

LISTEN AND BE THE SPACE: EXPLORING SPACE, WORD, AND MUSIC IN ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHITECTURAL DISCOURSE

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LISTEN AND BE THE SPACE: EXPLORANDO ESPACIO, PALABRA Y MÚSICA EN ARQUITECTURA Y EL DISCURSO ARQUITECTÓNICO

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary architecture and its discourse reflect the spirit of the current Western mindset, but lack harmony with the human essence. The aim of this article is to contribute to an updating of this misalignment by focusing on issues of the human essence that are often neglected: the sensory and rational imbalance that negatively impacts on it, and its spatial dimension. It presents Listen and be the space by Renata de Mendonça Espinheira Gomes, which proposes one of the many possibilities to address this gap. The work presents a new paradigm in architectural discourse, proposing ways to experience, think, update, and communicate architecture through sound. Sound recordings from various individuals about their perception of space are used to compose this piece, advocating for the incorporation of spoken (oral and musical) word in architectural expression and documentation, thus expanding its possible forms. The work has begun to trigger critical motivation, personal action, and also material for didactic experiences.

KEYWORDS

Architectural discourse, perception and interpretation, phenomenology of architecture, sensory disconnection, space-word-sound-music

RESUMEN

La arquitectura contemporánea y su discurso reflejan el espíritu de la actual mentalidad occidental, pero carecen de armonía con la esencia humana. Este artículo busca contribuir a actualizar este desajuste, centrándose en las cuestiones de la esencia humana que a menudo son desatendidas: el desequilibrio sensorial y racional que impacta negativamente en ella y en su dimensión espacial. Se presenta *Listen and be the space* de Renata de Mendonça Espinheira Gomes, que propone una de las muchas posibilidades para abordar esta brecha. La obra presenta un nuevo paradigma en el discurso arquitectónico, proponiendo formas de experimentar, pensar, actualizar y comunicar la arquitectura a través del sonido. Registros sonoros de varias personas sobre la percepción del espacio se utilizan para componer esta obra, abogando por la incorporación de la palabra (oral y musical) en la expresión y documentación arquitectónicas, ampliando así sus formas posibles. La obra ha empezado a desencadenar una motivación crítica, una acción personal y también material para experiencias didácticas.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Discurso arquitectónico, percepción e interpretación, fenomenología de la arquitectura, desconexión sensorial, espacio-palabra-sonido-música

INTRODUCTION

State of the art

The development of a society must be congruent with its human essence

Despite its exponential evolution, the zeitgeist of emerging Western society is not the most favorable to the human being precisely because it fails to heed its own essence. The hegemony of reason¹ and vision is affirmed, leading to the belief that it is these aspects which almost exclusively provide an understanding of life and spatial experience. The role of the body and more intuitive and emotional perception, is disregarded. In addition, we find little awareness or regard for the spatial aspect of our existence, leading to a lack of understanding of the vital influence of architecture in people's lives, be it the population at large, politicians, or even a significant percentage of architects. In the specific area of architecture and architectural discourse, little attention has been paid to the phenomenological capacity of the word (verbal or nonverbal), which affects not only the approach to an architectural project, but also its discourse. We can refer to music in a similar way. This situation leads to human life being negatively affected in its spatial aspect, reducing the possibility of living, being, and being (in) a place more fully.

Theoretical framework

Despite this, there are professionals from different fields who are aware of the problem. The fragmented approach to the human being, in which vision and intellect are often overvalued to the detriment of the body (the other senses), and emotion and intuition, is now considered unjustified by science and art. In neuroscience, for example, António Damásio (2011) highlights the intrinsic interconnection between body, mind, reason and emotion in the perceptual and behavioral process. John Berger, for example, frequently discusses the fragmented approach to perception in art (see Berger, 1972).

¹ The term 'reason', as it is used in this essay-manifest, does not refer to the object explored by philosophy, but to the common usage that is also, frequently, associated to in the field of architecture reason in the sense of the rationalization of cognition and emotion.

As Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Noel Arnaud also reveal, the human essence is spatial. Merleau-Ponty (as cited in Norberg-Schulz, 1975, p. 17) emphasizes that the reciprocity between being and space-existence is spatial just as space is existential, while Arnaud states that “we are the space where we are”. When addressing the fact that we are beings who not only exist, but inhabit space, Beatriz García Moreno (2012, p. 56) uses the term ‘dwelling beings’ (*seres de morada*) to express this interconnection. From philosophy, during the avant-garde movement, Martin Heidegger’s ideas highlighted the existential and experiential nature of architecture, highlighting that it is not just a physical and functional construction, but also a question of meaning and existential experience. Today, from the field of biology, specifically neuroscience in relation to architecture, it has been shown how the physical spatial context alters people’s brains and therefore their behavior and very existence. These ideas in the field of architecture, however, are often neglected today in relation to real needs.

