CURATING CITY INTENSITIES
The unravelled sensory experience of the urban public realm

PS presentation
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CURATING CITY INTENSITIES

PROBLEM STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

APPROACH

EXPERIENCE

DESIGN PROPOSAL

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CONCLUSION
Balance in a spectrum of city intensities

A sequence of tranquil and vibrant public spaces

- Lack of stimuli (Sensory deprivation)
- Sensory exposure
- Coexistence and balance of tranquillity and vibrancy
- Overload of stimuli

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Ocular-centric obsession
The one-sided sensorial view of contemporary societies

“The sight separates us from the world, while the rest of the senses joins him.”
- Juhani Pallasmaa, Eyes of the Skin 1994
Intensity over density
Different sensory perceptions of intensity due to shifting stimuli over time and the subjectivity for the individual makes the measurability difficult and subjective.

Fig 13. Vision and tactility, Herbert Bayer 1932
Acceleration of the Urban Rhythm
Affecting well-being and health

Video still of motorised and lightened vehicles in motion, Koyaanisqatsi 1982
The drifter as centre point

The aim

THE DRIFTER SHOULD BE...

NOT SPECTATOR BUT PARTICIPANT

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CONCLUSION
Theoretical framework
Embodied, inclusive and multi-sensorial experience and overlapping domains

Anthropogeography
Participants

Urban geography
The public realm

Psychogeography
The drift

Sensescape

Lived space
Experiential

Conceived space
Conceptual

Perceived space
Spatial/Material

Geographies, production of space and sensescape, image by author 2022
Theoretical framework
Embodied, inclusive and multi-sensorial experience and overlapping domains

PARTICIPANTS

CITY

Anthropogeography
Conceived space
Lived space
Psychogeography
The drift

Psychogeography

Urban geography
The public realm

Sensescape

Perceived space
Spatial/Material

Geographies, production of space and sencescape, image by author 2022
The Sensescape

A landscape with one or multiple architectural interventions that is integrated within a social and environmental context that will help an inclusive, embodied and multi-sensorial experience. The design must give way to the embodied practices of being in the world, including ways of seeing but extending beyond sight to both a sense of being that involves all the senses and an openness to being moved. The sensory values of a sensescape are found not just in the architectural intervention but also in its social and environmental context.
THE INTRODUCTION
Research question

// How can the design of a sensescape in the urban public realm evoke an inclusive, embodied, and multi-sensory experience for its participants, achieving balance in the perceived city intensities?

// Why and for whom is the balance in the perception of city intensities important for the impact of the accelerated metropolitan mode of living?

// How can the phenomena of city intensities and the senses in architecture be redefined?

// Where should the inclusive, embodied, and multi-sensory experience be introduced in London’s Central Activities Zone?

// Which atmospheric, spatial, and material representations of sensory stimuli from the urban public exterior and interior spaces can be identified to help an inclusive, embodied and multi-sensory experience?

// How can these atmospheric, spatial, and material representations be translated into a programme and design for a sensescape in the urban public realm a the city on different scales?
Research question

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The contextual layers of intensity

Drift through layers and networks of intensity, image by author 2021
The contextual layers of intensity
Focus on the sensorial layer

Sensory layer

Cultural layer

Accessibility layer

Ecological layer

Public layer

Activity layer

Programmatic layer

‘The Drift’

Drift through layers and networks of intensity, image by author 2021
THE APPROACH
The experiments
THE MANIFESTO FINDS ITS WAY THROUGH ALL THE SCALES OF...

DECLARATION OF MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS FOR AN EMBODIED, INCLUSIVE AND MULTI-SENSORY DESIGN APPROACH TO URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

MANIFESTO FOR THE SENSESCAPE

Want to listen to the manifesto? Scan this QR code:
1 CONTRAST AND GRADIENCE

A. Create a play and contrast in temporarily enabling or disabling specific senses (sensory deprivation or exposure). When a space disables or reduces a certain sense, the other sensory experiences will get stronger.

B. To avoid uncomfortable overstimulation, pick one sense to deliberately overstimulate while keeping the others at a manageable level. Avoid an exposure for an extended period of time but working towards a low or high intensity space by slowly building this into the routing, programme and materiality. This could be executed by using a (traffic) buffer zone or by orienting the programme inwards.

C. Vary in heights, shapes, sizes, materials and atmospheres (air, light, warmth, etc.) of outdoor and indoor spaces matching with the desired level of intensity. Activation of the senses is possible through noticeable contrasts in intensities that should not become so big that the human scale will be lost. Make use of archetypal building forms.

