

# ARCHITECTURE, JUDGEMENT & TASTE MAKING

TRACING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL  
MEDIA ON ARCHITECTURAL TASTE  
& THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



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# Introduction

How Is Social Media Shaping Architectural Taste in Contemporary Society ?

This dissertation will explore the concept of taste making in architecture and design and how it has evolved with the incorporation of social media.

This exploration seeks to unravel the long journey from the traditional concept of taste making in the architectural discourse to the digital, interactive and visual symphony of platforms we use nowadays such as Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and beyond.

Exploring, how social media has redefined not just the aesthetic preferences but the very essence of architectural trends, how people perceive and experience buildings and the built environment, and how design practice has changed and evolved with the incorporation of these platforms. In a world where social media has shifted the conversation around architecture and design, possibilities of consuming architectural content is infinite.

What is changed or lost in this contemporary landscape of social media influence on space?

# TASTE MAKING BEFORE SOCIAL MEDIA

Most of the times when the word taste is mentioned it is immediately associated with gastronomy, even though a lot of times the idea of taste is brought up in conversations related to art (Pallasmaa, 2008; McCorkindale, 1992).

Why is taste a sense and why is it linked to liking or not liking something in all kinds of contexts? I believe that this link comes as taste as sensory experience involves the perception of different flavors and we as humans have translated this into different scenarios when evaluating a subject, we as individuals make our judgment based on personal preferences, beliefs, contextual factors and cultural background, all these together mold our subjective taste.

Throughout history the concept of taste making has played a significant role in our society and the way we interact. The richness and different preferences each individual has have taken us to a point where we are divided, labeled and categorized based on our preferences. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, talks about conventional viewpoints surrounding this subject and how these are giving us the wrong impression. He states that taste is not simply a matter of personal inclination or preference but rather taste is a direct manifestation of all the things that make an individual who it is such as social background, educational level, and cultural capital. This concept of cultural capital is what he in his argument emphasizes is the pivotal role when constructing and shaping an individual's social class and prestige. Cultural tastes function as both, markers and agents of social distinction. (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.1-15)

When it comes to taste making there are many different factors that determine one's taste. Bourdieu explains that there are two main things, an independent variable and a dependent variable. The independent variable it's determined by factors such as a person's occupation, sex, age, father's job, residence, etc. . However, the dependent variable may show dispositions that are very different from one another in and of themselves, depending on the groups that the independent variable portrays. These two are directly connected and one does not work without the other (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.10)

For centuries the consumption of cultural goods such as art, literature, music and fashion, have become tools that are a differentiation and are used by dominant classes to assert their status and maintain social boundaries. These activities such as playing an instrument, going to the theatre or appreciating a piece of art are deeply embedded in the term of cultural capital that Pierre Bourdieu introduced. The upper class has not only access to greater economic resources, but a broader and very specialized education in many different fields. This shapes cultural norms and the taste of society in general (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.10).

As this concept of taste may see abstract or subjective, it is implied in most of the decision we make in our daily lives. Taste is a very broad topic that can be taken into all kinds of contexts and discussions, from very simple things such as whether you like certain kind of food, color, smell or activity, to more considered curated or exclusive topics such as art.

Even tough in some aspects as a society and the societal rules we follow have evolved, when it comes to art and, what it represents, to either create it or consume it, things have not changed much. Nowadays people that have knowledge and revolve around the world of art are still considered as someone who has cultural appreciation, critical thinking and with taste.

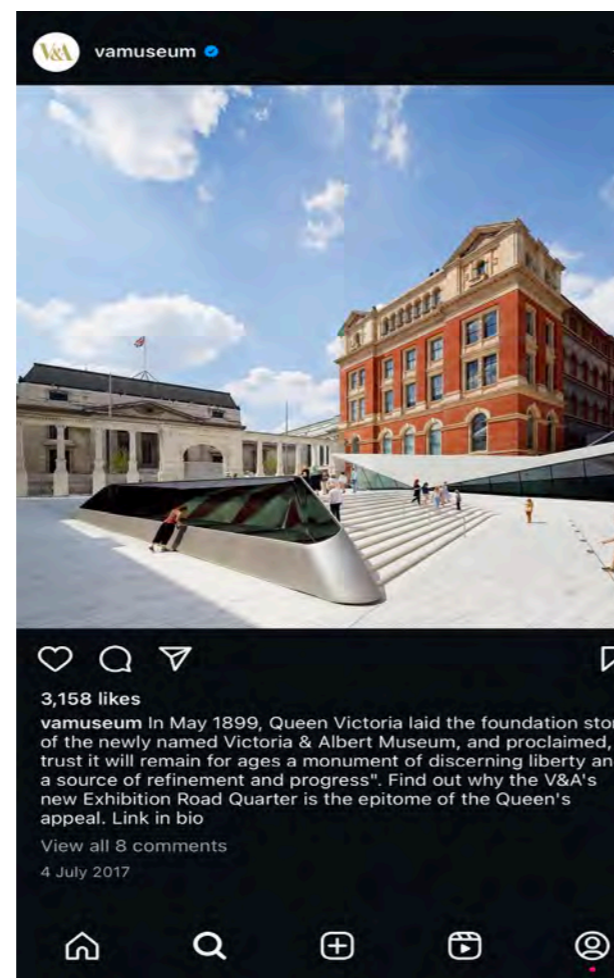


Figure 01: Instagram Screenshot of Exhibition Courtyard V&A Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum Instagram, 2016).

“TASTE IS FIRST  
AND FOREMOST  
DISTASTE, DISGUST  
AND VISCERAL  
INTOLERANCE TO  
OTHERS”  
-PIERRE BOURDIEU



# TASTE MAKING, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

This influence on taste-making poses both opportunities and challenges for architects, designers and for the general public. In one hand social media is a place where everyone's voice can be heard and on the other hand, this freedom of speech can sometimes be harmful and come with a lack of originality and creativity. All of these opinions and points of view in social media also create complex challenges when thinking of social media as a democratic and safe space. Everyone is entitled to participate and discuss all kind of different topics, however this participation should be monitored and regulated to have a safe and respectful navigation and engagement online. Finding a balance between the freedom of speech on social media and understanding the potential consequences of unregulated discourse is pivotal for sustaining a healthy democratic environment in these platforms.

In the context of social media, taste making becomes a decentralized process. The accessibility and speed of information in platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok empower individuals to curate and share their preferences, influencing a wide audience. People are going to see the content and information they want to see, this is how it works. I've experienced it myself many times, when you are looking for something, ads will not stop appearing, similar content will continue to pop-up on the screen.

