

How Design Affects Our Emotional and Physical Well Being at Home:

Changing Timelines of Art, Architecture & Design

Submitted for Partial Completion of the Requirements for

Research Topics in Art and Culture

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DECLARATION FORM

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Program: Industrial Art and Design Practices

Semester: 7 (ODD) 2019-20

Unit: Term Paper (General Studies)

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Introduction:

Human beings are and were influenced by art and architecture every day through continuous contact with functional and aesthetic forms through visual culture. We have encountered a continuous flow of pattern in the way art helps gather knowledge and inspiration that eventually contributes to how we speak and view the world. It has helped us gain insights into our cultures, traditions and transition in the socio-economic aspect of society. “Since time immemorial, art has existed as long as a man”¹. Art is a natural part of us and helps us achieve better self-awareness and helps bridge the gap between cultures. Almost everyone has some form of art in their homes; a painting, a photograph, a living room table centerpiece etc. Art, architecture and design fall hand-in-hand. They are interdependent of each other and yet pose an individual quality. Design and architecture are both strategic tools for achieving social and businesses objectives. Everything around us, everything we interact with has been in someone’s hands and dreams. They are in integral part of our lives, whether we are aware of them or not.

Our behaviour is influenced by objects and images that are surrounded by us. A good functional design, a beautiful painting, and welcoming interiors of a house are all essential components to understand our personal needs and appreciate the relationships we forge in this space today. In this growing world of technology, we are missing out on personal connections with ourselves and the people we share our space with, a creative space that gives us a chance to be inspiring, empowering and understanding our own social needs: It is important to remember how the history of art and architecture have impacted our lives and how design plays a role in bridging the gap between our wants, our needs and our emotional wellbeing. This paper will help realise and understand the importance of art, architecture and design in our lives, its revolutionary history and the reconstruction of everyday life.

¹ Lesli Walsh, “Why We All Need Art in Our Lives,” Michipreneur, April 11, 2013.

History of Art, Architecture, and Design and Changes it has Brought:

Art is visually striking and in the early 18th-20th centuries, the analysis of aesthetic qualities was indeed central in art history. During this time, art that imitated ancient Greek and Roman Art was considered to embody perfection. Five hundred years ago in renaissance Europe, this idea was originated and back then preservation of tradition was more valued than innovation. Art from the rest of the world was treated only marginally and from a colonialist perspective. Today, artists have turned away from the classical tradition, embracing new media and aesthetic ideals, and their opinions have shifted from understating its beauty and interpreting it in cultural ways². Art is subjective, it's a cultural construct that varies across time and is all around the space imbibed by our body. Art is a tool that emphasizes originality, creativity and imagination. The immense sociocultural changes that took place in the 20th century led to the shift in traditional focus on painting, sculpture, and architecture to include minor arts such as ceramics, textiles and contemporary media. Today, globalism has impacted as the biggest social development faced by art history. This change not only brought rise to new ways of art but gave a new perspective to other pursuits like architecture and design.

Architecture defines truth, and buildings, although inanimate, are to an extent morally superior to men. They always tell the truth about those who made and used them.³ It brings out stories of all historians and students of history through buildings and provides unbiased historical written and oral records. Visual insensitivity has become a built-in characteristic and because of it we frequently neglect our great architectural heritage, how it shaped our life before and what changes has it brought since then. The interpretation of history has always nearly been influenced by political and religious beliefs and by literary fashions. The

² IESA Arts & Culture. "Why Study Art History?." Accessed August 29, 2019

³ John Gloag. "The Significance Of Historical Research In Architectural And Industrial Design." *Journal Of The Royal Society Of Arts* 111, no. 5084 (1963): 635-48.

diffusion of knowledge, acquainted with certain mechanical rules has contributed to the perfection of work in architecture and design throughout the nineteenth century. Buildings, whether ruined or intact, have the ability to recreate the past for us and sometimes even provide a direction or inspiration for the future. It provides a notion of belief, faith and happiness. When use governs form, architecture becomes a piece of intellectual art: when emotion governs form, faith takes over. Faith, can move mountains, create great architectural masterpieces; emotions of love and grief created the Taj Mahal, faith in Christendom inspired the gothic cathedrals and churches in Europe and England, impact of Islam on the world and characters of the first Arab rules are demonstrated by the work of Muslim builders.⁴

Now preservation is not only the responsibility of historians but publishing accurate historical information about buildings is one of their functions and for this generation to understand and value it. The forthcoming generation should admire the turbulent inventiveness, the optimistic social experiments and appreciate the new Renaissance in architecture and industrial design.

