

WRITING FOR DESIGN

Find a calm atmosphere while reading this essay.

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ATMOSPHERES

Fig 1: Model made by me in 2018, the idea was to crete an atmosphere with light

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When we talk about architecture and design the conversations tend to be focused on elements such as space, form, structure, scale, detail and light.¹ These elements also teach us how to become designers, when we study them, recreate them and eventually form a deep understanding about them. This knowledge and comprehension lead us to merge these elements into one and so they become a piece of design, a building or any given space. Then a visitor comes along, enters this space and immediately becomes the observer or the subject within this space. Peter Zumthor describes this transition in this book: *“I enter a building, see a room and - in the fraction of a second - have this feeling about it.”*² He explains here how the visitor (himself) forms feelings about the space and it’s this encounter, between people and design, that creates atmospheres. Pallasmaa explains this encounter as: *“a mental ‘thing’, an experiential property or characteristic that is suspended between the object and the subject.”*³

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¹ Böhme, G. and Borch, C. (2014) *Architectural atmospheres : on the experience and politics of architecture* . Basel: Birkhäuser. p. 19
² Zumthor, P. (2006) *Atmospheres : architectural environments, surrounding objects* . Basel: Birkhäuser. p. 13
³ Ibid 1, pp. 20-21



The tension between the object and the subject

Architecture and design have in fact always produced atmospheres. Even though the history of design presents that designers were more focused on the visual representation and concentrated on form and shape, similar to elements mentioned before, but atmospheres were still created. But since postmodernity and the new humanism within the field, designers tend to focus on the way we experience buildings, the surroundings, how we feel as visitors or people who live there. Underlying here is then another theory of design, that goes beyond the function or say the use-value of design but also what sort of impression the object makes on the subject, in other terms: 'atmospheres'.⁴ Here is where the concept of designing and understanding these atmospheres becomes quite abstract. Since Atmospheres are, at their core, our personal perception of a space. But when the space manages to touch our emotions in the absolute best way, that subject becomes completely captivated by the object. Zumthor calls this quality architecture: *"Quality architecture to me is when a building manages to move me. What on earth is it that moves me? How can I get it into my own work?"*⁵ We can understand here that the idea of atmospheres becomes something desirable for designers because it can in fact become such a strong force. But with the knowledge of knowing that this force is created by our emotions, it would mean that atmospheres would change from human to human, in other words, a space that moves me might not move you. So how can we get this into our own work?

⁴ Böhme, G. and Thibaud, J.-P. (2016) *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres*. 1st edn. London: Taylor & Francis Group. p. 5

⁵ *Ibid* 2, p. 11

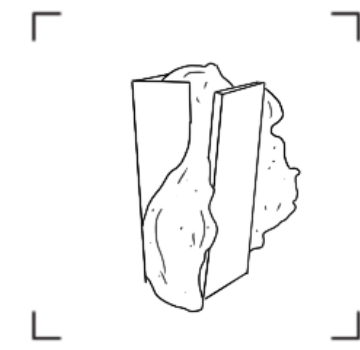
The atmosphere of a certain environment is responsible for the way we feel about ourselves in that environment. Within the environment we can find elements, these elements are not only causal factors that affect human beings as organisms but they also produce an impression on their feelings.⁶ This idea of elements imprinting our emotions is how we can begin to unravel atmospheres because we know that the atmosphere is found within the environment and the environment itself is in a way built up by these elements. Then perhaps by analysing these elements we can begin to understand how to design atmospheres. But what are these elements? At the beginning of the introduction, some examples of elements were mentioned: 'space, form, structure, scale, detail and light'. Another example could be the nine chapters in Peter Zumthor's book Atmospheres (see fig. 3) where he does exactly this, breaks down the concept of atmospheres into elements or as he calls it chapters. The content of this essay will explore elements of atmospheres in two key themes, or rather three, to get an in-depth understanding they would be analysed with case studies that portray these themes.

6 Ibid 4, p. 1



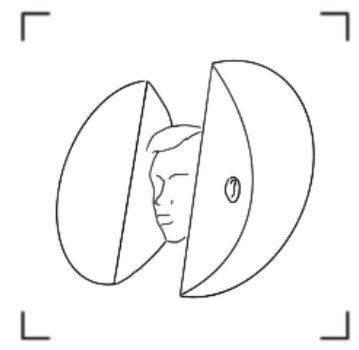
Body of architecture

The structure, the physical body of a building.



Material compatibility

The attributes of materials and how they interact.