Sometimes it feels like our phones can listen to what we think. "When speak online—when we share a thought, write an essay, post a photo or video, who will hear us? The answer is determined in large part by algorithms. In computer science, the algorithms driving social media are called recommender systems" (Narayanan, n.d.). These algorithms work with a high degree of accuracy, and while our phones may not be directly listening to what we think, it's highly adept at predicting our preferences based on what we search and see.

With this being said, we can understand better how the content we consume is only going to create and bring to us more content like that. As an example we can say that if we are constantly looking at architectural and design projects, we will receive more architectural and design content every time we access a social media platform. What is deemed "fashionable" "aesthetic" and "trendy" on social media platforms.

Our taste and preferences for a particular style at present are, in my opinion, too greatly influenced by what we see on social media regarding architecture and design. Prior to now, people did not have access to this tools and knowledge on architectural projects, hence this did not occur. Having said that, I believe everyone's taste was much more personal and genuine in the past. Today, however, our taste and approval for architectural works are intentionally or unintentionally influenced by what is deemed "fashionable" "aesthetic" and "trendy" on social media platforms.

“ONE OF THE GREAT BEAUTIES OF  
ARCHITECTURE IS THAT EACH TIME,  
IT IS LIKE LIFE STARTING ALL OVER  
AGAIN”

-RENZO PIANO

# ARCHITECTURE, ART & TASTE MAKING

A dynamic relationship between art and taste exists, however what about architecture?. Not only in terms of aesthetics, but the actual process of designing a building and the cultural value and history that is behind every structure. A question that has been going on for years, Is architecture considered art? "Architecture, being one of the classic fine arts disciplines, has long had a close relationship with the art world" (Huyssteen, J., 2022).

For centuries media such as drawing has been the principal way in which architects portray their ideas. Every architectural project we see, was once a sketch. This medium is very powerful and we can directly see the link between architecture and art. In architecture is all about drawings, communication, colours, textures and the users that experience it, just as art. These two should not be differentiated, quite the opposite, as Architecture is one of the finest of arts in the world and it should always be considered this way.

To understand why is architecture considered art, we first have to understand what is art and what is architecture. Art has for long being a subjective subject, this means that there is no specific definition or interpretation that it's right or wrong. What is referred to as art is a creative work that combines the representation of technical skills, beauty and the ability to make people feel something, this abstract concept through goes beyond creative and imaginative capabilities. These are some of the essential components of art. There is no universally accepted definition of art, and opinions regarding what constitutes art have evolved and are always up for debate( Huyssteen, J., 2022).

(Gowans et al., 2018) define architecture as " The art and technique of designing and building, as distinguished from the skills associated with construction. The practice of architecture is employed to fulfill both practical and expressive requirements, and thus it serves both utilitarian and aesthetic ends."

Architecture, as any other artistic manifestation, exhibits a diversity of styles, techniques and approaches that evolve throughout the different periods in which buildings are designed and constructed. As in other artistic disciplines, each architect has its own unique style that distinguishes him or her from the rest. From my perspective, the appreciation of a building depends on who is looking at it, its specific function and its contextual environment.

I argue that architecture not only fulfills a function, but also becomes a means of expression that reflects and narrates a profound story the architect tried to portray to the world. Each architectural work stands as a symbol charged with meaning, encapsulating not only the technical skill of the architect, but also the history, culture and way of life of a particular era.

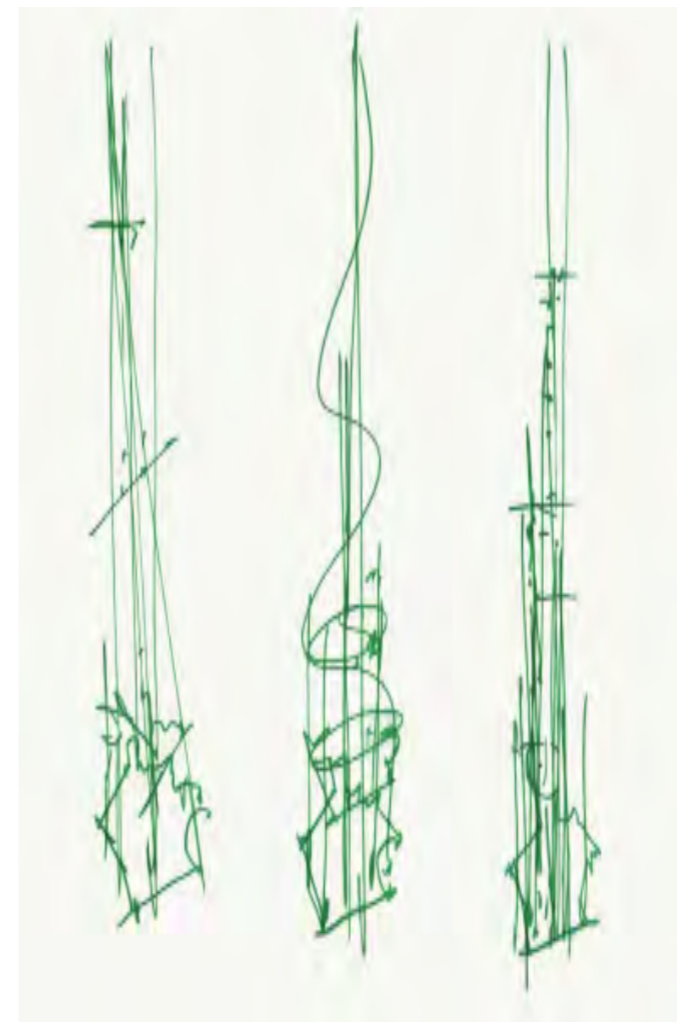


Figure 02: Renzo Piano Sketches of The Shard (Renzo Piano, 2004)



Figure 03: The Shard in London (Cluet, 2017)



(Hamlin, 1947) said that "Architecture as 'the mother of the arts' is the most ignored in the matters of taste even though architecture touches the lives of all. Architecture is often judged a thing of good taste and successful if a building looks beautiful (Hamlin, 1947). Yet people appear nervous when it comes to discussing taste and beauty concerning the built environment because taste may be "thought of," "referred to," or indicated" without there actually being qualities present in experience".

When talking about taste making and art, as stated before the appreciation of a building, and the consequent liking or disliking they generate in people is a highly subjective phenomenon that involves a wide range of individual preferences. Many things influence one's taste in architecture such as cultural background, personal experiences, and preferences for a particular style and aesthetic. Taste making in architecture therefore portrays the dialogue between architects and the public experiencing the building.

