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international ambiances network

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édito

«Bonjour l'ambiance!» were the opening words, on 10 September, of the Faire une ambiance / Creating an Atmosphere symposium in Grenoble. Our concern was not to start by defining something, enumerating its properties, delimiting the territory to which it applied, determining the skills involved, or not. Rather, because atmosphere is always a matter of feelings and emotions, we sought to toss up this familiar word and send it back with a more positive spin, just as we did for three days with the theme itself, exploring the upper reaches of a lazy, routine current of thought that repeatedly tells us that all there is to atmospheres is comfort technology, and all the rest is hot air.

To launch this long-haul task henceforth supported by the network presented in the following pages, here we were with more than 260 highly active participants, often correspondents in one of the 32 countries represented at the symposium, drawn from widely diverse professions ranging from artistic creation to research, from engineering to human sciences, and including a large contingent of architects, designers and town planners. All are convinced it is high time we bring together and confront all this learning, experience and skills working separately to qualify urban existence. All agree that we need meeting places to pinpoint just what contributes to making atmospheres and collectively acknowledge what such making requires in terms of coordination and inevitable responsibility.

My feeling is that, drawing on our work of reflection and participatory performances, and hel-

back on the symposium
creating an atmosphere

issue

ped on its way by the tonic good humour and constructive attitude of all present, something important started under the September sun, witness the many messages received after the symposium. In addition to the fruitful exchanges of learning and experience, the atmosphere was friendly and conducive, the least we could expect given the subject. I should like to express my warmest thanks to all those who contributed to this success: speakers, participants, organizers, funding agencies and correspondents. We now have a really encouraging idea of what was hiding behind that enigmatic green curtain - the emblem of the symposium - that together we started to lift. « Stay in the mood! »



Jean-François Augoyard

2009 symposium in BRASIL

As part of the international Ambiances network, a symposium is being organized this year in Brazil. The gathering, entitled **Sharing Urban Atmospheres: culture, body and language**, will be held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 6 November 2009. The symposium, with proceedings in Portuguese and French, concerns everyone in the network who feels interested by this subject.

How do urban atmospheres express forms of shared sensibility and ways of being together? In what respect do they impact on the way we coexist in public spaces? What role does the perceptible play in the emergence of different forms of urban culture and sociability? These will be some of the questions raised in Rio.

Alongside atmosphere, this is also a matter of addressing urban experience in a new way, paying particular attention to the sensory aspects of social life, the tiny sense impressions that we soak up in a place, the bodily expressions of city-dwellers and the often infra-conscious ways of being by which we make contact with others.

Sharing sensory experience in public places will be explored from three complementary angles: culture, body and language.

In addition to talks, urban interventions will be staged during the symposium, a rich source of experimentation [experience] and debate.

Overall management of the symposium will be in the hands of Cristiane Rose Duarte (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), with Paola Berenstein Jacques (Federal University of Bahia), Carolina Rodriguez (Labeurb, Campinas University) and Jean-Paul Thibaud (Cresson, UMR CNRS 1563, ENSA Grenoble).

Contact Cristiane Rose Duarte
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2010 seminar in SWEDEN

Ambiances network annual seminar will be held in Goteborg (Sweden) during the Göteborg Art Sounds (= GAS festival). Theme : Sound and light design

It will be in english and french.

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www.ambiances.net

The website www.ambiances.net, which came online last September, is beginning to grow accustomed to the complex role it fulfils, at the interface between representing a nascent international network's activities and broadcasting scientific, artistic, professional and educational news concerning its members.

In terms of figures, over the last three months **120 individual members** have registered (51 researchers, 22 teachers, 21 students, 19 professionals, 1 artist and 6 «non-specified» persons) as well as **11 research laboratories** (not including Cerma and Cresson) on four continents.

www.ambiances.net, also means **6 published editorials** that address, by way of sensory approaches, as many postures that call into question representations, method(s), scale(s), or more simply points of view which the topic of atmosphere, by its very nature, encourages us constantly to enrich and renew.

