

The Cutting-Edge: Extending the Boundaries into New Possibilities

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The first year of architectural studies emphasises exploration of medium, design understanding and real space involvement. The objective is building a thinking mind and creating a 'sense experience' in order to bring cutting-edge diversity and fundamental perception about basic architectural phenomenon. Understanding of the architectural design elements is not based on a formalistic approach. The students must observe, feel and connect their posture of 'self' with natural elements and man-made materials thus bringing these experiences into the architectural context. The students have to experiment natural mediums and understand the meaning of space through playful installations and design activities. Apart from that, the exercises also aim to enhance the process of visual perception while developing a student's skills in knowing and determining spatial relationships with objects and their properties. They become interactions of body performances with their natural surroundings transcending into new forms of behaviour, for their selves and others.

Basically, the curriculum helps students to understand the fundamental elements of visual vocabulary and translating design grammar of natural forms into a language of experience. Hence, this language acts as image and meaning of representation of the form. Image, according to Bergson (1993) – Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers - is the half way between them linking to the sense experience that might be perceived. More radically Bergson says, the body is an image which acts like other images and one image influences another according to 'the laws of nature'. The exercises combine the spirit of 'sense experience' and laws of nature into bodies of thoughts where human and environment are subjects extending boundaries into new possibilities. Its representation creates a notion of 'sense experience' and 'knowing' where it would establish an active quality which gives it a function in the spectacle of the natural surrounding and its existence. The 'sense experience' creates a vital communication with the world and it presents familiar setting in our life linking the dynamic and passivity of human with the natural environment. Students explored the meaning of senses, tried recognising a particular manner of being in a space and making a space. It is neither contradictory nor impossible that each sense should constitute a small world within the larger one. It is the virtue of sense's peculiarity that it becomes necessary to the whole and opens upon the whole.

The space becomes an object that leads to a new conception of intentionality, which treats the experience of the place as a pure act of constituting consciousness, by examining the symmetrical notion of form of perception, and in particular the notion of space. Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged but the means whereby the position of things become possible. (Merleau Ponty (1962). Phenomenology of Perception).

In conclusion, at the stage of fundamental architectural study, the idea of architectural projection is to create from the 'unconscious dimension of self' to 'self consciousness' and be aware of the absent of space through students' presence. It is important to stimulate the students and to involve them in the creation of a visual scene and how they posit themselves in certain circumstances of natural spaces. The site becomes an architectural phenomenon where they can interact and question their attendance to basic understanding of space and the object that they are creating. In creating these exercises, we wish to address the fundamental role of illustrating design activities (and pleasure) that demonstrate the basic design knowledge and its application. It addresses the works that might explain what appears to be a deliberate emphasis on anonymity as a form of architecture and art.

Jury Review

Nik Ariff Azmee

It would be a personal injustice of me to single out any of the works from A1 – A13 as they are works of expression by the students. I could not in all fairness deliberate a few of such expressions over the others. Each of these products are idiosyncratic in their respective forms and I could only recommend that they be exhibited collectively. As they are not strictly architectural pieces, the given criteria for assessment would be futile against them. Everyone should be congratulated for introducing students to the boundless realms of ideas and expressions when approaching architecture - in the absence of which, the exercises would then be a course of building rather than architecture.

I would like to recommend that the project for cardboard chairs be broadened by reducing it to a seating implement rather than pre-coded as a 'chair'. This is in anticipation that the result would then be much more innovative and varied rather than merely different versions of a chair.

Alas, the excitement of the first three projects began to wane considerably the moment the students approach what is more tangibly architectural. The *Singular Space Dimension* appears as preconceived forms into which ideas were incorporated rather than forms allowed to evolve over ideas.

For the *Singular Space Dimension* (SSD) project, the selection of A15 and A18 is primarily due to their execution of functions within the SSD without having to compartmentalise them into 'rooms'. There is the overall intent of making these spaces more interesting by introducing and placing what appears to be *objets d'art* but they seem to be just that rather than contributing to any interplay of light/shadow, solid/void, etc., into the space. Hence, the lack of substantial architectural quality about them.

It would therefore seem obvious that there needs to be a methodology that allows for architecture to be discovered in very much the same way students were allowed to discover expressions of themselves in the earlier projects of the semester. It would be probably more contiguous to seek development of ideas into architectural form rather than an architectural form or type-seeking ideas.