What some people may perceive as innovative, futuristic and modern, others may perceive as peculiar, bizarre and disruptive. For example, while architects and architectural critics expressed initial reservations, the general public enthusiastically embraced the Baroque style (Bianco, 2016). On the other hand, modernism was met with disapproval from the general public due to its lack of ornamentation, simplicity and resulting monotony. Despite this, postmodernism gained popularity among the public despite facing criticism from architects (Celiker & Cavusoglu, 2005). Nevertheless, we can argue that in matters of tastes and preferences, there exists no unequivocal right or wrong; at times, the opinion of the public may diverge significantly from those held by architects and even one person's opinion may vary from another. These are clear examples of the ongoing dialogue that exists between architects and society.

We can see the evolution and history of a place through its architecture. Each era has its unique style and as years pass by, we can identify what was built when just by looking at the buildings. As architectural styles evolve, the layers of history each building encapsulates not only the history of a building but the spirit of a certain period of time. The interplay of different styles in architecture, as stated by Richard Sennett, forms a captivating mosaic where "past and present collide, intersect, and overlap." The mix of different architectural styles in urban landscapes goes beyond just being a visual display of changing times; it's a conversation between tradition and innovation, old and new, historical and contemporary.

“AS AN ARCHITECT YOU DESIGN FOR  
THE PRESENT, WITH AN AWARENESS  
OF THE PAST, FOR THE FUTURE THAT  
IS ESSENTIALLY UNKNOWN”

-NORMAN FOSTER

# TASTE MAKING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

When talking about past and present in architectural styles, we can translate this idea to how we used to perceive architecture and design before and how to we perceive it now. Nowadays most people, including myself cannot conceive a life without social media. "The third industrial revolution, also known as the technological or digital revolution, has shaped our world today (Barroso and Van Brussel Barroso, n.d.)." Beyond its role as a communication tool, this platforms have become part of our lives and the way we live them has completely changed. Social media platforms can be used in many different ways and for many different purposes.

I was not born knowing how to use all these different platforms, however today I feel like I was, social media is so immersed in our lives that some people do certain activities, go to certain places and follow certain trends just to post them online. The way we perceive the world through a screen is not good or bad, it is just different from what we can perceive in the real world. Social media and screens give us this alternate world where we can connect with people globally, get any information we want instantly, and share our lives with the world. However, most of the times the content we see and consume in social media is curated, this means most of the content we see in social media has been carefully selected, organized and analyzed to get to the right audience. What we see is most of the times the "pretty" and glamorous part, as no one wants to share their bad days and negative experiences.

Social media has become part of almost everyone's life in the 21st century. Architects and designers are not the exception, social media nowadays is an indispensable way for architects and designers to show their work, reach a broader audience, contact fellow architects and designers, get inspiration and be aware about the trends all around the world. It can be a very useful tool for architects and designers to be seen all around the world, however it has completely changed and influence our taste and the way we perceive and experience buildings.

With this, a lack of originality comes along, as a lot of people decide to follow social media trends, uniqueness has become something rare to see online as the pressure to create what others are creating and what is trending on social media becomes more relevant to architects and designers work.

For many years taste making has been influenced and created by many factors such as social status, nationality, beliefs and level of education. Nowadays, all of these things still matter however one of the things that truly influences if we "like" or "dislike" something is social media. We may not do it consciously, yet we are more driven to a specific style if we have seen it on social media. If something is "trending" on social media it is more likely to capture our attention and influence our preferences. Without noticing it, every time we interact in social media we are creating a relationship between social media and taste-making. These activities encapsulated within social media practices extend beyond individual expressions of taste; they collectively contribute to the creation of trends, styles, and preferences, shaping contemporary taste making.



Figure 04: Digital Media illustration (Anon)

In architecture and design, social media has also changed architects, designers and the users of the spaces they create engage with buildings, interior and exterior in a completely different way. How does social media platforms mean for architecture and design? The way architects approach their designs has been notably influenced by social media. In a short video called "Building Images- New image-Based Identities in Architecture" architects and designers from prestigious and internationally recognized studios like OMA and UNStudio talk about how has social media shifted architecture and design and the different approaches each one of them takes in social media, as well as what do architects and designers do with to take advantage of these platforms.

. "Social media unveils s new side of the communication of architecture, it´s really about people experiencing and doing things in a building rather than taking the good photos you would see in an architectural magazine, you can see this in the OMA website, the more architectural point of view, but then next to it you have a lot of different personal experiences. It creates a more complete view of what is engagement in the social side of architecture" (Building Images, 2019). The point each one of these professionals highlight is that social media has completely shifted the way architecture is perceived and how has the experience of doing, sharing and working on the architecture and design flipped and since social media exists and the importance of the presence of being online.