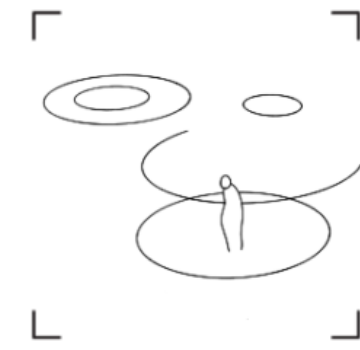
The sound of a space

Spaces are like instruments, isolated or amplified.



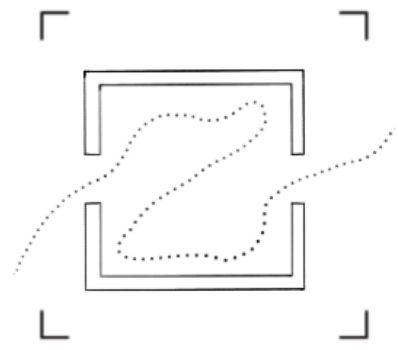
The temperature of a space

Altered by materials, people, contrast from outside.



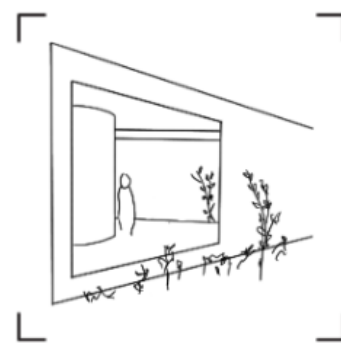
Surrounding objects

Peoples belongings, traces of a home.



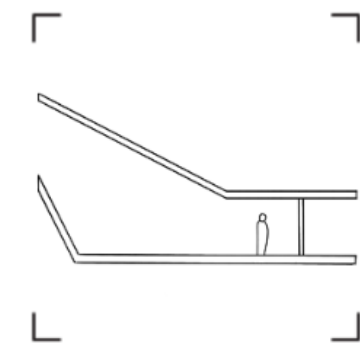
Between composure and seduction

The way people move within a space, discovering.



Tension between interior and exterior

Seeing beauty in being able to be outside and inside.



Levels of intimacy

Building mass in contrast to the people, size



The light of things

Spiritual quality of natural light, rotation and casting light.

Fig 3: Illustrations made by me, explaining Peter Zumthor's chapters on atmospheres

The first theme will explore elements that are beyond the physical, a space or object that feels spiritual. To set the scene, let's start with a quote.

*"When the sun comes up in the morning - which I always find so marvelous, absolutely fantastic the way it comes back every morning - and casts its light on things, it doesn't feel as if it quite belongs in this world."*⁷

Here one of the elements in this first theme is presented, light, the quote demonstrates how light can have a spiritual quality, something that we can't quite grasp, which is what this theme is all about. This element is called 'The light of things' in Zumthor's book, the following chapters all portray this spiritual quality and will be included in this section: Body of Architecture, The sound of a space and Levels of intimacy. With the addition of a fifth personal element, it's the opposite of how people move in a space, it's how one stands paralysed in awe of the surroundings, let's call it Captivated. To summarise, this theme discusses spiritual atmospheres, the elements within that feel surreal and the captivating nature of these spaces.

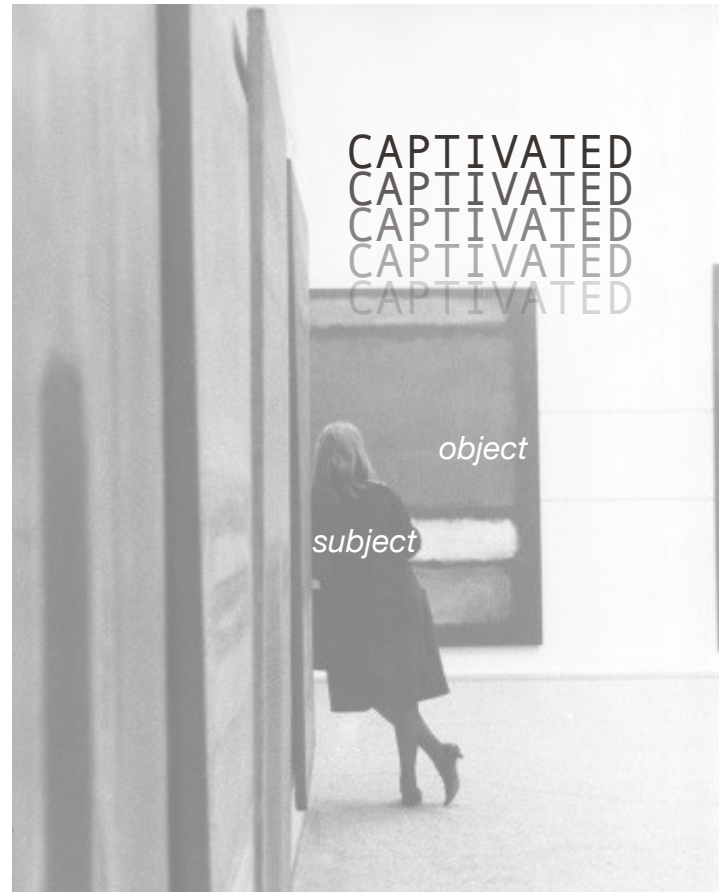


Fig 4: Visualising how the subject becomes captivated by an object
Mark Rothko at Whitechapel Gallery, 1961, Photo: Sandra Lousada