In the architectural field, this trend towards a fragmented or dualistic approach to the person leads to the creation of spaces that often lack meaning or are even dehumanized (Norberg-Schulz, 1975, p.15). Álvaro Siza Vieira, Daniel Libeskind, Peter Zumthor, Steven Holl, Tadao Ando, among others, emphasize the importance of considering the sensory system as a whole and recognizing the duality of the human mind, which is as rational as it is intuitive and emotional. Zumthor (2006), comparing it to human nature itself, highlights the need to integrate reason and emotion into architectural design, while Ando (1993) suggests that designing architecture requires realism immersed in fiction.

In the context of architecture, the phenomenological approach (focused on the experience and sensory perception of space) can be extended to language and therefore to words. Humans appropriate and inhabit a space in a similar way to how they appropriate and inhabit language and words. This is why Beatriz García Moreno (2012) uses the term ‘word beings’ (*seres de palabra*) to categorize humans. Reading a text describing a space makes it possible to experience the place through a verbal narrative, because words have the power to evoke experiences, emotions, and meanings. This occurs thanks to the intertwined relationships involved in perception, allowing a person to feel real stimuli through abstract, symbolic, or coded schemes, such as verbal language, even in physical absence.

Paul Ricoeur believes that language is the vehicle of imagination, and that it is not drawings or images that interfere the most, but linguistic images (1975). This idea is also corroborated by current research in neurobiology, which argues that mental images are

generated linguistically (Pérez-Gómez, 2015). In this way, perceptual phenomena, including memory, creativity, and imagination, intertwine, fuse, and parry the stimuli of the spaces and atmospheres evoked by literature in such a way as to transform them into a quasi-lived experience. Despite this fact, the critical, documentation and architectural publishing approach doesn't seem to take advantage of the phenomenological value of the word (unlike, for example, the exemplary work *Poetics of Space* by philosopher Gaston Bachelard, 1975). The recurring format of architectural discourse, apart from being restricted to the verbal format (along with the visual essentially photography), is predominantly technical, objective, focused, and figurative, leaving little room for the wandering, blurred, poetic, sensitive, intuitive, and abstract word also human characteristics. Another linguistic aspect of architecture is matter itself, where its characteristics and stimuli, such as color, proportions, shape, scale, light, textures, sounds, smells, etc., are themselves words.

The relationship between architecture and music has predominantly been expressed through math and geometry as a result of Pythagoras' discovery of the arithmetic relationship of musical intervals (see James, 2003, Chapter 2 - Pythagoras, the Master).

Acoustics, the behavior of sound in space, has also focused the attention of musicians and architects from the times of Ancient Greece (see Rasmussen, 1957). Oriented towards a more aesthetic approach (seeking harmony and beauty through the use of math and geometry) and a technical one (seeking functionality and sound efficiency in space), the approach to the relationship between architecture and music has limited other significant perspectives, particularly the phenomenological one as Sven Sterken points out (Sterken, 2007). Western musical and architectural culture was slow to relate music and architecture from this perspective, which, according to Sven Sterken (2007), emerged in the 18th century. Experiencing the feelings provided by music leads listeners to experience spaces, even if they are not physical. Goethe (as cited in Eckermann, 1829, p. 378) said that "the tone of mind produced by architecture is close to the effect of music. In a similar vein, Philip Glass (2017) says that music has the substance of reality that has a physical place. Ianis Xenakis, architect and musician, an important reference point in this field, designed several architectural works directly related to music and sound, not only in their aesthetic and acoustic dimension, but also in their immersive dimension. For example, the design for the Phillips Pavilion, built in 1958, was based on the same structures as his musical work *Metastasis*. Today we have Daniel Libeskind, Steven Holl and Juha Leiviskä, among others, who also consider this relationship in an immersive way. Libeskind,

for example, says that “Architecture is not just an intellectual or abstract exercise, it is an emotional experience just like music” (Libeskind, 2014). This architect, with a musical background and ‘curriculum’, says he never stopped playing music when he entered the field of architecture, because that is what he continues to do “I don’t think I gave up music, I just changed instruments!”— (Libeskind, 2014).

The current panorama seems to be opening up new perspectives on this architecture-music relationship, which is being worked on not only by musicians and architects but also by other artists and professional profiles. In these and other artistic and architectural searches and experiments, aspects of the human essence and existence should be included, aiming for the results that bring about a human benefit. Igor Stravinsky, for instance, states that he cannot take an interest in the phenomenon of music if it doesn’t emanate from the ‘integral man’, in other words, considering “the resources of his senses, his psychological faculties, and his intellectual equipment” (Stravinski, 2006, pp. 34-35).