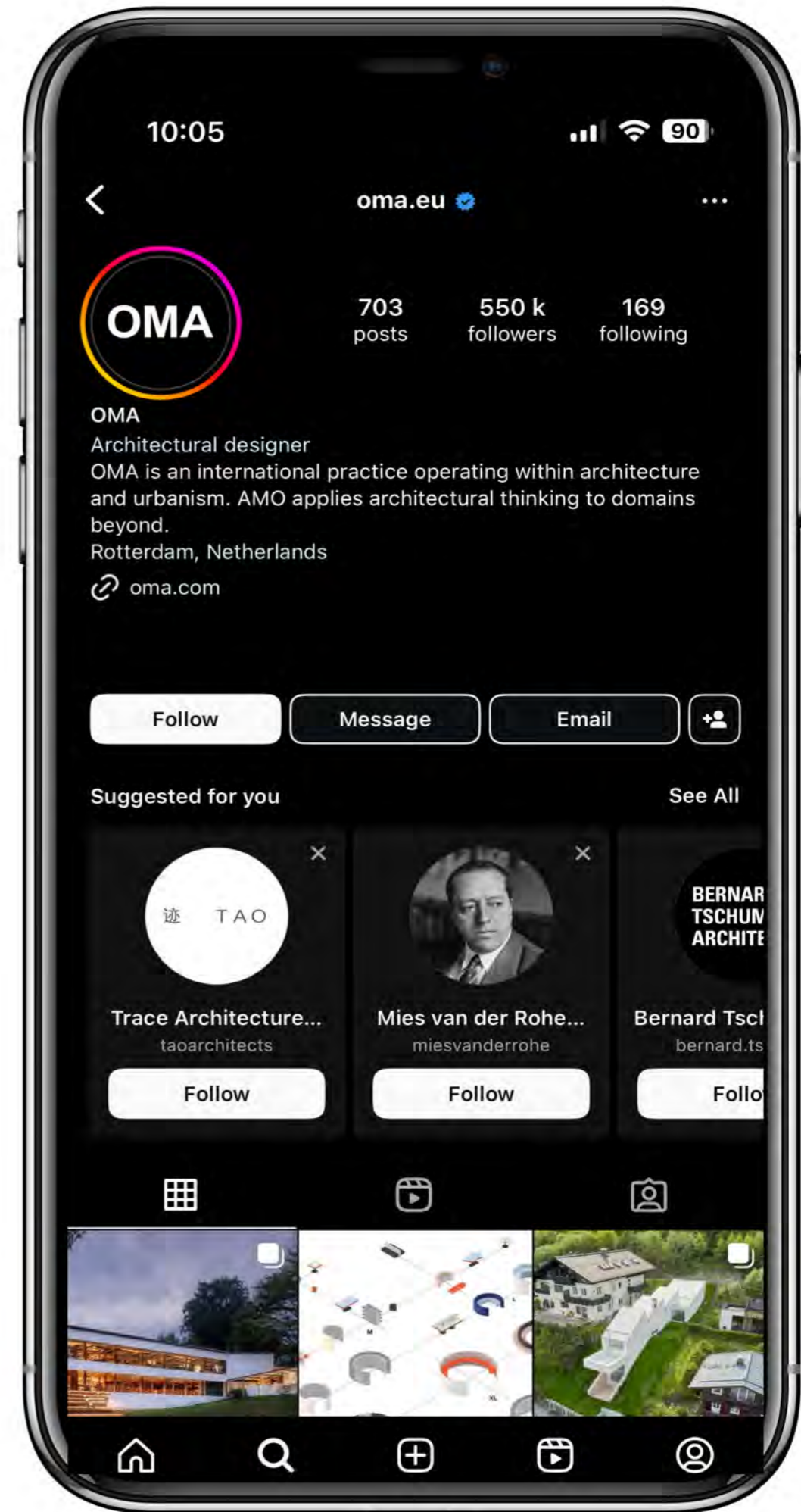


Figure 05: OMA Instagram Page screenshot (Fernandez, 2024)



# VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Figure 07: V&A Museum Exhibition Courtyard (Fernandez, 2023)



To elaborate more on taste making and architecture I would like to talk about how many times different styles of architecture co-exist together due to the fact that buildings were built in different periods of time, however some other times, architects decide to create a juxtaposition of styles and build a contemporary structure inside a historical building. This is the case of the V & A museum in London founded in 1852 and moved to its current home on Exhibition Road in 1857 (Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.).

“Since its inception, the V&A’s buildings were intended to exemplify the best of contemporary architecture and design. They were to be a work of art in themselves, reinforcing the Museum’s mission to educate and inspire its visitors. This philosophy has endured to create the richly varied set of buildings we see today. Each one now represents both a chapter of the V&A’s story and a moment in British design history” (Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.).

This magnificent set of 5 buildings have been for a long time an architectural landmark in London, they are indeed a work of art themselves, you do not need to enter the museum to appreciate this “works of art”. They showcase how architecture itself is one of the finest of arts, with all kinds of materials, details and textures.

Figure 07: V&A Museum Architectural Details (Fernandez, 2023)

“THERE ´S ONLY ONE THING  
IN LIFE THAT YOU CAN ´T  
DESIGN, AND THAT ´S  
HERITAGE, BUT WE HAVE  
A RESPONSIBILITY TO  
BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO IT,  
TO BE RADICAL AS WELL AS  
SENSITIVE TO THE PAST.”

-AMANDA LEVETE

The Henry Cole Wing is the next building of the museum we are going to analyze. This building is the tallest of all designed by Henry Scott and completed in 1873. This building creates a beautiful contrast between the courtyard triangular structures and the historical buildings (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017).



Figure 07: Exhibition Courtyard V&A Museum  
(Fernandez, 2023)



Figure 08: Aston Webb Building V&A Museum  
(Fernandez, 2023)

This Exhibition Road Courtyard were contemporary and very historical buildings lay serves as a compelling illustration of the fluid nature of taste, exemplifying its capacity for change and evolution. This courtyard is the first porcelain-tiled public courtyard in the United Kingdom with over 10,000 porcelain tiles adorning this public space, the project signifies a departure from conventional materials and a bold exploration of contemporary design possibilities (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017).



Figure 09: Exhibition Courtyard V&A Museum  
(Fernandez, 2023)

Last, but not least of the buildings that frame the courtyard of the museum are the Aston Webb Buildings which were designed by the architect of the same name who also designed Buckingham Palace and they were completed in 1909 (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017).

The architect Amanda Levete said: “The remit of the V&A is to teach about the relationship between art and craft and manufacturing and making. What we’ve done with the courtyard, in deliberately choosing a very ancient material ... [is to provide a] merging of technology, craftsmanship, and artistry, and that’s very much what the collection of the V&A does” (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017).

In architectural projects public reactions , especially high-profile ones like Amanda Levete’s undertaking at the Victoria and Albert Museum, tend to be diverse, opinions are divided and it can create controversy. However, when it comes to the taste and the design approach and choices the architect decided to make, the subject starts to get very subjective as each individual has the right to think and perceive things in different ways.

When analyzing a few Instagram post from the V&A museum the day the Exhibition Courtyard was opened I had in front of my eyes exactly what this dissertation is about.



Figure 11: Screenshot of comments on a post V&A Instagram (Victoria and Albert Museum Instagram, 2016)

A diverse spectrum of perspectives distinctly influenced by individual tastes. The discourse, unfolding in real-time, portrays the interplay between aesthetic preferences, the affinity or aversion towards the modernization or insertion contemporary architectural elements to historical building and the navigation of a democratic space (social media) were everyone is entitled to share their thoughts, either positive or negative.