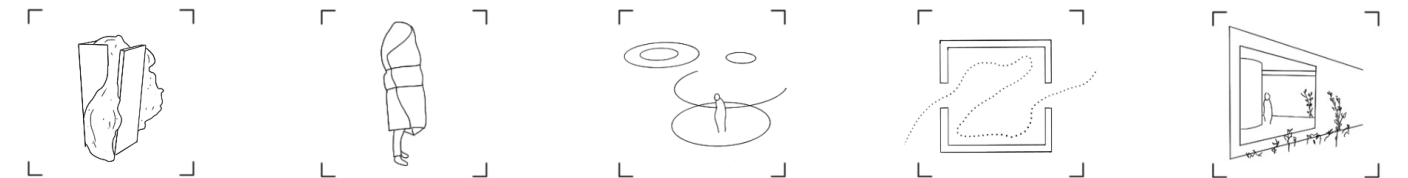
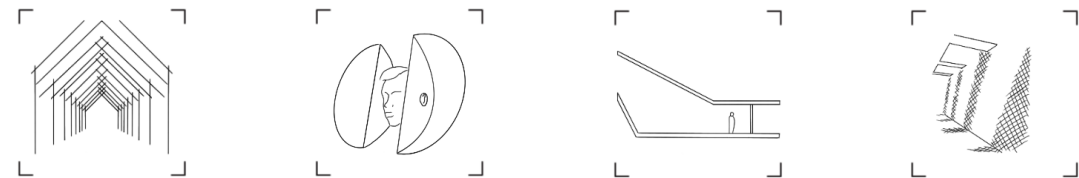


Fig 5: Visualising how the subject becomes captivated by an object
Mark Rothko at Whitechapel Gallery, 1961, Photo: Sandra Lousada

The second theme portrays elements that are within reach, an experience that feels sensual. Again allow for a quote to present the idea.

*"But a sense of "whereness" is actually much more integrating and specific, referring, as it does, to the character of the space in which we find ourselves. We sense what kind of space surrounds us."*⁸

Highlighting here, physical presence in a space and the idea that we can sense our surroundings. So if one can sense a space, one could also sense elements within a space. The sensual theme explores elements that can be seen, felt or touched and how these interactions change the experience into something sensual but also makes the subject feel aware of the present moment. The Zumthor chapters that will portray this theme are: Material compatibility, The temperature of a space, Surrounding objects, Between composure and seduction and Tension between interior and exterior. The chapter 'Surrounding objects' refers to people's belongings or traces of a home, in this theme, it will be altered to 'Surroundings'. This means the setting around space, such as how a valley radiates a serene atmosphere and can put the observer in a serene mood.⁹



7 Ibid 2, p. 61

8 Ibid 4, p. 137

9 Böhme, G. (1993) 'Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics', Thesis eleven, 36(1), pp. 113-126. doi:10.1177/072551369303600107.

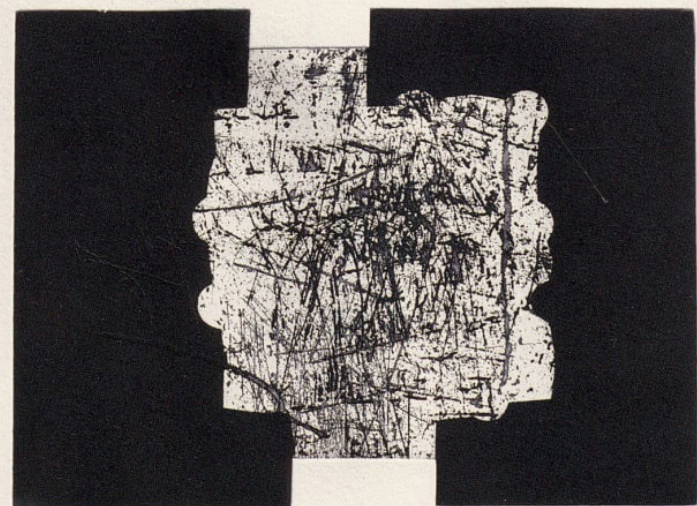


Fig 6: Saludo a Parmenides II by Eduardo Chillida, in 1998, Etching on wove Paperki paper

The third theme will illustrate the abstract aspect of atmospheres, meaning the personal connection to a certain space. This theme is quite different from the others since it doesn't explore elements of atmospheres, but rather a demonstration of why a subject is moved by an object. It takes on a personal perspective, meaning me, the writer, will be trying to understand why a space moved me by using the findings on atmospheres from this essay. We can view it as a summarization of the elements within atmospheres but put to the test in a real connection between a human in a space. It almost forms the conclusion for this essay and brings us closer to knowing how we can design atmospheres.