Which explains what is at stake with this micro-news channel in which comments, quips, positions, accounts of experiments, etc. are always welcome. So please contribute !

Damien Masson

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creating an atmosphere

10 - 12 septembre 2008

Grenoble

Sharing

«If I go to the pub or to the square outside, I say that it's a nice atmosphere or a bad one. In that sense, atmosphere is an inter-subjective concept, something that you share with a lot of people, it is connected with feelings and with cultural issues.»

Björn Hellström (Suède)

Architecte & Designer acoustique

teacher associated searcher at Konstfack

senior consultant Ingeneerr, ÅF-Ingemansson AB

«They are, perhaps above all, the people moving about in these decors [film, urban, etc.] who make the atmosphere, in the way they behave towards one another [...]. Different atmospheres emerge from 'being together' and if the mood of 'being together' is hostile, for example, the material and sensory elements that contribute to the whole will never succeed in turning it into a warm and friendly atmosphere; the opposite, on the other hand, is the case.»

Alain Findeli - (Canada)

Professeur honoraire, chercheur à la Chaire en paysage et

environnement de l'Université de Montréal;

chercheur invité à l'Université de Nîmes

Atmosphere, who are you?

During breaks in the symposium Martine Chaze-las and Françoise Acquier questioned some of the participants, researchers, teachers and organizers. They rose to the difficult task of defining the notion of atmosphere in one sentence!

Thanks to them.

«All that we can perceive through bodily experience - of the architecture or urban space - over and above what is explicit in its formal design. We each have our own way of perceiving, so it is impossible for two different people or experiences to have the same perception of a single space.»

Paola Berenstein Jacques (Brésil)

Professeur de la Faculté d'Architecture de

l'Université Fédérale de Bahia

Combination

«A combination of emotions, memories and thoughts prompted by a place.»

José Luis Carlès (Espagne)

Professeur Universidad Autonoma De Madrid

«Atmosphere may be defined as a sum of physical agents, living or not, that act on human emotions.»

Caterina Tiazzoldi (USA)

Directrice de l'agence C.Tiazzoldi / Nuova Ordentra et du centre de recherche NSU a l'Ecole d'architecture de Columbia University - Chercheur Associée Politecnico di Torino (Italie)

Entre-deux/In-between

«The concept of atmosphere is just that, the in-between, between the built object and the subject who is alive and acting, bearing in mind that the object itself changes with the subject.»

Alia Ben Ayed (Tunisie)

Enseignante à l'Ecole Nationale d'Architecture à Tunis (ENAU)

«An invisible medium between the environment and humans.»

Rainer Kazig (Allemagne)

Enseignant-Chercheur Université de Bonn

Feelings

«It is the impressions and feelings of a subject with regard to the objects or beings surrounding him or her, and in which it is immersed.»

Jean-Pierre Peneau (France)

Chercheur associé du CERMA

«It is what I sense in an environment that enables me to communicate with others.»

Michèle Sustrac (France)

Urbaniste-Puca

Spatial experience

It's taking account of the built space using various sensory modalities in order to enrich the way we live that space functionally, emotionally and psychologically.»

Marc Crunelle (Belgique)

Enseignant à l'Institut Supérieur D'Architecture Intercommunal - Horta

«Atmospheres are the way we describe our relationships with places. As such they come close to the notion of landscape.»

Caroline Lavoie (Etats-Unis)

Professeur(e) agrege(e), Utah State University - Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning

Enigma

«One possibility is to go for synonymous, but ideally the question that it poses to me has to be answered in different ways in different languages because there is a real problem in the overlapping of these kinds of things ...»

Mirko Zardini (Canada)

Directeur général et conservateur en chef

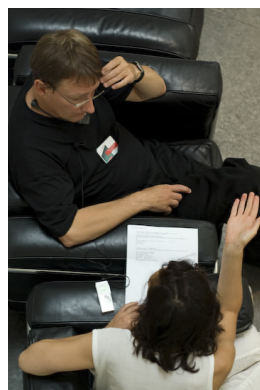
Centre Canadien D'Architecture

«This concept is fuzzy, the word says much more than a whole sentence. We destroy it by trying to pin it down!»