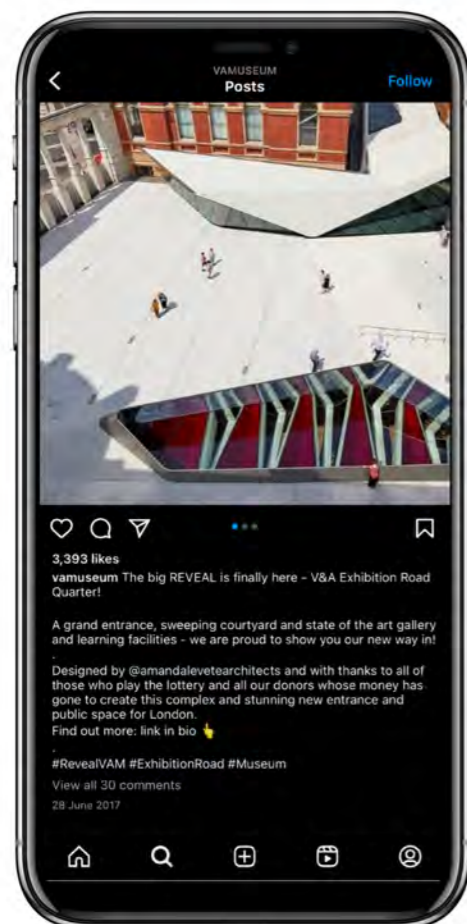


Figure 10 :Screenshot of V&A Instagram (Victoria and Albert Museum Instagram, 2016)



Figure 12 :V&A Courtyard Instagram (Fernandez, 2023)

# DESIGN MUSEUM

Living in a city like London it's enlightening when it comes to architecture. As you navigate the city's streets, each corner reveals a new architectural narrative, offering a visual symphony that portrays the city's history and at the same time the evolution and capability to adapt to new building techniques.

Different architectural styles coexist together and the juxtaposition of historic landmarks against contemporary skyscrapers create a very unique architectural landscape.

With this being said, one of the city's buildings that really caught my eye not only for the exterior, but for the interior as well was the Design Museum in Kensington.

The Design museum has a captivating architectural design that blends modern and industrial features. It was originally housed in a former banana warehouse and it opened its doors to the public in the year 1989 by Sir Terence Conran.

The intention of Sir Terence Conran when opening the museum was to promote awareness and showcase the importance design has on our daily basis. We may take it for granted, however, every single thing we use, it's been created by a designer that thoughtfully went to the design process to create the final piece we use (Design Museum, 2009).

Before the Design Museum, this building was the house of the Commonwealth Institution and the design of the roof elevated the Commonwealth Institute to the point that this building is considered one of the most iconic examples of modern architecture in London. (Design Museum, n.d.).



Figure 14: Design Museum Exterior (Dezeen, 2016)



Figure 15: Design Museum Ceiling (Dezeen, 2016)

Figure 13: Design Museum Interior Staircase Ground Floor (Dezeen, 2016)

Figure 16: Design Museum Facade (Gardner, 2016)



Its architectural redesign, led by John Pawson, not only reflects the contemporary ethos of design but also serves as a testament to the intentional shaping of architectural taste. The Design Museum showcases very particular interior features that portray the diverse range of design disciplines, featuring flexible exhibition areas, a prominent atrium, and a central helical staircase where visitors can sit and not only use them to go up and down the museum, this element adds a very dynamic and playful element to the spatial experience users have inside the museum, this element make visitors engage in a multifaceted spatial experience.

The interiors of the space mirror a shift in taste-making strategies, emphasizing experiential and immersive qualities, making the user the number one priority in the design. The fact that the design of the building is made to showcase the different design disciplines that exist make this building even more interesting.

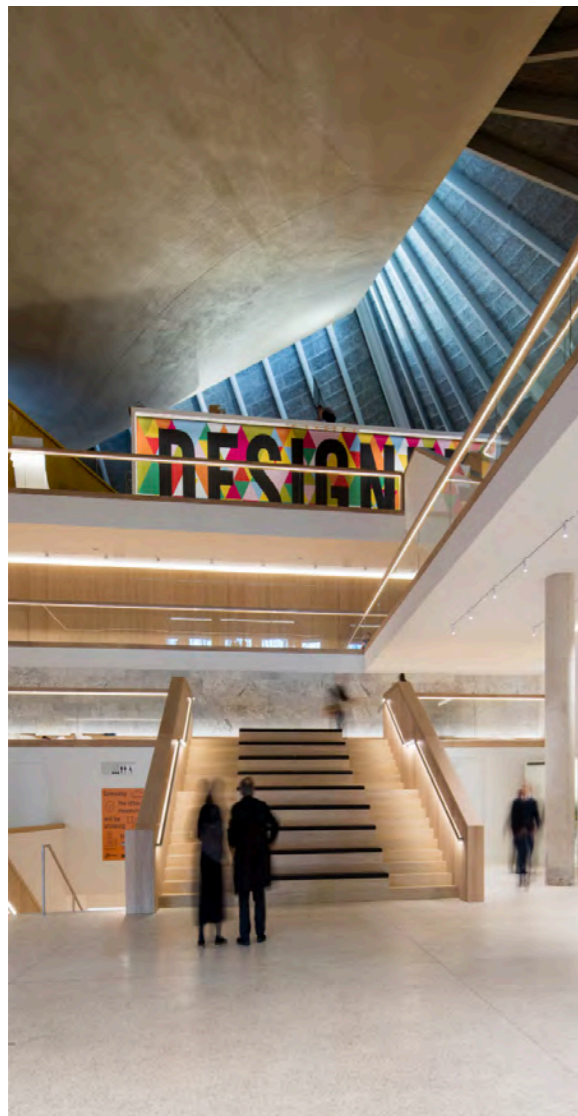


Figure 17: Design Museum Interior Ground Floor (Dezeen, 2016)



Figure 18: Design Museum Interior View (Dezeen, 2016)



Figure 19: Design Museum Entrance Label (Fernandez, 2024)



Figure 20: Design Museum Entrance (Dezeen, 2016)

# ONLINE AND OFFLINE INTERACTIONS WITH ARCHITECTURE

For architectural institutions like the Design Museum, the fact that social media platforms have gained prominence in shaping architectural discourse, is not an issue but rather a tool that showcases how physical design and in person interaction is needed, and it becomes a noteworthy contrast, demonstrating how the tangible and spatial aspects of architecture continue to play a crucial role in influencing and shaping tastes, complementing the virtual realms of social media.

The way we as humans experience spaces and how we interact with them has changed since social media exists. The access to these platforms has given us the opportunity to explore and get to know a space without having to be physically there. However, with the use of these digital tools a barrier has emerged, I believe in certain situations and spaces the experience online could never get close to what feels like being inside a space. This doesn't mean that navigating a space digitally is wrong, thus a distortion or misconception of reality can be created. Digital representations can offer authentic experiences, nevertheless we have to keep in mind that using these media as the only way of discovering new spaces will not offer us the same experience as experiencing it in person, using it as a tool will give us a more complete experience.

The main objective of architecture and interior design is to enhance the human experience and sometimes social media's influence can promote unrealistic standards or simply limit us to experience the place, atmosphere, materials and texture and most importantly to perceive and understand the feelings this specific place evokes.