BREATHING SPACE

For a calm atmosphere while reading this essay.

*Theme one: A space that spiritual and feel beyond us, puts us in a captivated state.
Theme two: An experience that is within reach but sensual, making us feel aware.
Theme three: A personal perspective of a subject that was moved by an object.*



BEYOND US – SPIRITUAL

Fig 7: Renderd image of Eduardo Chillida project Mountain Tindaya, by: Phrame

Eduardo Chillida was a renowned sculptor and artist, in 1996 he proposed the creation of a large subterranean sculpture within Tindaya Mountain, (see fig. 9) on the island of Fuerteventura, Canary Islands. Due to engineering challenges and legal obstacles the twenty-six years old project has yet not been built.¹⁰ This monument that lives only in rendered images, orthographic drawings and sketches is the case study to represent the spiritual theme. The plan was to excavate an enormous chamber within the mountain to create a public artwork, but the artwork would be an interior with sculptural qualities.¹¹ To reach the chamber the visitor must walk through a 90 meter long dark tunnel, which functions as a threshold; ones inside two light shafts would capture the sunlight or moonlight and create lights of different strengths. (see fig. 8) By experiencing this Chillida wanted the subject to become aware of the endless width of the ocean and the horizon, principles of cosmos and the idea of feeling small.¹²

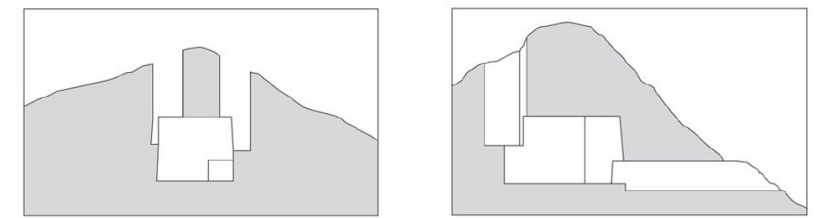


Fig 8: Sections of Chillida's proposal for Montain Tindaya

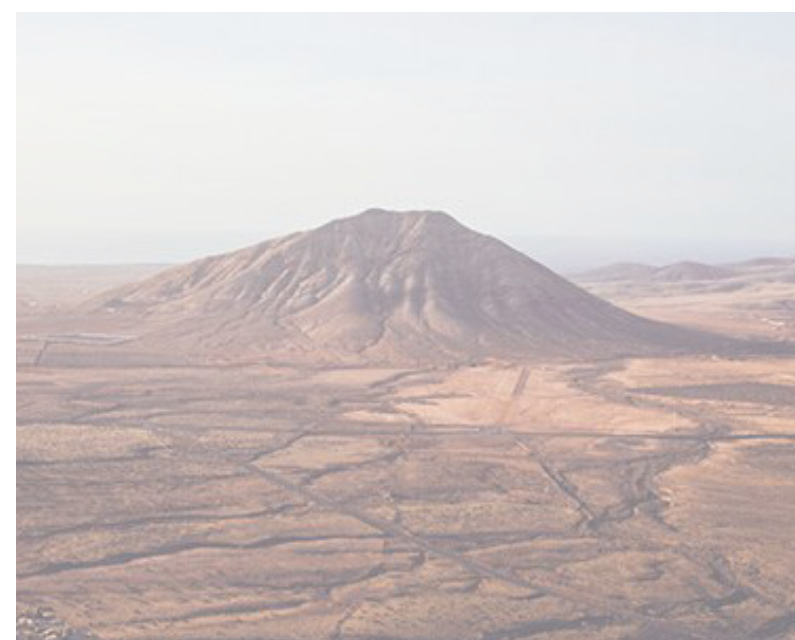


Fig 9: The mountain Tindaya

¹⁰ Macklin, S., et al. (2012) 'The investigation and design for a unique architectural space – The Chillida Cavern, Mount Tindaya, Fuerteventura', *Tunnelling and underground space technology*, 31, pp. 9–19. doi:10.1016/j.tust.2012.04.001.
¹¹ Marrero-Guillamon, I. (2020) 'Monumental Suspension: Art, Infrastructure, and Eduardo Chillida's Unbuilt Monument to Tolerance', *Social analysis*, 64(3), p. 26-. doi:10.3167/sa.2020.640303.
¹² von Graevenitz, A. (2018) 'Light rooms in Tindaya Mountain and the Roden Crater: Turrell's realization and Chillida's proposal', *The sculpture journal*, 27(3), pp. 309–320. doi: 10.3828/sj.2018.27.3.4.

