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Spatial Emotions

Nur Dalilah Dahlan

The fourth semester students of the Bachelor of Design (Architecture) were given a brief to design a built-up area of 1500 m² film gallery that consists of exhibition area, curator's office, workshop, staff lounges, reception area and car parks. Five studio tutors were appointed as supervisors throughout this 7-week project. The proposed site is located on a hilly area with a 10-degree gradient that overlooks the Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, the main entrance of Universiti Putra Malaysia and the suburban view of Serdang town. This strategic location will make the design stand out in the landscape.

This process-based research method of contextualizing popular culture of film within the teaching model of architecture design is focused on the students' ability in interpreting their understanding of film into a spatial representation of architectural building. In that regard, they are introduced to the semiological analysis of identifying sign messages through the complexity of images, gestures, music, sounds and objects from their selected films. A 4-phase designing process was introduced namely: contextual analyses, literature search, introduction to semiology and testing the ideas.

Phase 1: Critical contextual analysis

In the first phase, the students were asked to conduct specific site contextual analysis with respect to the physical environmental and socio-cultural issues such as site contour, micro-climate response, vehicular and human circulation patterns, and infrastructure services. It was later followed by the building's contextual analysis in which the students critiqued the contemporary practice of designing visouspatial gallery institution (to state a few, the blobby Kunsthaus Graz by Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, Denmark Pavilion of BIG Group, Singapore Art Museum, Berlin Holocaust Museum of Daniel Libeskind, and Malaysian National Art Gallery) as their precedent. Special attention was given to investigate the conception, topology, and spatial configuration of the studied buildings in order to understand their design philosophy. The critical information from the analyses were discussed in a seminar class and compiled as the 'design data bank' for the students' reference.

Phase 2: Literature search

In this second phase, the students were asked to choose their interested film genre such as horror, crime, musical, melodrama and action thriller. By conducting critical review from specific literatures such as film journals, magazines, pamphlets, online websites, and documented interviews, the

students were divided into film genre groups in order to discuss their respective findings. At this stage, special attention was given to understand the visual sociologic phenomenon of popular culture; in which the students formulate their theoretical proposition in understanding how the popular culture of film is shaping public taste and its relationship with design thinking.

Phase 3: Introduction to the media semiotics

In this third phase, the discussion of media semiotics was introduced by the studio tutors. The complexity of how the meanings of visual cultural media, in this case, the film, communicated through sign messages was discussed with special attention to address the issues of spatiality, functionality, and sensitivity in architectural design. Bringing further the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2, intensive discourses were conducted in small focus groups in order to critique the students understanding on how the critical polemics of popular culture, film, and public taste are relevant with the architectural design of film gallery.

Phase 4: Testing the ideas

Based on their findings from the previous Phase 1, 2 and 3, the students produced series of representations: conceptual sketches and mock-up models in order to test their design ideas. Throughout the process, the studio tutors formulate the 'scenario-based problem' when trying to question the functionality and practicality of the proposed design. At this stage, the one-to-one reasoning dialogues between the students and tutors were conducted consistently during the individual critic sessions as a way to formulate justified arguments and consensual agreements towards the proposed design.

The proposed Film Gallery Project is a visual sociological inquiry into the nature of film as a medium of design education and how it affects the individual, space construction of architecture and popular culture. The design brief acts as a catalyst for discussion on how architecture of architecture generates the portrayal of visuospatial communication with reference to the specific film genres. By approaching the fourth semester students of Bachelor Design (Architecture) using the design teaching methodology, the students were given opportunity to express their own design philosophy. Overall, the conducted project allows the students to enhance their design skills through the intensive intellectual discourses between the subject of popular culture of film and architecture. It is believed that this project will pave more possibilities in interlinking design research between the visual sociologic study of popular culture, film and architecture.

Jury Review

Faridah Adnan

The film Gallery project is the epitome of Year 2 students' achievement in processing and producing a design proposal. It cuts through the typical dose of everyday life to go where it goes best—to the edge. Its primary objective is to initiate more individualistic and inspirational based project in contrast to a more conventional design approach. In this instance, the projects selected go beyond the normal visual and spatial arrangement to contextualize a film gallery that relates to the site and environment. The dramatic experiences were successfully conveyed by the students through interplaying of lights, robust forms and siting strategies. The quality of transitional spaces dramatically enliven by the subtle interplaying of natural lights and emphasising on the view factors in arranging the circulations can also be seen in all the works. It is refreshing to see the students' apprehension of the site to generate design idea. Whether it is fictional or not, they convey certain mood required in a film and transpire into a film gallery.

However, most of the schemes can be better if more understanding on the spatial apprehension is inserted in the programme. The drama should not be conveyed by sudden entrance to the building which is in a small scale. There is a need to bring in the outside experience into the building which can prolong

the time spent in the film gallery. The landscape can be considered as important integrating elements in the design. Most of the buildings look sterile as they are not integrated into the existing site with proper landscape. The integration of courtyard as important interior space extension for gallery is found to be lacking in the proposals. As a result, the experience in the gallery can be considered short-lived and unconvincing to entice the visitors. It is clear that the gallery should sprawl more in the sites to provide more dramatic experience.

A film gallery should be able to educate the public through the showcase of history and craft of film. The artefacts have certainly reflected the idea of a film gallery which can be more dramatic and interactive to the users through the integration of building form and environment. The design of the architecture reflects the concept of reaching harmony between film arts and architectural innovation. The gallery should not only be known for the designer's visual power but also its ability to provide the audience with a complete intimate experience of contemporary cinema culture.

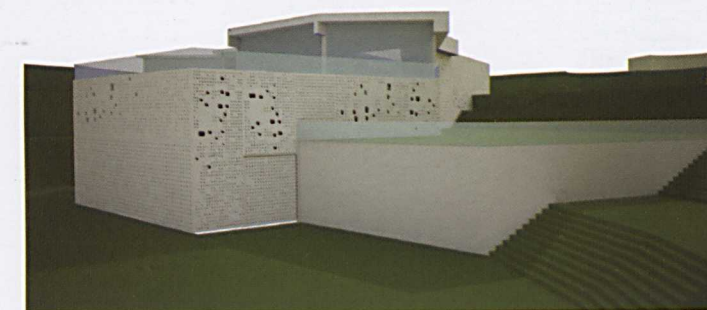
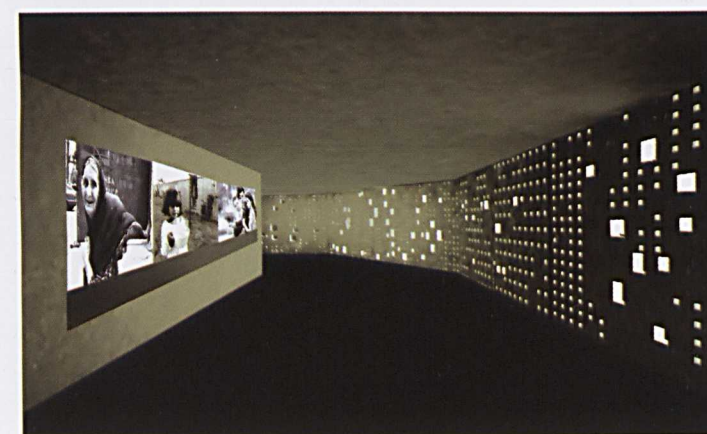
Spatial Thematic Experience

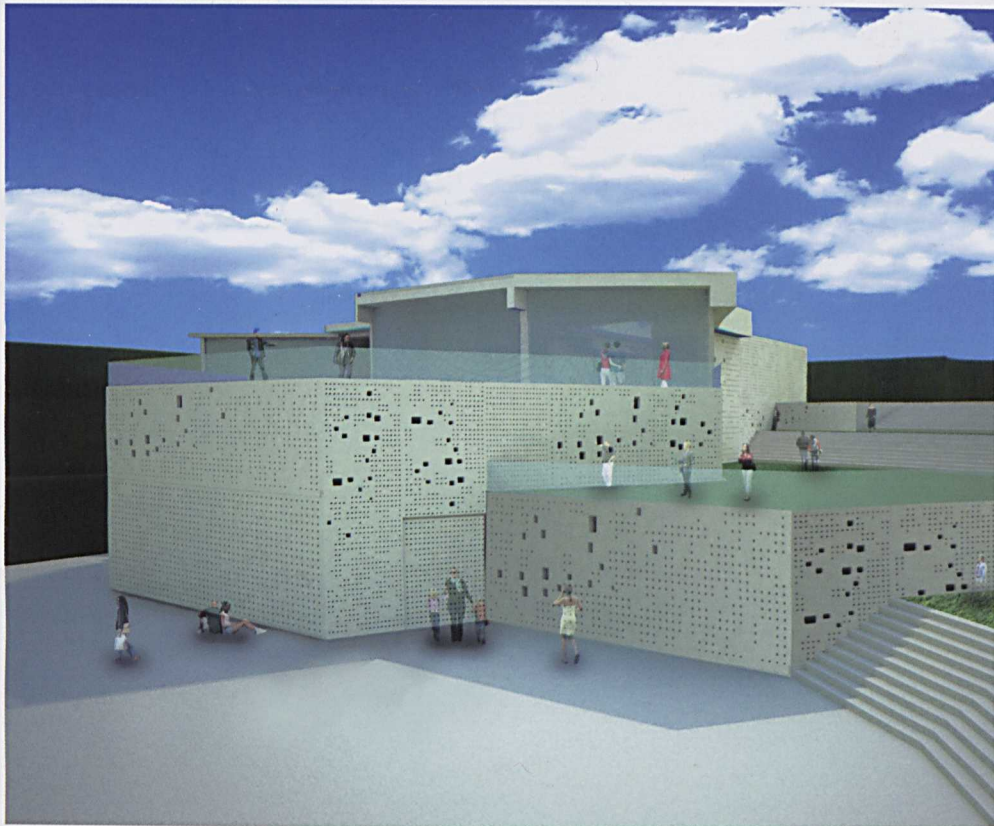
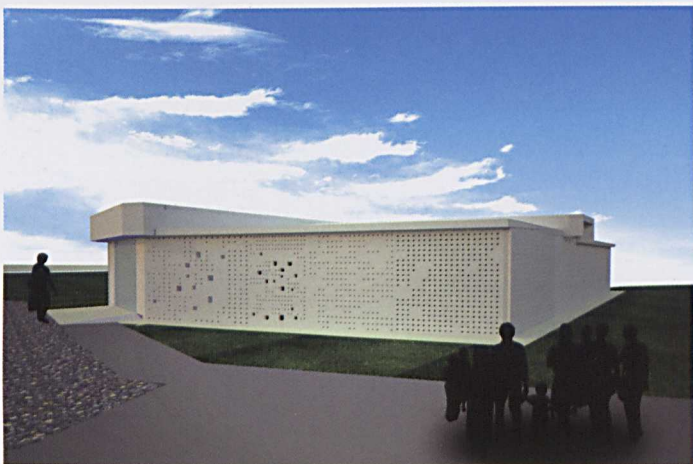
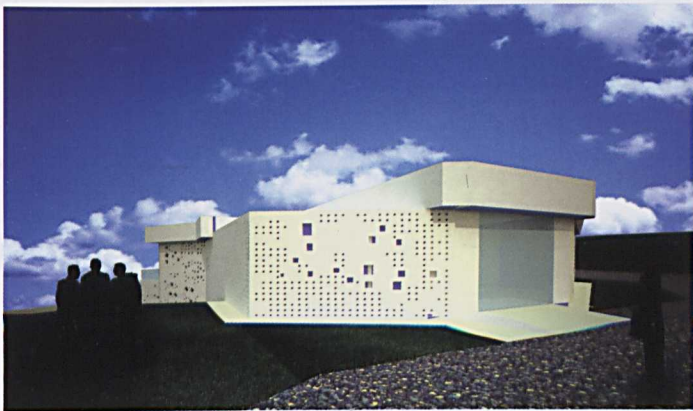
Maszura Abdul Ghafar, Nur Dalilah Dahlan, Sumarni Ismail & Nasir Baharuddin