Art and Architecture

Art and architecture, given their strong role in this field, constitute unavoidable and indispensable requirements for all. They not only reflect the zeitgeist in which they find themselves, they also offer strategies to defend and support the existence of individuals in the world to preserve them and their quality of life, especially when problems arise that interfere with the fundamental laws of human equilibrium.

Support for this idea can be found in the claim by Joseph Beuys that “Art has the power to heal society” (Beuys, 1969), and also because of its role as an agent of change and participation. Art “makes it possible to communicate the innocuous, the painful, the socially unwell, the hysterical and, at the same time, it helps to summon the other, the different, the extraordinary” (Pérez y Montoya, 2023, p. 114). Gerhard Richter reinforces this by stating that “art is the highest form of hope”, as cited in “Text for catalogue of documenta 7, Kassel, 1982” (1982). In architecture, this idea also has a foundation when it is understood that space is a part of human existence, and that “it is a work from which no man can exempt himself” (Távora, 1982, p. 31). In this sense, the desire to reach everyone, as spectators, is based on the belief that one of the functions of art is to change consciousness and also as an active audience-spectator, on the idea that each person is an artist with revolutionary power we are the revolution— (Beuys, 1969). Not least because of “the participation of others as a fundamental and important value in the creative endeavor” (Ferrando, 2005, p. 25).

THE WORK: LISTEN AND BE THE SPACE

“What language does the stone speak, I asked my mother”.
Jorge Listopad (1992, p. 38)

Listen and be the space arises from the observation of Western reality, driven by the desire to contribute to society. This contribution is based on artistic and architectural disciplines.

From these observations, questions emerge that constitute the research object of this work.

- How can we show the credibility and power, beyond reason, of the more irrational, diffuse, and abstract dimension?
- How do we show, beyond vision, the credibility and power of the multisensory body as a functional homeostatic unit?
- How can we reverse the tendency of our mind towards excessive rhetorical reasoning and vision?

Specific objectives of the work

General

- To recall that human existence and essence are based on the full body and mind.
- To remember that human existence and essence is spatial (it implies space and time) and language inhabits it.
- To remember that perception is the basis of human existence and essence, and it involves both objective/rational perception as well as peripheral and diffuse/emotional perception.
- To help update the Western mindset.

From the architectural field

- To recall the potential and role of this profession in addressing this problem.
- To help update the professional mindset.
- To present one of many possible ways to minimize the problem in a way that better aligns with human nature.
- To emphasize the visceral relationship of the word, and also of music, with being and with architecture.

Guided by the questions posed and the objectives outlined, *Listen and be the space* explores and works with the universe of human existence in its spatial aspect. Concretely, this work reflects the spatial experience of a particular building by several people (invited to participate in the work) through the exploration of words their words and the musicality that results from this exploration.

The work explores rational language, but also intuitive, abstract, and musical language. Listening to the work, besides evoking certain spatial experiences in a more rational way —through a more current/classic language— also aims to provoke, engage in the unknown, the new, the exploratory; to move away from reason; to enhance disorder, discomfort, and chaos; to confuse, doubt, question, and induce reflection on our current predicament/situation through a more intuitive and poetic language. This latter language is supported by the musical and polyphonic narratives explored in the work. They seek to highlight all senses and sensory channels, as well as the emotional, intuitive, and abstract side of the mind, providing a fuller way to inhabit and experience a place than being guided only by rational language.

The emphasis is on how space is inhabited and appropriated by humans in a similar way to how words and music are inhabited and appropriated. This type of exploration is visible in literature and art, for example, in phonetic poetry or visual poetry, but is unexplored in the field of architecture. This work seeks to fill that gap, exploring the unexplored in architecture and its discourse.

The essay-manifesto is therefore sonic a disc. It is a polyphony of sounds and vocal words, describing places and architectural works, providing its listeners with their perception and living experience. The work is a manifesto, a critique, and a challenge:

It highlights the urgency of rethinking the paths to the future, as well as the effort to update our mentality, crystallized in a pretense of reason and visuality. It is a call for attention, it is a criticism, and it is a challenge. It also reinforces the fact that this effort should come from all of us, because we are the instruments of this change. This Manifesto is therefore addressed to all, and especially to those architects who truly assume a commitment to their art (Gomes, 2022a).

In this (now) provocative experience with the space provided by the essay-manifesto, we are trying to get people to ‘repopulate spaces’ reinforcing their essence, the human essence (Gomes, 2022a).