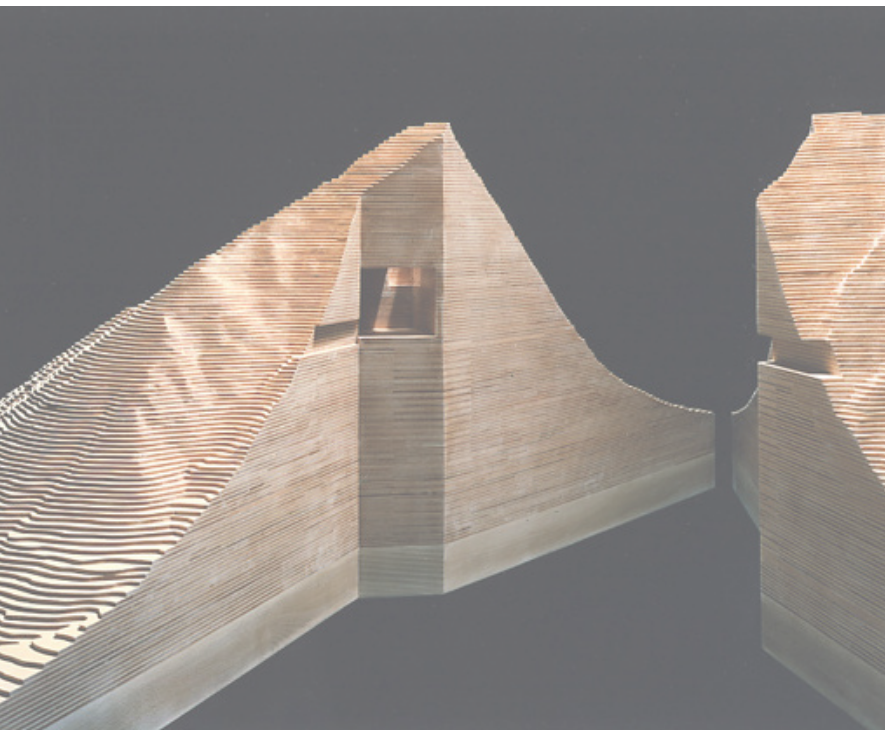


Fig 10: Model of the mountain and the design proposal within

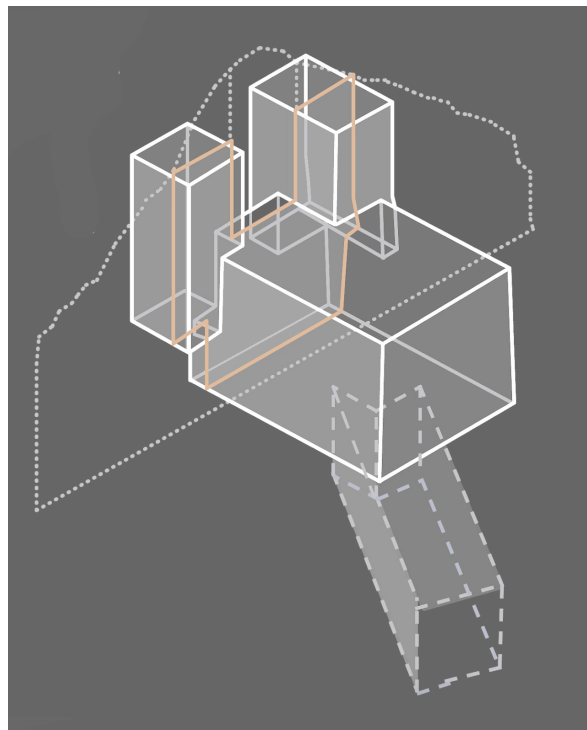


Fig 11: 3D drawing of the space within the mountain, highlighting the two light shafts