Design is no longer easily ignored. It has grown to become a significant actor in pursuing the social, political and environmental challenges faced at global levels. Design has acquired many different meanings and associations because of refraction through still incompletely understood industrial, cultural and economic developments over the past 200 years. Design not only suffers from a general unwillingness of the culture to grant it the status of an activity worth studying and defining--an unwillingness shared by design practitioners who want design merely in terms of what designers do--but also form a fundamental ambiguity that the concept of design possesses.⁵ There exists a grouping of histories around the major design fields like industrial design, graphic design, communication design and in

⁴ Gloag, "The Significance Of Historical Research", 639.

⁵ Clive Dilnot. "The State of Design History, Part II: Problems and Possibilities." *Design Issues* 1, no. 2 (1984): 3-20. doi:10.2307/1511495

dealing with post-1945 works, they are separated from architecture, just as architecture education is separated from art and design education. However, this doesn't hide the fact that we see histories of design activities exploring the various meaning of the generic term design.

Design is the key to our surroundings and the values of design that are transparently embodied in the form of products in such a way that we do not need to articulate them, but we do in the process produce a conscious-deeper understanding of design. As John Walker recently pointed out, art history long ago ceased characterising art: its real function now is that of constructing a particular tradition or way of looking at art and the critical concepts associated with this tradition.⁶ Design appears in the objects and images resulted by circumstances that do not coerce form, but certainly often manifest in form. The very fact that these forms of design organisations so manifest circumstances means they also act as evidence, often in powerful patterns and objects as well as the forms of design processes, and have an archaeological status. Lukacs, whom Clark quotes, reads the “essence of history as lying within those structural forms which are the focal point of man's interaction with the environment at any given point” and which determine “the objective nature of both his inner and outer life”.⁷ As mentioned above, design has been separated from architecture; however they have the commonality of exploring, solving issues and improving emotional well-being.

Emotional Design and Well-Being at Home:

Emotions are reactions and feelings toward anything like object, place, people, and ideas. They either have pleasant or unpleasant quality. A substantial part of these emotions we feel is due to “cultural products” we use every day, such as art, clothing, accessories, and so forth. Emotions thus play a huge role in decision making and thus influence our purchase decisions. The challenge faced today by designers is how to design for emotions, or how do

⁶ John A. Walker, “<https://www.scribd.com/document/21509909/value-of-a-general-model>,” (Oct 23, 2009), .

⁷ Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, 153.

emotions impact our design choices. Design, therefore, occurs in a different framework than before, concerning social change, the conservation of resources and energy, emerging environmental problems, and customer-oriented trends.⁸ The emotional response triggered by the use of the products varies for people with different backgrounds and cultures.

‘Happiness’ and pleasure in product use has four different categories as given by Jordan(1997)⁹:

1. Physio-pleasure: related to touching and holding of a product.
2. Social-pleasure: related to social relations and communication that a product enables.
3. Psycho-pleasure: gained when a product helps the user to establish a task.
4. Ideo-pleasure: related to values that a product and its use represent or support.

The surprising factor is that now we have evidence that aesthetically pleasing objects enable us to work better.¹⁰ Attractive things make people think more creatively. An anxious and tense mind will lead to making complex decisions and the solution is to find alternative solutions. In other words, happy people are more effective in finding alternative solutions and can tolerate minor difficulties. A positive effect arouses curiosity, builds creativity and engages the brain in an effective learning process. One is likely to see the bigger picture and overlook small problems. Designers can get away easily and effectively if the task performed by the product is fun and enjoyable.

How does design invoke a positive and negative effect? Our brain is programmed in a way that, throughout evolutionary history--food, warmth and protection give rise to positive effect¹¹. Some conditions include comfortable places, harmonies music and sound,

⁸ Oya Demirbilek & Bahar Sener (2003) Product Design, Semantics And Emotional Response, Ergonomics, 46:13-14, 1346-1360.

