

Rebuilding Senses

Neuroscience / Psychology / Biophilia / Architecture

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Built environments, that include urban spaces, landscapes, and buildings, shape human lives profoundly. According to numerous scientific studies, disciplines such as biology, psychology, cognitive neuroscience and phenomenology steadily yield evidence of that the environments we create can alter our minds and our capacity for thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. This is a subject of growing importance as we face a 13% projected growth of world's urban population by 2050, which adds approximately 2.5 billion more people in need for places to live, work, and be educated, not to mention the associated demand for infrastructures through which to move, and landscapes in which to find refuge (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018).

This project is in part inspired by my attraction to spaces that evoke self-reflective thoughts and creativity through sensorial experiences. Presuming that the cause of such attraction is driven by a kind of human intuition which induces our fondness for certain physical sensations, this project is to explore existing knowledge of human neuroscience and psychology as well as their application on sensorial design in architecture, in the attempt to address their importance, if not necessity, during the on-going urbanization of our physical world, specifically as an agent which promotes mental, physical, and therefore social wellbeing of urban dwellers.

The project consists of two parts: first, the research of documented scientific studies on the biological relationship between the human mind and body, and the built environments; and second, an architectural design proposal in which the understandings of the previous part applies. In the latter part of the project, I wish to bring its subject to a greater relevance in our current world. Thus, I decided to adopt the issue of homelessness in downtown Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada as a vehicle for the design application, since I see it being a desperate crisis close to home. With that being said, the architectural design proposal in the second part of this project will be a building design for a homeless navigation centre at 52-92 East Hastings, Vancouver, BC, Canada.