A really good example of this happened to me when visiting two different museums, The Design Museum and The Welcome Collection, while these two spaces have a very different design and aesthetic, they're both spaces where exhibitions happen and people are there to enjoy what this distinct exhibitions have to offer. My experience inside each one of them was completely different. The Design Museum gave me a very dynamic visit, as the building itself is designed in a way that invites people to move around the spaces and look at it from different angles creating an interactive environment that you can feel in every corner of the building.

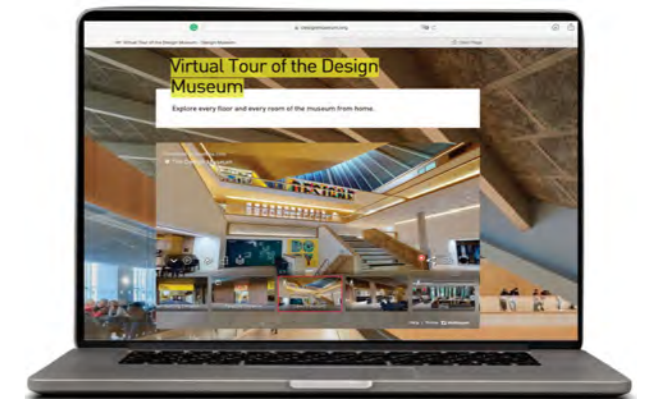


Figure 21: Design Museum Virtual Tour (Fernandez, 2023)



Figure 22: Design Museum Second Floor to Ground Floor View (Fernandez, 2023)

On the other hand, when visiting the Welcome Collection my experience was not as fun, creative and interactive. I went to see an exhibition that talked about beauty standards and the perception of beauty called “The Cult of Beauty”, the exhibition itself was amazing, however I found out later that the Welcome Collection was offering this exhibition online and with audios explaining each piece of it. Since the physical building didn't provide me with something I particularly enjoyed, despite my overall appreciation of its architecture and the exhibition itself, viewing this exhibition online would have been a good option for me.

With this being said, we can argue that even though this is just a very personal opinion and experience, I believe there's a unique and irreplaceable quality to being present in a physical space, experiencing its atmosphere, interacting with its architecture, and engaging with its exhibits or surroundings firsthand. However, using online resources can make our experiences so much richer. Thus, while physical presence is irreplaceable, online resources and social media can help us explore spaces in meaningful ways.



Figure 23: Welcome Collection Building Facade (Welcome Collection, n.d)



Figure 24: Welcome Collection “Cult of Beauty Exhibition” (Welcome Collection, 2023)



Figure 25: Welcome Collection “Cult of Beauty Exhibition” Website (Welcome Collection, 2023)

Interactions inside spaces, online and offline, in 2D on a flat screen or in 3D in real life are very different and at the same time similar experiences. Both of these experiences involve human interaction and the creation of meaning and experiences within a given context and space. Design, technology and human interaction intersect and work all together in these two contexts. As experiencing spaces in these different ways may seem fundamentally diverse, they are both very rich ways of experiencing buildings.

## TRACING JUDGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Judgement in social media is a complex topic. As humans we are encouraged to judge things in general. If a judgment is made in person, you are able to know exactly who made it and when they made it, however with online judgment it is very difficult most of the times to be sure who is on the other side of the screen writing or posting this. This does not mean judgment has always to be something negative, however judgment on social media has the potential to become "online hate".

The anonymity and distance these platforms give to all the users that navigate them can be double edged sword as freedom of speech is the main character, however this freedom of speech can be the one that creates a negative and harmful environment. Even though judgment is a natural part of human cognition, it should never be damaging someone else's integrity.

But how does this impact our built environment and public spaces?

Are our spaces becoming less diverse as conversation and taste narrows online?

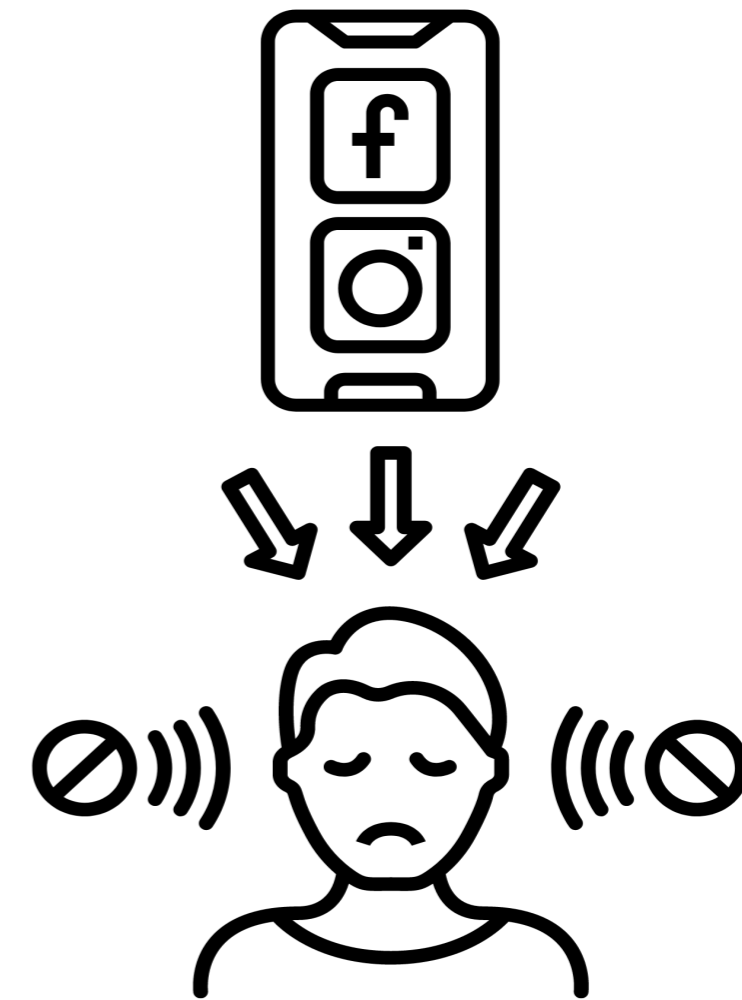


Figure 26: Social Media Judgement Illustration (Canva,n.d)

Have you ever wondered, how will social media be without judgment? I don't have a specific answer for this, nevertheless there is no specific definition for what is considered hate speech, "There is no single definition of hate speech-online or offline- and the topic has been hotly debated by academics, legal experts and policy makers" (Persily and Tucker, 2020). We can argue that it is very complicated to fight against something that is not even defined, nevertheless, definitions of hate speech are either exceptionally broad or extremely narrow, but there is no specific or approved definition for this.