⁹ Jordan PW, “The Four Pleasures-Taking Human Factors Beyond Usability”, (Tampere Finland, Finnish Institute For Occupations Health, Helsinki) 2.

¹⁰ Donald A. Norman, *Emotional Design - Why We Love (Or Hate) Everyday Things* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 10.

¹¹ Norman, *Emotional Design*, 29-30.

“attractive” people, rounded, smooth objects, bright hues and sensuous feelings. On the other hand, conditions such as heights, darkness, sharp objects, crowds of people, spiders, human faeces, appear to produce automatic negative affect. Our brain is prepared to learn language and structure, but the particular language we learn and the accent we speak in may differ with experiences. People’s minds work in various ways, and emotions, traits, moods and personality are all aspects of the emotional domain.¹² The way we use a product or service is all dependent on the emotional domain of the brain. They change as they are responsive to immediate events. The behaviour and reflective levels are sensitive to experience and our culture is what we choose to find appealing or not. So interpret we do, and over the many thousands or millions of years of evolution, we have coevolved muscle systems that display our emotions.¹³

Therefore as designers, the challenges are thought to be opportunities and there always find new approaches to explore. As a designer, one of the main motives is to satisfy the customer. The customer or user should feel a sense of belonging and satisfaction when using a product.

The distinction between the terms needs and wants is a traditional way of describing the difference between what is truly necessary for a person’s activities (needs) versus what a person asks for (wants).¹⁴

Our emotional wellbeing is, directly and indirectly, related to how we perceive the field of design and how designers find the appropriate audience and purpose.

Design finds itself in everything we see, we touch and we feel. The most significant aspect is that whatever we design, it is produced, received and used within an empathetically social context. Design is found in art, art is found in our homes, and homes are a major aspect in the field of architecture. The values associated with all the creative fields are defined as

¹² Ibid., 33.

¹³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁴ Ibid.

utility, aesthetic appearances or functional form and are produced and shaped by our culture, economic status and social upbringing.

The ways we design and create things and live in our surroundings are reflections of the world around us.¹⁵ Surprisingly, all the aspects are coherent to the space we call “home”. Home is a culmination of external factors such as architecture and design and how we get emotionally attached to our homes is usually shown by the way we design it and place objects or ‘art’. A home is a combination of space, relationships, people and place. It is a personal haven where we can recline, reconnect and revitalise after a long day. Our emotional and physical needs are satisfied in our confined space, which we call home. According to the IKEA Report 2016, millennials (18-29 years) have greater expectations of emotional features such as art and design and that their home is unique. Home is a place where the ‘we’ and the ‘me’ are dependent on each other. The ‘we’ relates to interactions and shared activities among family members that nurture and build relationships and the ‘me’ relates to one’s personal space for self-development. It is a place for recreation, a place for nurturing, a place to sit, eat and relax with your family and friends and place to be your own self.

How can we say that the things in our house affect our behaviour? First, how we express our identities; second, things we deliberately put in our homes for memories or creating thoughts that affect our own feelings; and the third way is how we relate to the activities we engage ourselves in. These aspects lead to a positive mind and thus lead to the realisation of values imparted from our historical backgrounds. It takes us forward in our lives and gives us a purpose. Design plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between our desires and our needs.

Conclusion:

¹⁵ IKEA, “Life at Home- What Makes a Home,” *IKEA Home Report #3* (2016).

As the research has demonstrated, it is important to understand our thoughts, our wants and our needs which are influenced by our past and present and can shape our future as well. The things we put in our homes are all reflections of our personalities and the essential building blocks of our wellbeing. Naturally, the home provides room for relationships in the best possible way, regardless of the space we live. There is a need to understand the link between our creative history and our future and the changes they have brought. Our home is a creative space that gives us a chance to be inspiring, empowering and understanding our emotional wellbeing through design. We are all designers. We manipulate our environments based on our needs, the things we keep in our living room, the furniture we use and the way we transform our houses into homes, spaces into places and things into belongings.¹⁶ Design is part of this occasion, but person interactions and emotional satisfaction is the key.¹⁷

If there is a universal golden rule that will fit everybody, this is it: Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.¹⁸

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¹⁶ Norman, *Emotional Design*, 224.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Morris, "The Beauty of Life, Birmingham Society of Art and School of Design, Feb 19, 1880.

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