METHODOLOGY

After investigating and identifying an issue, including formulating research questions and reviewing the literature with a critical analysis of the theoretical context, attempts were made to find similar case studies to formalize the project. However, this search proved fruitless due to the possible absence of such studies with these characteristics. Subsequently, tests were conducted to evaluate ideas and ways to execute the work, including methodological

and strategic aspects for interviews, stimulus, and translation of non-rational language, musical composition, sound recording, and software use. This phase culminated in defining the working structure, which is repeated in each place/experience undertaken since 2018, and is detailed below (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Methodology stages

	OBJECT OF WORK	DESCRIPTION
STAGE 1	Building / space	Choosing a place to work on. The place must have an architectural value and offer a rich immersive experience.
STAGE 2	Invited participants	Choosing and inviting people to interview and to record them at the building -as contributors. The group of people must have different profiles and different relations with the building.
STAGE 3	Collection of participant recordings	Making interviews/conversations to the invited participants at the buildings. It must record the voice of the invited participants at the building and also the sound of the building
STAGE 4	Composing the sound recordings	The audio recordings of the interviews realized will be the instruments of the sonor composition. The composition must follow the ideology of the essay-manifest.

Source. Prepared by the author, 2023.

1 - Building / space - choosing a place to work

The essay-manifesto is based on the need to expand into Western society, an area where the problems identified are evident. For this reason, the work unfolds through various experiences various places, with architectural quality. The place could be of various kinds –an architectural work intended for housing, leisure, culture, education, or industry; it could be for individual or collective use, private or institutional, small or large scale, etc. The place can also be a square, a corner, a garden, or a mountain. We seek diversity because the spaces we live in are equally diverse. The aim is to find a variety of experiences, in different ‘Western subcultures’/ countries, with their own language. We believe that this variety will also provide useful information to guide and update this essay-manifesto, as well as other subsequent research or artistic works.

To date, the following works have been finalized and/or are in progress (Table 2).

INVESTIGACIÓN EN TEORÍA ARQUITECTÓNICA

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TABLE 2
State of the works

BUILDING	Casa da Escrita
PLACE	Coimbra, Portugal
AUTHOR	Pre-existence: Unknown Rehabilitation: João Mendes Ribeiro
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	Pre-existence: back to medieval times Rehabilitation: 2010
FIRST USE	Residence
ACTUAL USE	Cultural With events rooms, artistic residence And open archive
AREA	1161m ²
STATE OF THE ESSAY	Finished
PHOTOGRAPHY	Renata Espinheira-Gomes



BUILDING	Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian
PLACE	Lisboa, Portugal
AUTHOR	Ruy Jervis d'Athourguia, Pedro Cid, Alberto Pessoa (building) António Viana Barreto, Gonçalo Ribeiro Teles (gardens)
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	1959-1969
FIRST USE	Cultural Auditoriums, exhibition halls, library, etc.
ACTUAL USE	Maintains
AREA	Building: 23.000m ² Park: 75.000m ²
STATE OF THE ESSAY	Finished
PHOTOGRAPHY	Renata Espinheira-Gomes



BUILDING	Pool of the seas
PLACE	Leça da Palmeira, Oporto, Portugal
AUTHOR	Álvaro Siza Vieira
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	1961-1966
FIRST USE	Leisure
ACTUAL USE	Maintains
AREA	800m ²
STATE OF THE ESSAY	In progress
PHOTOGRAPHY	Renata Espinheira-Gomes



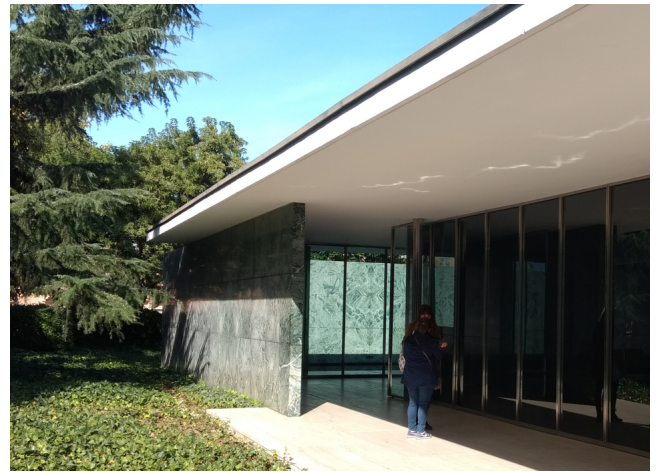
BUILDING	Glass house
PLACE	São Paulo Brazil
AUTHOR	Lina Bo Bardi
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	1951
FIRST USE	Residence
ACTUAL USE	Museum
AREA	House: 400 m ²
STATE OF THE ESSAY	In progress
PHOTOGRAPHY	Nelson Kon (at Instituto Bardi's web)



