzing and understanding the sonic space of the environment is an essential step that leads to a conscious process of shaping this environment. The method of recording and listening to the recorded sounds related to a geographical area is an essential part of an artistic process suggested by the composer. This process has an important educational aspect. Overall, learning to listen and train in sound production leads to increased sensitivity and brings about different perspectives and abilities. This process can also lead to increased awareness of the non-visual values of space [15]. This demonstration explored the sensory aspects and characteristics of space and composed it for a particular architecture and sonic environment. The main goal of this workshop was to create an urban sound, and the final composition was formed from a sequence of exercises. Group members were required to get to know each other and explore their unique personalities [16]. They simultaneously analyzed the sonic characteristics and capabilities of the space and their roles within it. This demonstration took shape based on the individual abilities of each performer and was the final and most

significant part of the workshop. The performers drew inspiration from the auditory sensations of space and used ordinary objects such as their bodies and voices to create music and sound. They were inspired by what they observed in urban spaces, such as the sounds of people talking or walking, or the diverse sounds of nature amid the bustling urban environment. The culmination of this performance was the transformation of these unique and distinct sounds into a concise and complete piece of music that represented the city's sonic environment. The final composition, titled "City Sound," was an exceptional experimental performance. Each audience member could interpret it differently based on their sensory experiences. This non-visual demonstration that emerged from the urban space and architecture was a unique way to stimulate the creativity of the performers and engage the audience in a completely different way with their environment .

**Figure 3: The experience of a sound art project at the storytelling art festival.**

## 5. Multisensory Perception of Space

Another way to address the topic of multisensory perception of space was to create a complex visual and auditory online presentation of the city based on previous suburban movements and to present an exercise show of the urban environment. An important part of this stage was incorporating the experiences of participants in the city art festival, who were simultaneously involved and inspired by their methods (Figure 2). The city was depicted using traditional visual methods, and additionally, a sound map was created to provide a unique audio presentation for each distinct part of the city. Furthermore, each location was illustrated through films, images, and personal stories of those who focused on that specific area (Figure 3). The final product was a unique multidimensional and non-traditional architectural display of the area through a map and sound spaces, creating separate narratives of a complex urban space. Soundscapes and sound maps gave a real dimension to the city and delved into it in a way traditional architectural displays did not [17]. Participants in the sound map experience were encouraged to critically evaluate environmental sounds and consider how, while presenting a unique auditory path to follow a specific area and blending the sound with their urban experience, they engage in auditory environments.

**Figure 4: Comprehensive Perception Concept in Urban Space**

## 6. Conclusion

The future of architecture depends on the multi-faceted nature of the field and the advanced and innovative methods employed within it. This project demonstrates that art provides a tool to approach architecture innovatively. Through the language of art, we can introduce new approaches and establish a stronger connection between architectural concepts and audiences. Using art to connect with architectural concepts can serve as a feedback loop through which society can reflect the evolution of the field, provide feedback on spatial usage, and express ideas about architectural design. The described elements demonstrate a multi-faceted approach that causes fields such as architecture, art, electronics, urban sociology, anthropology, and media design to become interrelated. It is evident that future professionals must develop highly specialized competencies and strengthen their entrepreneurial abilities in order to successfully address global challenges. The proposed new forms of educational activities promote new methods of architectural education. In this way, these new methods often focus on the process of understanding and designing the multi-dimensional aspects of public spaces and, consequently, increasing awareness of their phenomenological characteristics. This long-overlooked approach provides new opportunities, and design studios can contribute to its transformation and shift attention towards innovative new methods of architectural design. Future approaches can propel this field forward and influence a better understanding of its contemporary manifestations. In addition to strengthening the scientific foundations, these methods and new approaches assist professionals and students in acquiring skills in utilizing advancements in various fields in architecture and urban planning. The expected results of learning will also provide new guidelines and unique suggestions for expanding existing learning programs in architecture schools by adding to their knowledge of sound art and new technologies and scientific research.

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