D. It is beneficial to become acclimated to a wide, busy or tall outdoor or indoor space by entering it concealed. If the transition is gentler and more smooth, the threshold for entering a space is lower. The expansion and compression of space along the paths will also encourage movement.

E. Multimodal motorized transport, multi-directional infrastructure and mixed-use (public) programme provide more sensory exposure (networks), whereas pedestrians or cyclists, linear infrastructure and residential (private) programme provide more sensory deprivation (pockets). For curating intensity, make use of archetypal building functions that compel these atmospheres. There are public programmes where places of overexposure are unavoidable, such as station buildings, churches and market halls. To avoid or escape the buzz while still enjoying the programme, greater attention must be given to the traffic and opposing tranquil spaces in or around the space.
THE EXPERIENCE
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THE DESIGN PROPOSAL

A network of sensescapes, the 15-minute city focused on London
History London
The sensorial intensity of the public realm of Bankside
THE MANIFESTO

1 CONTRAST AND GRADIENCE
2 SOUNDSCAPE
3 SENSE OF BASIC-ORIENTING
4 SPACES OF REST AND MOVEMENT
5 LIGHT AND WARMTH
6 MATERIAL AND COLOUR
7 SMELLSCAPE
8 HAPTICSCAPE
9 ELEMENTS IN SPACE

CURATING CITY INTENSITIES

The intensity of London’s public realm measured by programme in the Central Activities Zone

“When public programmes expands and mixed-use is common, city intensities will get higher.”
THE MANIFESTO

CONTRAST AND GRADIENCE

SOUNDSCAPE

SENSE OF BASIC-ORIENTING

SPACES OF REST AND MOVEMENT

LIGHT AND WARMTH

MATERIAL AND COLOUR

SMELLSCAPE

HAPTICSCAPE

ELEMENTS IN SPACE

Imbalance between vibrant and tranquil pockets

The 15-minute city in London
A network of sensescapes

A network of Sensescapes in London’s Central Activities Zone that can restore the balance between vibrant and tranquil spaces and the perceived level of intensity.
Contextual analysis: Boroughs and opportunity areas Southwark
Zoom in on area 5 with undeveloped and unused plots
THE DESIGN PROPOSAL

The master plan, Pockets versus networks
Psychogeographical drifts led by intensity levels by day and night

The urban study of how the built environment (intentionally or unintentionally) impacts people's emotions and behaviours.

The drift A-B
Guided by high intensities

The drift A-G
Guided by low intensities
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Previous masterplan proposal
Brownfield plot Landmark Court as vibrant extension

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Proposal programme, U+I 2022
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Contextual analysis: 15 minute city 1:7500
Plots (red), buildings, waterbodies, (public) green and railway system
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Scale M: Initial programme masterplan
Public, inclusive and experiential layer

Sensescape
Response to social and environmental context

The experiential layer
Cautefully curated sequence of exterior and interior spaces that awakens different sensorial stimuli

The public layer
Church
Market
Street
Chapel
Picnic area
Passage

The inclusive layer
Graveyard
Revitalized Graveyard
Library

Create a combination of a recreational and natural setting within the inward oriented programme

Create sensorial buffer to facilitate inward oriented tranquil programme

Tea house
Orangerie/Greenhouse
Botanical garden
Courtyard
Enclosed garden

Mixed-use plinth with retail
Residential units
Offices
City square

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SENSE OF BASIC-ORIENTING
SPACES OF REST AND MOVEMENT
LIGHT AND WARMTH
MATERIAL AND COLOUR

SMELLSCAPE
HAPTICSCAPE

ELEMENTS IN SPACE

THE DRIFT IN MASTER PLAN

A path for drifting along the spectrum of intensities with architectural interventions mapped out in a master plan with relatively vibrant and tranquil spaces, as well as their interaction.

1 Plot 1
Orangerie as circulation space with winter garden and building entrance
Public library with shelving, listening and reading area, study/work spaces, reception
Teahouse with bar, dining space, relax space, tea ritual spaces, tea room, storage, kitchen and shop
Botanical garden with herbs, plants and fruits for the supply of the teahouse and fencing for nighttime
Revitalized graveyard with public open green space
Gallery space for haptic workshops
Mixed-use plinth with programmatic activation of the street such as retail
Offices and residential units in the storeys above the activated plinth with access space

2 Plot 2
Public canopy with picnic area
A variety of seatings and dining tables for different group sizes in the open air