Why do people feel entitled online to say or argue about something in a way they would never do offline?, Is it different saying it in social media than saying it online? Should people have the right to be "mean" just because social media is a space with freedom of speech?. I believe that the potential harm hate speech can create online can reach a more broader audience and it needs proactive measures, including its prohibition, to avert undesirable consequences. However, this fine line in between letting people express themselves and not letting harmful and negative comments appear is complicated to establish.

The immediate interactions on social media such as likes and comments serve as a rapid feedback mechanism that provides the users with validation and engagement. Validation inside these platforms has become the one of the most important things for online users. It plays a significant role in shaping human behavior, as people tend to conform to social norms and seek acceptance within their social circles. In the context of social media platforms, social validation is often quantified through metrics such as likes, comments, and shares (Ballara,2021; Martínek, 2021; T. Luo et al., 2020).

Nowadays we are used to having information the instant we look for it. While this rapid response creates a fluid way of communicating, it can also create a necessity for immediate gratification and approval as well as fast spread of negative comments and online hate.

The action of clicking a button that will give a like, a comment or a share is more important than we think. These actions can take many different paths. If the information that is being shared, liked or commented is accurate and peaceful, it can get to many people all over the world leaving a positive impact on them, however, if this information is the opposite, the outcome will be the opposite as well. Hate online has become more and more popular in social media and it has been recognized as one of the biggest challenges to the social media industries and the modern society in general. Throughout 2020 and early 2021, the big technology companies announced that they were taking action to fight against the online hate that was all over these platforms, however, since then the number of reports about hate speech and harassment haven't change much (Walther, 2022)

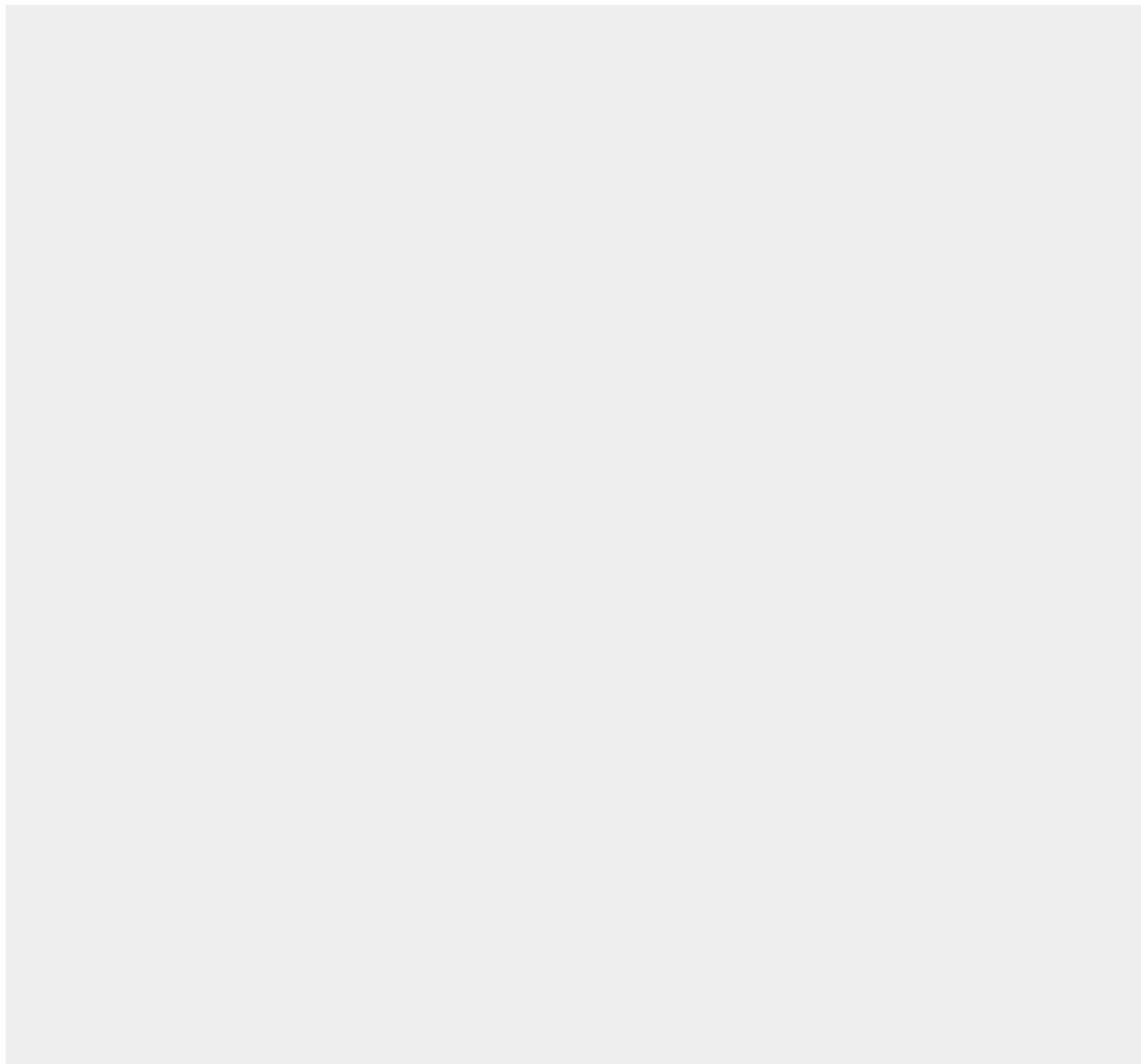


Figure 27: Post Illustration (Canva, n.d)

# Conclusion

As a student of interior design, I am aware of the power of social media – from presentation of design courses, perception of degree course value, to the perceived “success” of large architectural and design projects. I believe the success of these projects is now deeply connected to their digital presence, as social media platforms have become a benchmark for accomplishment.

Talking from experience, as design students, we have a very interesting point of view and we find ourselves navigating this intricate interplay between creativity, visibility, and the constantly changing dynamics of the digital world. We will never experience how life was before social media as we were basically born with it, however it is very enlightening to see the possibilities we have nowadays in our academic journey with this digital visibility to get prepared for the contemporary design world with the possibilities and challenges that come with it.

The context in which discussions around architecture and design or any topic in general unfold are very different depending on where they happen. An intriguing aspect comes into the conversation when talking about high-brow and low-brow discussions. High-brow discussions happen behind the walls, this gives a more exclusive and hierarchical aspect to it. People that participate in this kind of discussion are considered well educated and informed, for this reason, the quality of the discourse is elevated and not everyone is entitled to be part of it and get information from this curated environment.