We tend to associate light with vision, but is light invisible? Light makes us able to see things but the light itself must strike something in order to be seen. A classical way to see light is in light rays¹³ and this is the way visitors would perceive light within Tindaya. This space is defined by light, the main concept lies in the idea of penetrating the mountain's interior with natural light, both from the sun and the moon, (see fig. 13 & 13) the space is designed for making the invisible visible. With the fact that the light interacts with the darkness within the mountain, an area where no one thought light would ever reach, is what makes this light so spiritual. The huge skylights that capture both types of natural light and display their never ending cycle around our planet also contributes to the spiritual quality. One can also start to imagine this interior at night, the captivity of the moonlight and the sun's distant sisters, stars. But we can not forget that the shadow gives shape and light to the object in light.¹⁴ Here comes the other idea of light, the darkness and shadows. We can find this in the long tunnel leading into space, a passage defined by darkness. Pallasmaa talks about how shadow and darkness are essential: *"During overpowering emotional experiences, we tend to close off the distancing sense of vision; we close the eyes when dreaming, listening to music, or caressing our beloved ones."* Meaning that in a dark space our sense of imagination is boosted and opens up our unconscious secondary vision.¹⁵ This would mean that walking through the dark tunnel would bring a sense of fantasy of what's to come and that the light rays would have a stronger effect in the absence of light. In the book *In Praise of Shadows*, Tanizaki talks about the concept of dark spaces: *"We are overcome with the feeling that in this small corner of the atmosphere there reigns complete and utter silence; that here in the darkness immutable tranquility holds sway. Uncanny silence of these dark spaces. An alcove to which the sunlight had never penetrated. Where lies the key to this mystery? Ultimately it is the magic of shadows"*¹⁶ Highlight here "sunlight had never penetrated", and how Chillida wanted to achieve this surreal moment within the mountain. But also silence, which leads us into the chapter about sound in a space.

SUNLIGHT

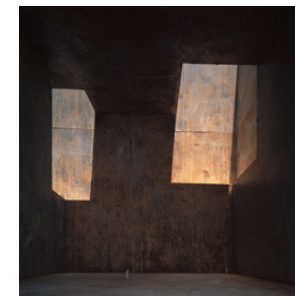


Fig 12: Tindaya in daylight

MOONLIGHT



Fig 13: Tindaya in moonlight

¹³ Ibid 4, pp. 193-194

¹⁴ Pallasmaa, J. (2012) *The eyes of the skin architecture and the senses*. Third edition. Chichester, West Sussex U.K: Wiley. p. 51

¹⁵ Ibid 14, pp. 50-53

¹⁶ Tanizaki, J (2019) *In Praise of Shadows: Vintage Design Edition*. Vintage Classics. pp. 39-40

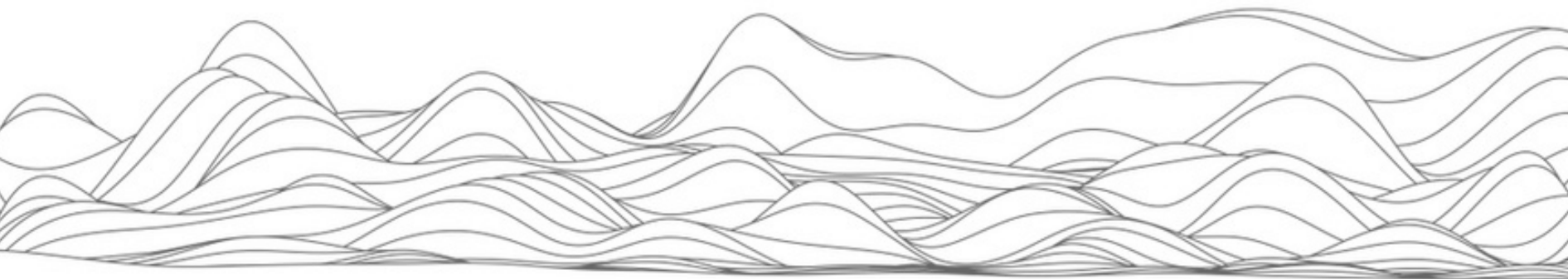


Fig 14: Soundwaves shaped like mountains

SOUND OF A MOUNTAIN

Our world today has become so noisy so trying to make a building a quiet space has become something difficult.¹⁷ *“Anyone who has half-woken up to the sound of a train or an ambulance in a nocturnal city, and through his/her sleep experienced the space of the city with its countless inhabitants scattered within its structures, knows the power of sound over the imagination”*¹⁸ So what makes sound spiritual within Tindaya when it’s something we experience everyday? Well it’s the absence of it and being able to achieve quietness within our loud world. The design is placed within the thick mountain walls making them a protection from the outside world, the sound, the people. The only sound you might hear is an echo, noise bouncing from the walls in the vast space, but echo another way to understand a space, similar to our visual sense.¹⁹ Thus making the echo a sensation of how large the chamber is and how small in conference you are. This presents us with the third element, levels of intimacy. But before we continue there is another idea, Zumthor talks about how buildings make sound, to let imagination flow, does a mountain make a sound? Like a seashell found in the sand that you press against the ear and hear the ocean. Maybe the mountain has similar qualities, if so the sound would yet again become something surreal, because who has ever pushed their ear against a mountain?