3 Plot 3
Meditation chapel or pavilion
A contemplation space with place to rest, sit or lie down

Passages
Publicly accessible railway underpasses
programmatic infill arches
Circulation space
Analysis site conditions: Connections
Three plots connected via the railway crossings and the roads

Connections plots, Image by author 2022
THE DESIGN PROPOSAL

The sensescape, a tranquil design for the exposure of the vibrant area
Analysis site conditions: Noise pollution 1:5000
Noise in dB, buildings, waterbodies, green and railway system
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The current use
Related to layers of intensity
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Analysis site conditions: Public programme
Surrounding programmes
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9 ELEMENTS IN SPACE
**Programme** | **Front of house** | **Back of house** | **Key elements**
--- | --- | --- | ---
**The inclusive library** | Reception/information area | Staff office area | Front desk | Toilets & sinks
Cloakroom | Closed storage area | Coat rack | Desks
Restrooms | Meeting room | Lockers | Computers
Collection area | Special-use room | Shelving system | Cabinets
Read/study area | Bookcases | Lockers | Computers
Seating | Tables | Shelving | Cabinets
Lounging | Chairs | Greenery
Garden area | Couches | Fountain

**The tea room** | Restrooms | Bar | Dishwasher
Cloakroom | Food preparation area | Countertops | Lockers
Waiting/entrance area | Food cooking area | Sinks | Bench
Bar area | Plating area | Shelving | Hatch
Dining area indoor + outdoor: | Cleaning/Washing area | Cabinets | Chairs
Seating | Refrigeration area | Refrigerators | Tables
Lounging | Staff room | Ovens | Couches

**The greenhouse** | Grow space outdoor | Storage area | Soil | Countertops
Grow space indoor | | Herbs | Heat lamps
Manual tea production area: | | Plants | Ovens
Withering room | | Trees |
Rolling room | | Cabinets |
Oxidation room | | Racks |
Drying room | | Shelves |

**The gallery** | Exhibition area outdoor | Storage area | Chairs | Desks
Exhibition area indoor | Kitchen area | Tables | Toilets & sinks
Restrooms | | Shelves | Kitchen units
Shopping area | | Cabinets |
Ramping area | Storage area | Shelving and rack units | Cabinets
Seating area | Restrooms | Counters | Kitchen units

**Retail** | | Shelving | Toilets & sinks
Clock area | Traffic areas: | Signage | Benches
Corridor | Mechanical space area | Guidelines textured (emergency) | Artificial lighting
Outdoor atrium | Emergency exit area | Doors | Bells
Vertical access | | Windows | Greenery
Walking areas | | Installations | Drainage
Seating areas | | Stairs |

**Proposal scale S**
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9. ELEMENTS IN SPACE

Analysis site conditions: Public programme
Surrounding programmes

Analysis site condition zoom in programme: Public programme surrounding plots, image by author 2022
Volumetric archetypes
Related to contrast, intimacy and soundscapes
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ELEMENTS IN SPACE

Detail roof, trusses, masonry wall and flying buttress

1 Marley Hawkins fired clay roof tile
2 timber batten (20 x 30 mm)
3 timber batten (20 x 30 mm)
4 water resistant foil
5 insulation (thermafleece) part of SIP
6 chipboard SIP
7 wall anchor
8 wall plate
9 timber beam
10 hard insulation
11 gutter with repetitive supports
12 truss from glued laminated timber beams (250x300mm)
13 hard fired brick, Heathflower van der Sanden (210x100x50 mm)
14 timber beams (300x200mm)
15 steel profile (350 mm)
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ELEMENTS IN SPACE

Detail foundation concrete slab with terrace swing doors

1 timber window frame
2 water resistant foil
3 weephole
4 hard insulation
5 chipboard
6 insulation
7 hard fired brick, Heathflower van der Sanden (210x100x50 mm)
8 timber beam
9 kerto ripa floor (240 mm)
10 sound insulation (75 mm)
11 timber batten (30 x 20 mm)
12 timber mounting beams
13 steel lintel for brick facade
14 timber door frame
15 sunscreen attached to door
16 terrazzo floor
17 insulation
18 heat radiation panel

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55/65
Detail foundation concrete slab with terrace swing doors

1. triple glazing HR++
2. timber door sill
3. natural stone doorstep
4. hard insulation block
5. water resistant foil
6. hard insulation part of bardge board
7. water drainage
8. concrete part of bardge board
9. concrete foundation slab
10. foundation insulation
11. white matt ceramic floor tile 200 x 200 mm)
12. mortar
13. sound insulation

Detail foundation joint A3   1:10

50cm
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