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Space use as an input to the design process

Introduction

This paper aims to acknowledge the space conceived by the architect in the Design Studio as a built object and foremost a lived vessel that shelters and enhances experiences and human behavior. Consequently, it will first articulate space and use and it will draw attention towards the importance of considering space use, early on, in the Design Studio.

Hence, it will be crucial to point out the stages of the interdisciplinary process and its different stakeholders' contribution in each stage, assuming a *Pre* and *Post-Design* Participation. So, after referring to current approaches of Design Participation in the schools' curriculum, the paper will then address the Evidence-Based Design subjects, as diverse as they can be, considering them as an incisive way to assess the differences between expected and effective use, beyond the Design Studio and throughout the building's lifecycle.

1. Space-Use Reciprocity

Buildings are the instruments of life.

(Mendes da Rocha, 2006)

With this statement Pritzker Prize Laureate Paulo Mendes da Rocha recognizes architecture's feature as an influential subject to human behavior. But to this assertion it could be added its reciprocal dimension, the fact that people, with their appropriation of space, also change it and make it their own¹.



1. *Travelogues*, Diller Scofidio + Renfro. Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro. (www.dsrfny.com).

The recognition of the user's active role in the objects' definition was taken on by authors like Lefebvre (1974), Jauss's *Reception Theory* (1977) and Gadamer's *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (1976). Artistically, in the early beginnings of the 20th century, Duchamp already pointed out that the object had no absolute value but that it gained value and became complete with the individual experience of the spectators/users.

More recently, Jonathan Hill² transposes this to architecture, regarding:

[...] the creative user with a role as important in the formulation of architecture as that of the architect. To use a building is to alter it, either by physical transformation, occupying it in unexpected ways or conceiving it anew. A carpet of snow can be a bed or become a chair. Architecture is made by use and by design. (Hill, 2003, p.148)

Works like Diller Scofidio + Renfro's embody these concepts and, by valuing overall users' fruition of space, their works engage life within them from the first draft. For projects like *Travelogues* (New York, 2001) (fig.1) or *Arbores Laetae* (Liverpool Biennial, 2008) (fig.2), the sensory stimulus motivates the design experience and contributes to its full definition.

So, for the Design Studio Education it will be crucial to conceive space in regard to its future uses, with a deeper acknowledgment not only of the physical objects *per se*, but what they mean to the individuals' experience in space, embodying once more the words of Jonathan Hill:



2. *Arbores Laetae*, Diller Scofidio + Renfro. Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro. (www.dsrfny.com).