Thomas Ouard (France)

Doctorant / Cerma

Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Nantes



symposium atmospheres

A free-flowing account of the symposium based on various impressions, remarks and passing words from participants during the three-day event.

We spent three days in symposium at Grenoble art museum, surrounded by modern architecture, in a place that procures a feeling of tranquillity, with a touch of isolation. As we enter the venue, sound comes to meet us in a brightly lit foyer, in which it is possible to see all that is going on. We climb to the conference room, more traditional in its architecture, with a slightly intimidating tribune, which tends to create a distance between speakers and public.

The symposium starts. More than 200 people, some from very far away, others from close at hand, constitute **a significant mixture of nationalities** and disciplines.

The opening lecture by Jean-François Augoyard sets the tone – very friendly and moving, but exciting too. So off we go.

What about the content of talks? There is a large diversity of approaches to the notion of atmosphere, dominated by **openness and pluridisciplinarity**. A genuine richness that deserves to be cultivated in the future. And then a little scrap of music, growing steadily louder, at the end of each talk, the sign that it is time to conclude. This little auditory reminder is surprising at first, but we get used to it, as it sets the cadence for speakers.

Entering the translation booths, we discover they are really small. But though the translators are very keen in their translation of talks they suffer from a lack of fresh air and the relentless pace of presentations.

But then there are those little film extracts that punctuate the sessions of the symposium. What a good idea, switching from one atmosphere to another. A fine form of punctuation. On the other hand the poster sessions are tougher going. They coincide with breaks, a time when there is



a powerful inclination to leave the conference room to relax, so we only lend half an ear, half an eye, which is a pity. There is still a little room for improvement. Debate continues over lunch at the museum's restaurant.

We should not forget that there is also plenty of atmosphere outside, with the **urban strolls** organized at the end of the day, an opportunity to meet and make closer acquaintance. These sensory walks are particularly appropriate for a symposium devoted to atmospheres, conveying a highly intuitive approach to the theme itself. The walks were a visible success.

The atmosphere seems to gel in this way, with all these opportunities for informal encounter, thanks to the time set aside for exchanges between researchers, to the contacts made outside the conference room. **A mixture of French-style academicism and genuine good humour**, in the words of one participant.

Atmospheric walks

The idea behind these urban strolls was to offer those attending the symposium hands-on experience of atmospheres in the historic centre of Grenoble.

Four interweaving routes, carefully chosen for their sensory qualities, were a chance to meet and exchange sensations – through body, hearing and smell – prompting a new reading of the urban space.

- « **Cheminements mouvementés** »

(*eventful tracking*) played on several basic ingredients of dance: involving space and varying rhythms to take a fresh look at ordinary things by transforming the way we walk.

- « **Parcours sonore** » (*sound path*)

opened up a sometimes disregarded side of our urban spaces, alternating between an active listening attitude to identify sound effects and a more contemplative stance, enjoying the pleasure procured by hearing.

- « **Silences odorants** » (*fragrant silences*)

took routes for the good of our noses, venturing several times well away from the ordinary odours of the public space.

- « **Sculptures de corps** » (*body sculpture*),

with its dialogue between bodies and built space, completely changed our perception of the scale of place.

Thanks to these simple bodily exercises, the gestures and speech of walkers once again demonstrated the magic of urban atmospheres while reasserting three assumptions previously posited by the Rendez-vous collective :

Atmosphere is an eminently bodily experience, and the interplay of displacement and movement in a built space guides its perception.

We are both actors and receivers in the sensory space in which we live.

The collective experience of atmospheres perceived and shared enhances the way we look at the public urban space.

