

Contributions For an Expanded Field of Theory of Architecture

This article reflects upon the modalities of ideation and idea representation within the Theory of Architecture disciplinary field, and more specifically in what concerns public space. The main question is if it's possible to academically implement an epistemological architecture approach less dependent and limited by the linearity of the linguistic discourse, and more able to expand to a imagistic discursiveness?

Conducted pedagogical experiments in the scope of the curricular unit "Teoria 3" (public space theory) of the integrated master degree in architecture at Architecture School of OPorto in Portugal (FAUP) indicate the feasibility of this reflexive field extension, provide data that points to the added value of such an approach and allows us to question the prevalence of research methodologies that are alien to the architecture field, and argue that within architectural research, the methods and processes that mobilize specific artistic cognitive knowledge, like the projective and synthetic communicational and visual skills, shouldn't be avoided and, by the contrary, it's use should prevail.

The description of the conducted experiment will be provided showing how in Teoria 3 the students develop experimental research, a precondition for theory formulation, using the instruments and methods familiar to architecture making.

The philosophical principle of continuity from Leibniz to Peirce - and even Deleuze - is the conceptual paradigm presented to students as a starting point to frame public space architecture, complemented by a instrumental reading proposal of public space as "the body on the move" (Fonseca, 2010). The approach main pedagogical instrument is the construction of a tridimensional analogical model, we call the **pSm - portable space model**, complemented by other processes like freehand drawing, digital drawing, taking measurements, mental calculus, photography, and graphic design. These processes are complemented with traditional discursive processes like bibliographic research, interviews, and writing.

Based in the results achieved by students attending to Teoria 3, and participants of the experiment, we will consider the advantages and disadvantages of such a pedagogical process.

The findings point to the enhancement of the students ability to deal with space information, as well as the enhancement of the students analytical and synthesizing cognitive processes in a critical and architectonically specific way, that is comprehensive of the issues that can be raised in each case, including forms of residence and forms of collective equipment. In fact, in the era of the debate towards void, sPm, drawings and other representations of the space phenomena in terms of real public spaces are a powerful alternative tool to question the preconceived knowledge we have of space and a critical and fruitful way to guide space intervention strategies.

We speculate that the reasons for these advantages may arise from the students direct contact with space, as they produce first hand real space representations as systematic survey. This is provided by three-dimensional models and bi-dimensional freehand

observational drawings as both tasks imply an interpretation of space that arises from an inherent confrontation between universal architectonic principles and architectonic circumstantial reasons. The sPm, drawing and the final graphic communication design also have revealed themselves as tools to update the knowledge of the physical organization of public space as a unitary concept of the human institutions form.