While this exclusivity may limit everyone’s accessibility to the conversations, it gives them a level of credibility and reliability that low-brow conversations will never have. On the other hand, low-brow conversations are quite the opposite, as implied in the name. They happen in more open and public spaces and not necessarily physical spaces, these low-brow conversations normally happen in social media, a democratic space where everyone is welcome to participate and give an opinion, this open to the public dynamic makes these conversations accessible for everyone, however, the level of credibility and specialized knowledge normally lacks, a variety of opinions unveil in these low-brow conversations and they normally do not culminate in a concrete conclusion, whereas high-brow conversations most of the times look for a resolution at the end of the conversation. One gives credibility and exclusivity, while the other one gives accessibility and freedom of speech.

The evolving landscape of the digital world in our society becomes more important and relevant every day. Public opinion, taste making, freedom of speech, hate speech online and offline, societal forms and cultural norms are topics that were discussed in this dissertation and even though we may not directly see the link these have to architecture and design, nowadays all of these topics completely shape and influence architecture and design.

In conclusion, the landscape of taste-making in architecture and design has undergone a profound transformation on the digital era. Buildings are no longer just buildings; they become stories posted, shared and critiqued. I believe that the evolution of the concept of taste making in architecture and design before and after social media portrays how the traditional and hierarchical model of taste making that once defined our approach to aesthetics has completely changed. In the contemporary world this structure from the past is now rejected and now people have a more inclusive, dynamic and engaging approach to shaping taste. As a society, we are active participants in this journey of evolution. Beyond the impact social media has had in taste making in architecture and design, social media resonates across all aspects of our lives. It has transformed the way we live and it will continue to do so.

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# APPENDIX

During the journey of exploration and research for this dissertation my site visits to the Victoria and Albert Museum and The Design Museum helped me to enhance the clarity of my argument about and answer in a more insightful way my research question.

The purpose of these site visits was to explore the architecture and design that conforms them more closely. To have a closer look to how people responded to the buildings and interacted inside and outside of them gave me a better understanding of the spaces. People that attend this museums are not only observers but active participants that contribute to the way these places are perceived.

This was not the first time I visited these two Museums, in fact I chose to use them as case studies as I found both of them fascinating as a building as well as an organization. Through observation and analysis I realized the two museums have a completely different approaches yet people go to both to do similar activities such as looking at the exhibitions, admiring the architecture or simply enjoying their time

# SITE VISIT 1 V&A

23. October.2023

My first site visit was to the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), I chose this as a case study as it is my favourite museum in London. Everything about this museum captivated me since the first time I visited it, specially the juxtaposition of architectural styles. This combination of the modern courtyard that sits below the five classical buildings make me feel and understand past, present and possibly future. With this site visit I realized that new or modern can sometimes enhance what was already existing and that there is no need to erase the mark of the past. With this being said, it was very easy to link this observation about old and new, classic and modern to my research question "How is social media shaping architectural taste in contemporary society?"

This site visit helped me to live and understand the topic myself very closely, I believe there is no better way to support an argument and understand a topic than living it and seeing it myself.

## NOTES DURING SITE VISIT:

Victoria and Albert museum.

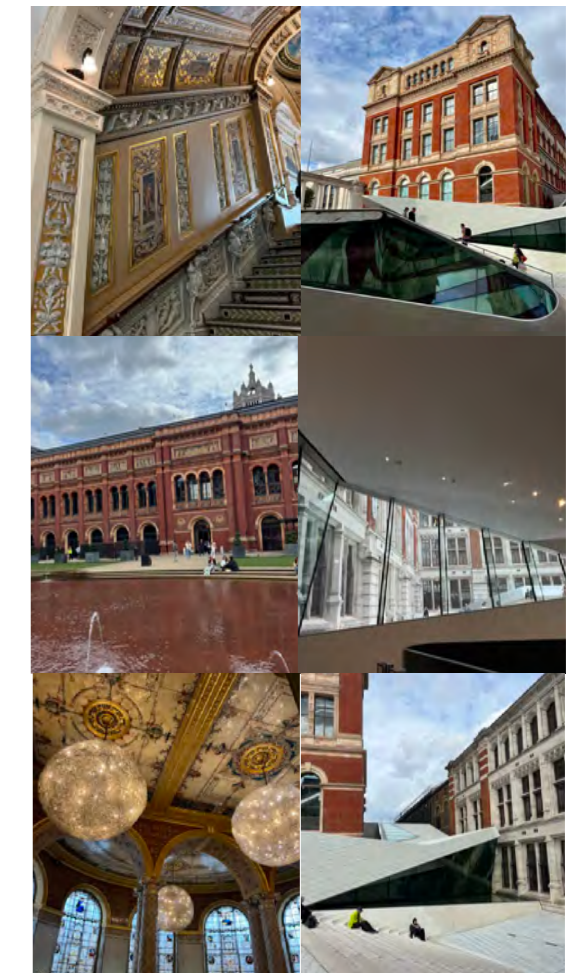
**People**

- All races
- Doing different activities
  - Working
  - Reading
  - Talking
  - Admiring the architecture
  - Relaxing
  - Looking at the different exhibitions
  - Taking Pictures

**Spaces**

- The interior of the museum reflect its historical significance as a big institution for Art and Design
- Different architectural styles are integrated within the museum's structure.
- Contrast between "old" and "new" architectural style
- Layout and spatial flow influences the user's experience
- People engage with the exhibitions but the courtyard was the busiest space.
- Accessible for all visitors
- Different room sizes.
- Some rooms very dark and some very bright.
- A lot of attention to detail on the outside columns.
- Different display methods.

## PICTURES DURING SITE VISIT:



# SITE VISIT 2 DESIGN MUSEUM LONDON

23. October.2023

My Second site visit was to The Design Museum in London, when looking for a site for my second site visit I knew I wanted a museum, however something very different in all ways to the V&A. What made me chose The Design Museum is that is a space were Design is showcased in every possible way and it is the star of the show, from something very ordinary, to complex ways of design thinking.

The space has a very special and unique architecture as well as interiors, in believe this space was designed in a way were user experience and interaction were very important. The experience as soon as you enter the museum is very dinamic and you can see that every corner of the museum has something users can interact with. This visit was very fun, I went on a ver busy morning and the Museum was very crowded, yet full of life. The iconic stairs, the use of space, light and materials make are what make the experience inside the space very unique. To conclude, The Design Museum offered me a visit were I felt part of a community and the space itself played a very important role.

PICTURES DURING SITE VISIT:

