

Abstract

Concept of Façade

With Daylight at Heart

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From an evolutionary perspective, human beings belong to nature, attuned to the sun via the circadian rhythm. We are meant to be exposed to daylight far more extensively than we are nowadays. The present situation, whereby mankind has more or less consciously decided to spend life inside buildings, is in intense contrast to basic human physiological needs, indeed our very DNA. It is therefore time to recall our natural basic requirements as human beings. There is a need to rethink the protocol of present building practice in terms of daylight qualities in relation to the act of creation of the inside (of housing/in architecture), and therefore to rethink our building culture in the actual act of sustainable transformation of existing housing, as well as in the act of making sustainable new housing.

A façade is not a façade – that was the hypothesis in the Ph.D.-research from where this lecture originates. But then, what is a ‘façade’, and what is the role of the façade in the creation of contemporary housing – within the concept of architecture? The hypothesis provoked the following research question: how can daylight and daylight phenomena be at heart in the architectural process of creating natural living conditions – in the act of making the ‘inside’? Etymologically the word *façade* is fascinating, connoting the expression in a human face – Façade, the face of a building. And it is exactly when the activity of the façade genuinely relates to human life inside buildings, when the façade reaches into ethical and existential realms, and beyond itself, and when a full awareness of the potential of the façade has been reached, that the concept of façade comes to life. Essentially, architecture is the cultural act of making sustainable ‘inside’ space that supports the health and well-being of human beings. Awareness of natural daylight is therefore vital. Consequently, the research area was theoretically adjoined to both the phenomenological and the ontological tradition.

In search for daylight qualities (wealth), a conceptual take – one at the periphery of the present academic practice in the field of daylight research – was applied for analysis and used as a methodology. In ‘Conceptual Activism’, a concept was built upon knowledge from a personal ‘empirical archive’, infused with new knowledge, meaning, and findings, and the concept was consequently redefined. The research strived to unfold daylight as the “prime matter” in the creation of the ‘inside’ space by using empirical evidence from the periphery of the current domain within architecture. The primarily new infusion into the research project derived from qualitative interviews with three international art photographers, Bert Teunissen (NL), Daniel Blaufuks (PT), and Torben Eskerod (DK), accompanied by a representation of their significant artworks in experiencing and documenting people, daylight qualities, and the ‘inside’ space.

The research reaches out for new variations, layers, aspects, and finally understandings in how we address daylight within the concept of façade when creating human-oriented ‘inside’ space, hence in the act of making space.

The research resulted in a Ph.D. thesis entitled *Concept of Façade: With Daylight at Heart*, and the Viva voce took place 20th of December 2022. The research was conducted affiliated with the Centre for Industrialised Architecture (CINARK) – supervisor was Professor Anne Beim, Institute of Architecture and Technology (IBT) at the Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation in Copenhagen, Denmark.

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