BUILDING	Gomis House - La Ricarda
PLACE	Prat de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain
AUTHOR	Antonio Bonet Castellà
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	1953-1963
FIRST USE	Residence
ACTUAL USE	Cultural / occasional residence
AREA	House: 500m ² House and Garden: 40.000m ²
STATE OF THE ESSAY	Finished
PHOTOGRAPHY	Renata Espinheira-Gomes



BUILDING	German Pavillion in Barcelona
PLACE	Barcelona, Spain
AUTHOR	Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION	1928-1929
FIRST USE	Cultural - 1929th Barcelona's International Exhibition
ACTUAL USE	Cultural
AREA	1.300m ² aprox
STATE OF THE ESSAY	In progress
PHOTOGRAPHY	Marina Makri



Source. Prepared by the author, 2023.

The creation of additional works/places is envisaged, which, much like these, encompass very interesting features within the framework of the essay on architectural quality, not only at the visual and functional levels, but also in terms of the environment, sound, etc.

2 - Invited participants as contributors

An instrument to heal a society is the people themselves as John Cage mentioned 'Instrument: you' (as cited in Martin, 1994). For this reason, as well, the sonic and musical instruments in this work are people their voice and their words. They are also your life and spatial experiences, your sensitivity, your memories and, finally, your openness, enthusiasm, and sympathy in participating in this essay-manifesto.

Contrary to what is common in publicizing, research, and design (see Curtis, 2019), this essay also gives a voice to all the anonymous masses professionally disconnected from the field of architecture; because all individuals are part of the culture of a place and an existential part of its spaces (see Távora, 1962). That is why all their records are needed to formalize this work. In this way, a range of people are invited to take part in this polyphony. In this diverse group there are people of varying ages, from children to older people; people with different occupations linked to architecture and the arts, or not architects, designers, researchers, commissioners, philosophers, anthropologists, cleaners, gardeners, musicians, painters, poets, teachers, educators, cooks, dancers, seamstresses, photographers, vets, librarians, etc.; people with no profession or occupation, normal sighted people and people with visual impairments (blind and low

vision); people with or without an affinity with the building (people who live, work or are frequent users or people who have rarely or never visited it); people with different interests, with different lives, with different experiences, with different memories, and so on.

The selection of a diverse group of invited participants, who can represent the diversity of a community, increases the likelihood that the audience will subsequently identify with the discourse. This facilitates audience ownership of the essay and can lead to reflection and action on the issues raised by the play. By reflecting, “intellectual participation” automatically occurs. As Magritte said (in Ferrando, 2005, p. 28), “intellectual participation” was the aim of his paintings, which, in his view, were an instrument for thinking and getting the viewer to be active.

The diversity of the invited participants in each experience is intended to match the diversity of the general population. There are, however, some profiles that are intended to be maintained in all experiences. Architects, because their professional skills enable them to express themselves in a way that is agile and conducive to one of the objectives of the narration/description; people with low vision or blind people, because, as they don't have visual stimuli, they are more aware of their other senses; children, because they are not subject to such ingrained socio-cultural conditioning their speech is usually more intuitive, emotive, and imaginative; artists, because of their training and ability to distance themselves from socio-cultural conditioning and to wander in abstraction. Where possible, we try to invite the designer of each architectural work in progress they are the ones who can best explain the project and its objectives, as well as offering other interesting information about the work. Because the work is based on an artistic and architectural foundation, we have listed some of the invited participants from these areas who have already taken part in the work. From the field of architecture, we have Álvaro Siza Vieira, Aurora Carapinha, João Mendes Ribeiro, among other great professionals, and the field of art includes Andrés Lewin-Richter, Irene Buarque, Catarina Molder, Pedro Sena Nunes.

3 - Collection of participant recordings

The collection of sounds refers to the speech of the invited participants and the sounds of the place. The speech of the invited participants, which is recorded, develops through an informal conversation/ interview between them and the author of the essay-manifesto. The choice of informality aims to make the invited participants' speech more relaxed, and therefore more personal and truthful a speech less constrained by the fact that they are being recorded and, in most cases, do not know the author of the essay-manifesto.

The conversation/interview is directed according to the profile and attitude of each invited participant, and according to the objectives of this conversation that they describe the place/building objectively, subjectively, and imagined, through rational words and less rational ways of communicating through the voice (sounds, melodies, rhythms, onomatopoeia, etc.). An attempt is also made to reference information from all sensory channels. Less rational and more experimental/musical communication gains strength when “forms perceived by the senses, are particularly suitable for expression of ideas, which cannot be expressed using the spoken language” (Gawlikowska, 2013, p. 51).