Calamity or serenity, the designer is inspired by the natural phenomenon in motion films and wishes to portray it in the design of his film gallery. The aim is to produce a dramatic building that is experienced through its unique circulation and spatial arrangement. Leong Kam Kuat embraces natural ventilation and spatial arrangement. Leong Kam Kuat embraces natural ventilation and spatial arrangement. Leong Kam Kuat embraces natural ventilation and spatial arrangement. The inhabitants where they act symbiotically in the natural thematic theatre. The inhabitants could gaze up and down while traversing the ramp, ascending and descending the stairs along exciting exhibition spaces. The elevated roof and atrium lighting blur the transition between the internal and external spaces while it sits on a natural site and avoiding natural prodigies. The project leads to a new interpretation of thematic space environment through a transitional space.



■ Leong Kam Kuat



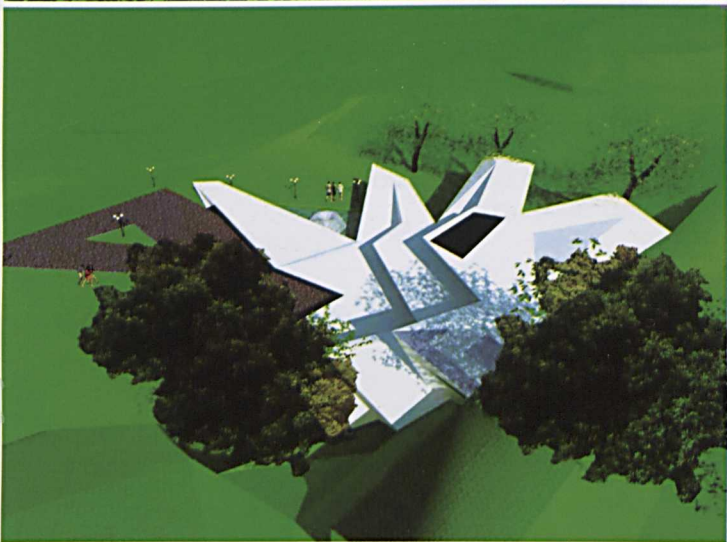




Sustainable Siting Strategies

Sumarni Ismail, Maszura Abdul Ghafar, Nur Dalilah Dahlan & Nasir Baharuddin

The design of the gallery located in a hilly site should ensure minimal encroachment to the site landscape by minimizing land cutting and filling. The gallery should be integrated with the landscape which result in the creation of form and would then merge within the natural curve and slope to be considered as a sustainable building. Hasmira adopted adventure genre that is manifested in the spatial exploration journey of the building internal ramps reinforcing the idea of conquering a dynamic hilly landscape. Elevated views from the different floors and staged roof are vital as lookout to the surroundings. The project demonstrates the importance of embracing site and maximizing the view through appropriate building orientation to get the true value of a sustainable design



■ Hasmira Yahaya

Visuospatially of Destruction

Nur Dalilah Dahlan, Sumarni Ismail, Maszura Abdul Ghafar & Nasir Baharuddin

A tectonic architectural form can reflect a natural area of disaster that is achieved through the visual and spatial design. The intention is to go beyond 'fictional realism of natural disaster' as visualized in the films and contextualizing the voluptuous imagery of form and content as a 'shared language' between the popular culture of film, public taste and architecture. Mohammad Hafizal's Film Gallery project manipulates irregular walls and overhead

finishes portraying the sense of building instability. The tectonic strategy of the Film Gallery in evoking the sense of aftermath continues in the formation of its building topology; where the hard scape is covered with coarsely cut key stones surrounding the brutal bare concrete structure. The project is a very successful attempt of integrating landscape and built environment to create a fictionalized building.



■ Mohammad Hafizal Abdul Kadir

