

Spatial Experience of Physical and Virtual Space*

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<https://doi.org/10.51596/cbp2021.jrv8060>

ABSTRACT

Fictional spaces produced with multidisciplinary research using improving technologies create settings that provoke new questions and have different answers. This comes about by broadening the horizons in virtual space studies, space concept, design, and experience. Evaluating virtual space as a layer of reality represents architectural space that belongs to the physical world.

The principal factors that form the physicality of a space, its shape and content, are related to cultural, public, societal, perceptual, and intellectual codes. The space concept can be explained as a physical concept. In the sense of human interaction with space, the feelings it elicits, perceptual factors, both in the subjective and abstract dimensions, that can be described as feelings, and 3D physicality. Spaces designed and produced for human use can be perceived differently and mean other things to different people through human-space interactions. Perceiving, interpreting, and describing a space is a complex process that can only occur by experiencing it.

Although virtual reality emerged as a simulation of physical space, there are increasing attempts to form an emotional and physical connection to such spaces today. New technologies used to create new spaces and descriptions such as virtual reality, virtual space, cyberspace, and hybrid space are articulated as new layers within the spatial memory accumulated to date.

Virtual reality technologies, which can be explained as an interface between humans and machines and describe different life systems, give one the feeling of being in another space. Although these spaces are virtual, they can be related to the space concept as they can be experienced and give the feeling of being somewhere. These settings, which present multi-dimensional spatial experiences by taking humans into a digital reality, are created using computer support and are experienced using various electronic tools. These settings in which human and machine, organic and non-organic entities meet are also crucial in design education as they improve creative processes related to the future, machine-human interaction, and the space concept and its formation. As virtuality being evaluated as a layer of reality becomes a representation of architectural space that belongs to the physical world, it also has the potential to approach space design in a new way.

It has the potential to affect and improve the perception of creating space and deliver spatial solutions, understand new living conditions, and discover the future by responding to technological improvements.

Virtual reality creates a personal space experience that diffracts space and time—improving technologies set these spaces, which simulate reality, as a layer of fact, a reflection or representation. The cyber and virtual experiences that have emerged in new media spaces have reduced space's dependency on the physical world through the integration of improving technologies and art.

* "Spatial Experience of Physical and Virtual Space: SALT Research to Virtual Archive" has been published as a book chapter in *From Göbeklitepe to Industry 4: Smart Buildings Smart Cities*

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‘SALT Research’ within Salt Galata, a monumental building in Galata-İstanbul, and ‘Virtual Archive’, a media art project by Refik Anadol that questions the virtual-digital space concept, were chosen as experience spaces. It was emphasized that there are holistic composition differences between spaces due to the current physical space experience that composes the infrastructure of the study and virtual space. It is composed of different elements and is perceived just like real space. The dataset includes a detailed assessment of two different spaces with similar contexts and contains the physical and virtual space analysis through syntactic, semantic and pragmatic scales. Volunteer participants emphasized the differences in holistic composition between the two spaces. They noted that the virtual space differs from the physical space and is composed of different elements and that the user has the perception of belonging just like in a physical space.

The physical space, SALT Research, was evaluated as satisfactory and high-quality in terms of aesthetics and equipment. Phrases used to describe it were neat, high spaces, comfort, spaciousness, light, dark areas, tranquillity, silence, acoustic balance, harmony, historical, gripping, transformation, aesthetic and functional, and plain. In contrast, participants saw the Virtual Archive is a new, exciting, different, and innovative experience. The bodily freedom of the virtual space experience was described as optimistic. Through a brief understanding of the space, they overcame the difficulties of physical existence that arose when accessing information in this new environment.

Fictional space produced with a multidisciplinary study using improving technologies creates settings where new questions are asked, and different answers are made, broadening the horizons in virtual space studies, space concept, design, and experience. Virtuality being evaluated as a layer of reality represents architectural space that belongs to the physical world.

Virtual reality technology changes and influences our time, dimension, and architectural perceptions, the modes of expression and interaction models in art and architecture by taking us into a different universe experienced spiritually and mentally in new space creations.

The space experience through the journey of interpretation and understanding of space and architecture tells different things for each person on each occasion. Perceiving space through the physical space experience and active senses via intellectual feedback also affects virtual reality interactions.

Different disciplines examine the machine, human, space, and future relations in an interdisciplinary environment. Different designs’ varieties and opportunities have a place in architecture and interior architecture. In the future, the integration of physical space, virtual space, and machine intelligence into space design and design education and the role and effect of the designer will continue to be discussed.

Today, new representation environments present new evolutions that improve, evaluate, and interpret spatial ideas. Despite changing technologies, humans must exist somewhere, and existence is related to our sensory, emotional, and memorial creations. In this sense, the place of humans and designers will continue to be questioned in the new spaces created.

Keywords: Patrik Schumacher, ethics, ethical paradigms in architecture, humanitarian architecture, architectural media platforms.