Excerpt from a tapescript [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, 2020 - invited participant: Rita Gomes (RG)]

Author: Can you describe the space where we are in an objective way?

RG: This is a spacious area transitioning between two levels, separated by two flights of stairs. The dominant tones are beige-brown, and it has a soft light (...)

Author: And how do you feel about it? Do you like it? Dislike it? How would you describe it subjectively?

RG: It's a pleasant and spacious area, a thoroughfare, so it's not a place where you feel like staying; it encourages movement (...)

Author: Now close your eyes. What do you smell? What do you hear? If your skin could talk, what would it say?

RG: The smell isn't significant (...) more voices and footsteps can be heard. It's a more dynamic space than the previous ones (...)

Interviews are conducted in situ. This situation provides a direct experience (body and mind) of the place, where the stimuli/words of the space are retained directly by the individual without direct interference. In addition, their physical presence makes it possible to capture the sounds of the environment during the interviews, such as the voice sculpted by the formal and material characteristics of the space, enriching the invited participants' speech. In the absence of a physical presence (sporadic occasions), invited participants rely on memory to describe the place, which weakens some objectives of the experience but strengthens others. Sometimes memories, even if they are distorted by cognitive processes, including imagination and creativity, offer significant insights into what has most marked the individual in that spatial experience. For this reason, it was decided to incorporate these memories into the description. The sound recordings are made at different times of the year, broadening the perception and discourse of the selected places. This timeline interferes with the individual's perception, and therefore with the discourse, conceptualization and formalization of the work.

4 - Composing sound recordings - formalizing the work

Disc structure

Each experience-disc refers to a specific space/building. The work includes a comprehensive description of the building as a whole and selected parts (and also seeks references to the geographical and socio-cultural context). The choice of which parts of the building are considered the most representative is made by the author of the essay and, where possible, by the architect(s) who designed the building. The description of the building in general or of each of its parts is divided into three: narrative (the choice of the term 'narrative' refers to the term understood in the most common way verbal, rational and classical), sound, and polyphony.

NARRATIVE: This consists of 'classic and ordinary' verbal language, where the narrative is organized on the basis of the grammatical rules and syntax of the language of the invited participants / place. This discourse contains objective, subjective, and imaginary references. There are words referring to visual stimuli and other bodily stimuli as well as more unreal situations, such as the description of this dreamed space transformed by desires, etc. The composition of this discourse, in which parts of several people's speeches are combined, is also carried out following a rational logic. The idea is to follow a linear reasoning of that place and that experience by the various invited participants.

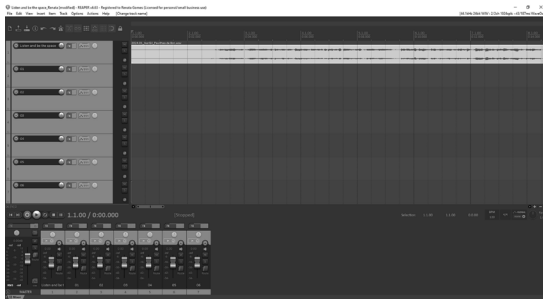
SOUND: This is a non-verbal language. Participants have to explain what they feel and perceive when experiencing that space through a vocal but non-verbal/rational narrative. The vocal sounds emitted can be more or less abstract, more or less melodic, more or less continuous, fast, slow, intermittent, rhythmic, rhythmless, light, heavy, etc. Above all, it is important that they 'explain' in a more emotive and intuitive way. The invited participants' sound recordings and the author's composition of them, although experimental and less conventional in nature, become musical material. The 'sound' tracks don't explain the space through a rational structure, in words, but listening to them stimulates the listeners' creativity and imagination, leading them to feel and experience certain feelings. As Eugenio Trías says, "music lacks meaning, but it overflows with meaning" (Trías, as cited in Barjau, 2000, p. 7).

POLYPHONY: This consists of sounds (non-verbal language) and extracts from the narrative (verbal language). Sounds, phrases, and words, as well as pieces of each of them run over each other, intersect, leave space, hold hands, fold and unfold in order to get closer to the 'chaotic' situation of the perceptual phenomenon. By

stimulating reverie through the various sounds and words in an experimental and ‘chaotic’ composition, the transition between the rational and the abstract is stimulated at the same time, minimizing the barriers to travelling within each one, as music also does.