17 Ibid 2, p. 31
 18 Ibid 14, p 54
 19 Ibid 18

CAPTIVATED
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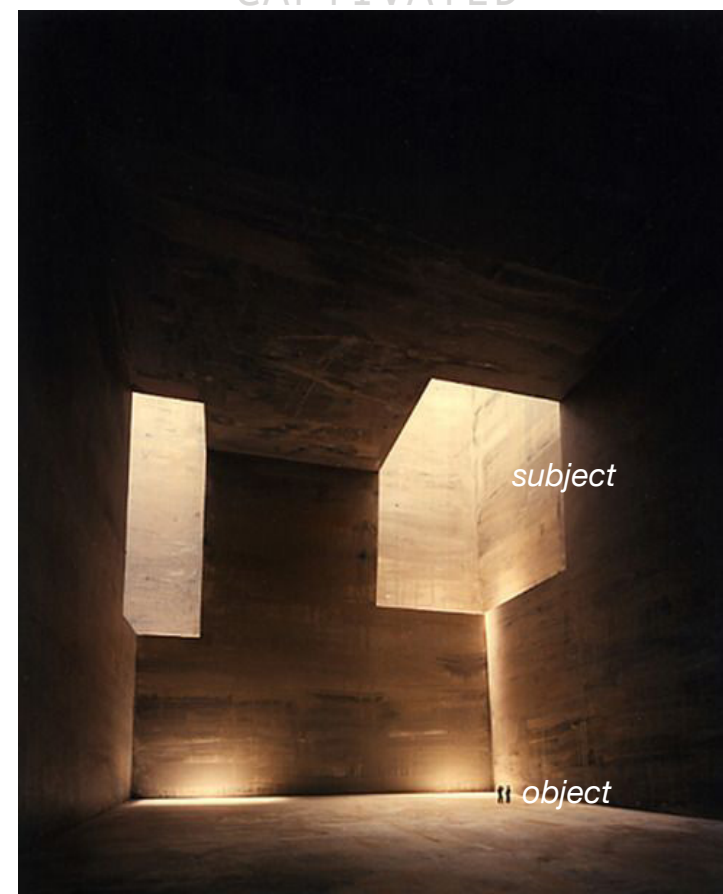


Fig 15: Renderd image of Eduardo Chillida project Mountain Tindaya

Back to levels of intimacy, which has already been achieved by the echo, but it can also refer to the building mass by contrast to our own²⁰ which in this case is, the mountain. Chillida wanted visitors to feel this, being insignificant²¹ this concept of how small we are in this world, makes us feel that there is more beyond us, which is what this there is all about. This idea connects to all the elements within this theme, the huge light rays above that penetrate the dark mountain, the light in contrast to the darkness, the absence of sound and the element, the body of architecture, in which the mountain becomes the body of the space and the surreal idea of being inside the a mountain. And finally we land on the final element, Captivated, which summarises this theme. Because it’s the way we behave within a space like this, filled with elements that are not found in everyday life, into which we can only stand in awe of the spiritual atmosphere.

20 Ibid 2, p. 51
 21 Ibid 12



WITHIN REACH – SENSUAL

Fig 16: Photograph of Thérme Vals design by Peter Zumthor

To represent this theme the idea is to analyse one of Peter Zumthor’s buildings since his book proves a strong base for this essay. To analyse a creation of his in relation to a few of his own chapters on atmospheres. It would also be relevant because Pallasmaa describes Zumthor’s work as the multitude of sensory experiences²² and this theme will explore sensual atmospheres. The case study is Thérme Vals, a spa located in a valley in Graubunden Canton, Switzerland. The spa opened its doors in 1996 and is characterised as a complete sensory experience and a space where stone and water meets.²³ The water for the thermal baths comes from the mountain just behind and the building is built up by Valser Quartzite slabs from the nearby quarry.²⁴



