

Beyond the Visual: Art, Architecture, and Multisensory Experience

Constructing Meaningful Environments Through Embodied Perception and Spatial
Phenomenology

Presented by:

Mariana Lasneaux

Affiliation:

UNICAMP

Brasil

Beyond Visual-Centric Architecture

The Hegemony of Vision

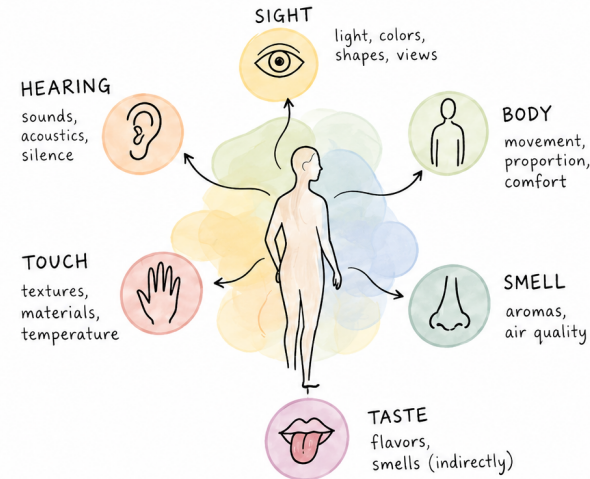
Modern built environments frequently prioritize visual apprehension and formal geometry, reducing architecture to image consumption.

The Embodied Paradigm

Architecture is lived, touched, heard, and moved through. Human experience requires an active field of interaction between body, space, and culture.

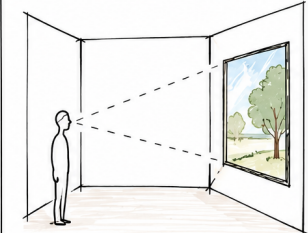
MULTISENSORY ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is not only seen – it is felt, heard, smelled, touched and lived.



BEYOND OCULARCENTRISM

For too long, architecture has been centered on sight – privileging the visual experience and treating the other senses as secondary.



OCULARCENTRISM REDUCES THE COMPLEXITY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND LIMITS THE POTENTIAL OF SPACE.

Foundational Perspectives on Aesthetic Experience

DEWEY (1934)

Art as Experience

Integrates bodily perception, emotion, and active engagement into a unified experiential flow.

RASMUSSEN (1959)

Experiencing Architecture

Emphasizes rhythm, scale, acoustic quality, and soft contours beyond visual geometry.

PALLASMAA (2005)

The Eyes of the Skin

Critiques ocularcentrism; advocates for tactile, acoustic, and peripheral sensory engagement.

Triad of Spatial Mediation



Kinesthetic Movement

Bodily transit, gravity, directionality,
and spatial navigation over time.



Materiality & Texture

Tactile warmth, resonance of
materials, acoustic echoes, and
light reflection.



Atmosphere & Memory

Immediate emotional attunement,
affective tone, and cultural
associations.

Transforming Abstract Space into Meaningful Place

Space → Place

Tuan (1977) & Norberg-Schulz (1980)

Human attachment and existential grounding convert geometric voids into meaningful habitats.

Genius Loci (Spirit of Place)

Environmental identity emerges through historical depth and sensory continuity.

Affective Appropriation

Occupants transform physical structures into personal and collective memory repositories.

Atmosphere and Emotional Attunement



Image: Zumthor, P. (1996). *Therme Vals* [Architectural design]. Vals, Graubünden, Switzerland.

ZUMTHOR (2006)

Architectural Atmospheres

Immediate emotional perception prior to conscious analytical thought—driven by light, sound, temperature, and shadow.

PÉREZ-GÓMEZ (2016)

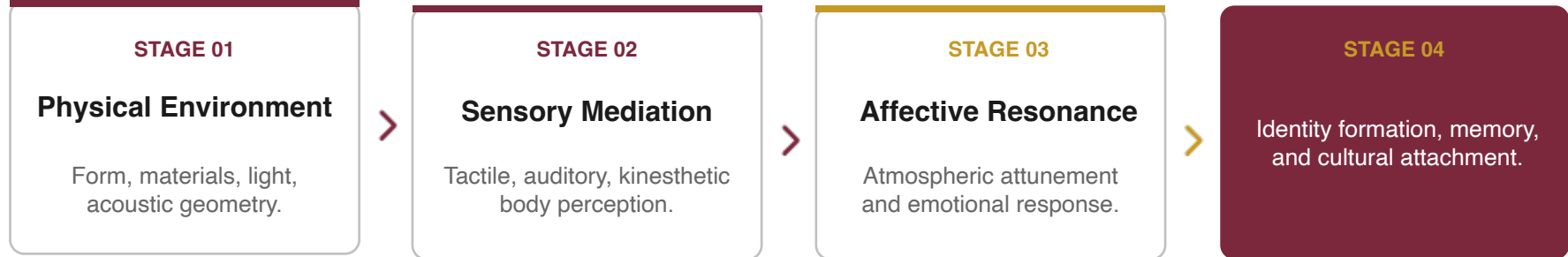
Attunement (Stimmung)

Restoring harmonious connection between human emotional wellbeing and spatial design.

Paradigm Comparison in Architectural Design

Dimension	Ocularcentric Paradigm	Multisensory & Embodied Paradigm
Primary Focus	Visual form, aesthetics, and photogenic geometry	Haptic experience, soundscape, tactile warmth
Human Role	Passive spectator observing external objects	Active participant inhabiting spatial fields
Spatial Result	Detached, intellectualized, formal space	Meaningful, emotionally resonant place
Pedagogical Value	Emphasis on visual rendering and 3D modeling	Emphasis on material prototyping and phenomenological analysis

The Spatial Meaning Generation Pipeline



Implications for Arts & Design Education



Pedagogical Shifts

Integrate 1:1 scale tactile prototyping and acoustic modeling into architectural design studios.



Holistic Practice

Train designers to map sensory atmospheres and human movement alongside traditional floor plans.



Human Well-Being

Foster environments that support neurodiversity, physical comfort, and deep emotional grounding.

Thankyou / Terima Kasih

Presented by:

Mariana Lasneaux

Affiliation:

UNICAMP

Brasil