The composition of all the tracks ‘narrative’, ‘sound’, and ‘polyphony’ includes the recording of various invited participants and is done according to the objectives of the rehearsal-manifesto. Both the ‘abstract’ and polyphonic sound discourse tracks do not specifically seek harmonic and melodic musical composition as their primary objective. However, due to the characteristics of some of the recordings, the strength of memory and expression (of the author), and the pleasurable need to feel musicality, harmony and melody may occur. The central idea is that the discourse be poetic in its musicality and, therefore, approach a more human truth. ‘The more poetic, the truer’ (phrase often attributed to Novalis). Despite having a brief background in music, the author’s professional training is not in musical composition. The advantage of this situation is that the possible conditioning of a professional musical training, by its absence, will not contaminate the intuitive and free aspect of composition. So, like the nature of the narrative and the sound recordings, the compositional structure of the essay also wanders between reason and, above all, intuition, and emotion.

FIGURA 1
Sound composition and editing program



Source. Prepared by the author, 2023.

FIGURA 2
“Materialization” of the sound material on vinyl disc



Source. Prepared by the author, 2023.

Instrumentation

The collection of sound material (interviews and sounds from/ in the location) is primarily carried out using an omnidirectional microphone providing complete 360° coverage attached to a recording device, typically a mobile phone. The recorded material is processed (composed and edited) in the REAPER program a recording software and Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) that allows, among other things, the composition and editing of sound material. In some cases, the composition can be materialized in a disc (Figure 1, Figure 2).

RESULTS

The desired outcome of this work a change of mindset cannot by its very nature be achieved in the short term. It does, however, stimulate new perspectives and immediate reflections on the issues at stake. Comments from various presentations and participation in the essay-manifesto demonstrate this reflection: “It is a valuable contribution that fosters the sensory capacity of architecture in a holistic dimension” (Estanislau Roca, personal communication, January 17, 2021); “it is, after all, a valuable complement to the art of listening, to deep attunement, the exercise of which is as necessary as it is vital” (Marta Sequeira, personal communication, July 17, 2021); “an unmissable, fundamental work, which listens to us and

makes us restless! A breath with all the voices!” (Pedro Sena Nunes, personal communication, March 10, 2021); “it’s a big job! Original and urgent!” (Irene Buarque, personal communication, July 26, 2023); “I never thought I would be part of art” (Mónica Fernández, personal communication, December 2, 2022).

It has also inspired action. The following quote was written after attending a presentation of the essay-manifesto at the NOTE Gallery, Lisbon, during the InShadow event (2023):

I came out of the gallery for a building. Absolutely, totally, truly inspired (...) I recorded a sound record with some impressions of myself about the space I’m in (...) Now I’m here and I’m consciously picking up a lot more. That mutes everything (Rosa Medina, personal communication, November 25, 2023).

The quotes come from people with different professional profiles (academic and research; architecture and urban planning; photography and film; plastic arts; restoration; translation).

By fostering reflection and promoting the formulation of new perspectives within the realm of architecture, the work emerges as a relevant object of study in the academic sphere, offering ample opportunities for in-depth analysis (a wide range of debates and investigations) and idea development. Its influence extends beyond the boundaries of the discipline, reaching into various interdisciplinary fields. Concerning its intervention in the academic field, it is noteworthy that the work is already being addressed by the author herself. One of the main guiding principles of the ongoing exercise is precisely to address and explore the perceptual breadth of space.

DISCUSSION

There are many issues that arise in the essay-manifesto (during the ideation, realization, or results of each disc) that can be analyzed, reflected on, and discussed:

Backstage - reason versus emotion and intuition

At the end of each experience-disc there is a clue that we call ‘Backstage’. It wasn’t theoretically calculated, but arises from praxis and the unexpected. Here are compiled comments and expressions that are made ‘offstage’, often considered uninteresting: mistakes, laughter, unthought comments, doubts, fears, etc. However, listening to them later led us to understand them as a way of revealing and confirming data from the initial approach to the Western context. These ‘leftover tapes’ are basically a translation of today’s world,

where the value of intuition and the subconscious, improvisation, error, and ‘perfection’ have no place and which, therefore, restrict and neglect the perception of the world and its own existence. Behind the scenes, we can see the embarrassment and reluctance in the face of the challenge of breaking with cultural restrictions (‘rational norms’ or ‘rational normality’) and the resulting feeling of being unprotected. When there was a possibility of breaking from this norm or normality in the interviews, the participants not only enjoyed the exercise more, but also provided more and more interesting records that were in line with the aim of the work.