Chantal Dugave & Cécile Regnault



Collectif Rendez-vous
 Chantal Dugave, artiste, architecte
 Marie-France Garcia, danseuse, chorégraphe
 Cécile Regnault, architecte, concepteur sonore
 with collaboration of
 Suzel Balez, architecte,
 Simon Bailly, danseur
 Julien Delas, musicien
 Patrick Romieu, ethnologue
 Damien Masson, photographe

Ricardo Atienza-Badel *L'identité sonore urbaine. Research into how the concept of sound identity can be incorporated in the elaboration of an urban project*, for a thesis presented on 19 December 2008

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Grégoire Chelkoff *Cartophonie sensible d'une ville nouvelle: exploration du patrimoine sonore de l'Isle d'Abeau*

Cresson report n°74 - 2008
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Ana Lidia Dominguez Ruiz *La sonoridad de la cultura : cholula : una experiencia sonora de la ciudad* - Universidad de las Américas Puebla (Puebla - México), 2007. - 220 p. master's thesis - ISBN 978-970-8190-03-9.

Listening to sounds reveals our everydaylife and social world. This master's thesis attempts to define the notion of sonic culture «sonoridad de la cultura». The city studied here is Cholula (Mexico) : its markets, its bells, its feasts, its nights, its new areas.

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Cristiane Rose Duarte The Architecture, Subjectivity and Culture research group at the Architecture Faculty at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is mounting research actions focussing on methodologies for analyzing cultural and psycho-social factors in urban atmospheres. Apart from the importance to marking the boundaries of atmosphere, as a concept, the group of researchers is studying the feelings and behaviour patterns that some atmospheres produce in the users of urban spaces. This is a new field of research, opening in several directions, and certainly contributing to the understanding of new life styles in our big cities.

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Rainer Kazig *Die Alte Stadt*, Heft 2/2008 Special issue «Stadt und Atmosphäre», edited by Jürgen Hasse

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Editorial (Jürgen Hasse)

Die Stadt als Raum der Atmosphären. Zur Differenzierung von Atmosphären und Stimmungen (Jürgen Hasse)

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Der Bahnhof, Ort spürbarer Phasenwechsel (Claudia Wucherpennig)

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Städtische Atmosphären im Spiegel der Fotografiegeschichte (Boris von Brauchitsch)

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Valeria Merlini *Come generare un'atmosfera*, an article in Italian on Digicult about the Creating an Atmosphere symposium, a short summary of the three beautiful days we spent in Grenoble.

<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=1292>

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CCA-Mirko Zardini After the exhibition *Sense of the City*, the CCA has continued its exploration of architecture and design related to atmosphere and the senses producing an installation with Philippe Rahm, *Météorologie d'intérieur*. This installation was presented in the CCA exhibition *Gilles Clément / Philippe Rahm: environ(ne)ment: manières d'agir pour demain* = approaches for tomorrow and at *Manifesta 7* in Rovereto, Italy (summer 2008).

Recently we have worked with Canadian university students researching the concept of Cold www.cca.qc.ca/documents/PowerCorp_final_2008.pdf as well as co-organizing an interuniversity charrette on the issue of housing in the North www.cca.qc.ca/charrette.

For further information on these activities, visit the CCA website at www.cca.qc.ca

Dr Ingrid Vogels - Philips Research

Experiencing Light 2009 : International Conference on the Effects of Light on Wellbeing, Eindhoven (NL) . 26-27 October 2009

<http://www.experiencinglight.nl>

Extended abstract deadline : 1st march 2009

ingrid.m.vogels@philips.com

Nathalie Simonnot et Eric Monin



International symposium

Luminous architecture in the 20th century (1907-1977). Applications of electricity in lighting buildings: research, design, development, reception ENSA Nantes, december 10th-12th 2009

<http://www.cerma.archi.fr/CERMA/architecture-lumineuse>

Call for papers : before may 15th 2009.

architecture.lumineuse@cerma.archi.fr

Online Proceedings

The proceedings of the international symposium *faire une ambiance/creating an atmosphere* are now available on-line.

<http://www.ambiances.net/?p=100>

Don't forget to registrate on the website [ambiances.net](http://www.ambiances.net)

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