The value of interdisciplinarity

Despite the pertinence of dividing and specializing different areas of knowledge in order to delve deeper into the subject, interdisciplinarity is a basic requirement if knowledge is not to fall into the abstract. Although not premeditated, the essay-manifesto ends up demonstrating the relevance of interdisciplinarity in its approach and development without it, the work would have no place or pillars to build on—. As expressed by Herzog & de Meuron (1994) “all interesting, coherent work reflects many influences and differing, sometimes paradoxical qualities, stable elements and changing elements, a parallel existence of phenomenology and ontological, attractorlike elements. This is the same for art, film, literature, and even architecture. Given this reality, *Listen and be the space*, with the book (Gomes, 2022a) that can aid in understanding its sound and theoretical aspects, has been presented in different spheres such as architecture (for example at *Casa da Arquitectura*, Porto, 2022), sound experimentation (Phonos Foundation, Barcelona, 2022), dance and documentary (InShadow Festival, Lisbon, 2023), etc. Today, with this article, it is presented within the sphere of architectural research and architectural discourse.

CONCLUSIONS

Aimed at preserving the human essence and its quality of life, *Listen and be the space* advocates the urgency of rethinking the paths of the future, which includes the effort to update our consciousness which has become crystallized in a pretense of reason and visuality.

Given the thematic affinity, the urgency to update architectural theories and practices in general is evident (Holl, 1996; Pérez-Gómez, 2015). Included in this need is an awareness of the architect’s role as a mediator between space and the human being and how this has implications for human existence. Also implicit is the important role of architectural discourse, criticism, and dissemination in exposing a reality and supporting healing strategies. At the same time, there is a need to broaden its vocabulary and complete its content, including not only technical and specialized information,

but also more corporeal, multisensory, emotional, diffuse, and peripheral information, in the quest for new formats beyond verbal writing (predominantly rational) and the visual image (which, by considering itself 'unique', seems to belittle the communicative capacity of other sensory channels). Architectural discourse must also take advantage of the phenomenological capacity of the word (verbal or non-verbal) in its discourse it must go hand in hand with hermeneutics—. At the same time, criticism and dissemination must broaden their target audiences. They should not be restricted to the elitist world of architecture, but should also seek to capture the attention of the anonymous mass that is society in general, because the problem and the solution are not restricted to the profession of architecture but, to varying degrees, to everyone.

The manifesto-essay presented, *Listen and be the space*, seeks to address the questions arising from the investigation into the current context and the research object. The strategy and methodology adopted focus on exploring the sonic format, while delving into sensory aspects currently less considered. Simultaneously, it incorporates, with emphasis, the participatory aspect the sonic recording of invited and interviewed individuals, influenced by the thematic ideology and the work's own development. The structure and sonic composition are guided by the ideology of the work. The findings of this essay constitute elements considered relevant for updating not only the manifesto essay itself but also for other artistic and scientific investigations and experiments.

Although attention to this topic is not as widespread as it deserves, there are several studies on the themes addressed in this essay-manifesto. Regarding sensory experience, studies by Bloomer and Moore (1977), Blesser and Salter (2007), or more recently by Charles Spence (2020) can be mentioned. On architecture and language, the study by Markus and Cameron (1993) can be referenced, which explores words to describe and understand spaces and how language influences the perception and interpretation of architecture. Concerning inclusive and cutting-edge listening, reading, and approach methods in the architectural context, the study by Hultsch, and Pérez Martínez (2023) can be referenced. Regarding the relationship between architecture and music, examples include Sven Sterken (2007) or, more recently, Carmen Garfias Santiago (2019). Finally, in the realm of multidisciplinary and the intersection of diverse fields like architecture, music, sound, painting, drawing, movement-dance, and others, examples such as Gómez Molina et al. (2007) or Gomes (2022b) can be referenced. These specific studies aim to enhance sensory experience, architectural expression, and discourse. This work, however, explores this relationship through phenomenological, intuitive, and emotional aspects in a pioneering

way, adopting paths and strategies that have been explored little or not at all in the field of architecture. Through a marginal and poetic approach, the work aims to open up new values and ideas to fuel this necessary change. The essay-manifesto *Listen and be the space* thus appears as one of many ways of contributing to this scenario by exposing the situation and launching new possibilities and paths to redemption. It aligns with what Steven Holl advocates in the field of architecture when he says “architecture’s contribution goes beyond solving the problems of a given program. (...) We have to remain open and continue to be experimental, and perhaps also marginal” (Holl, 1996, p. 16).

The effectiveness of the essay-manifesto will depend on the geographical distance it can reach and the way it is received, assimilated, and stimulated. What is certain, however, is that a change in consciousness doesn’t happen in a short space of time, nor just by one person or one artistic proposal, although without a rigorous approach (artistic, scientific, philosophical, etc.), and without impulses and proposals resulting from it, it will be more difficult to accompany and heal a society when it needs it. In this sense, and for now, *Listen and be the space* cultivates hope.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

Conceptualization, Research, Methodology, Project administration, Writing - original draft, Writing - review and editing, Visualization.

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