Fig 17: Thérme Vals Section

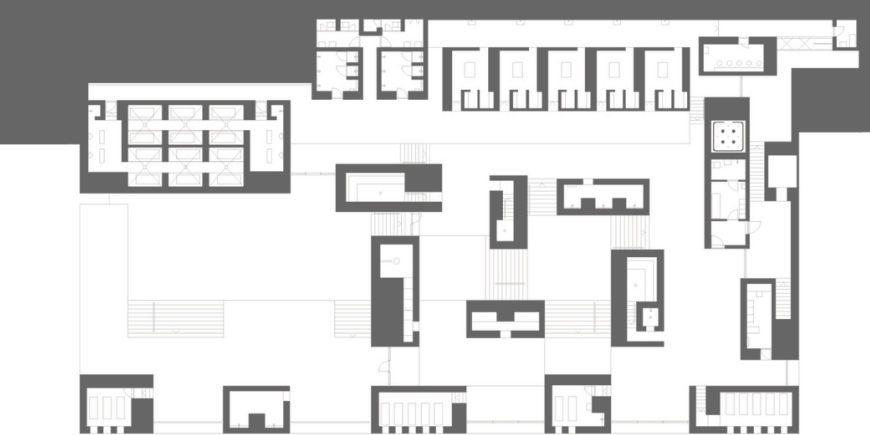


Fig 18: Thérme Vals Plan

22 Ibid 14, p. 75
 23 Archdaily (2009) The Thérme Vals / Peter Zumthor Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/13358/the-therme-vals> (Accessed: 9/12/2021)
 24 Zumthor, P. and Yoshida, N., 1998. Peter Zumthor. A+U

AWARENESS
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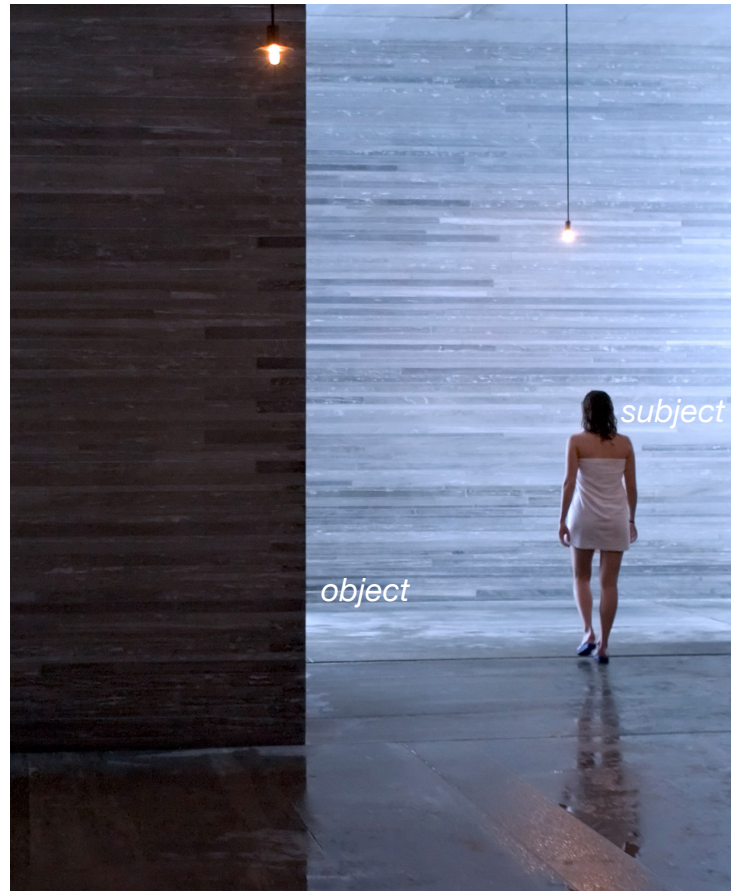


Fig 19: Interior of the spa, photographed by: Fernando Guerra



Fig 20: Stairs down to the pool, photographed by: Fernando Guerra

To start off this theme let's begin with the element between composure and seduction. Zumthor himself takes Therme Vals as an example in this chapter, he explains how the space introduces a sense of freedom of movement, 'a milieu for strolling' he calls it. It has to do with seducing people rather than directing them, spaces you enter and begin to feel as if you could stay there but then something would be drawing you around the corner and you just drift along.²⁵ This idea of discovering a building by walking through it is a way to understand the building, by doing this time becomes irrelevant and instead the visitor is negotiating themselves in emotion of sequence. One idea is to view architectural experiences as verbs rather than nouns. The way a building, like therme vals, suggest activities, to walk around the corner or to cross a threshold.²⁶ Buildings and interiors are then essentially spatial structures for people to experience things and so these activities make someone bodily present in a building.²⁷ Therme Vals does not only portray this idea in movement of the visitor but also of the other acts that can be found within this spa. Such as the various baths or the intimate calming room with a view of the mountains that invites the visitor to lay down on lounge chairs²⁸ (see fig. 21) This concept brings out the core of this theme because when moving around you experience things, especially here, in a spa you experience them through your senses. You touch them, you see the mountains around you and you feel the water around your body and with these acts you only exist in the present and become timeless.



Fig 21: Calming room with view of the mountains

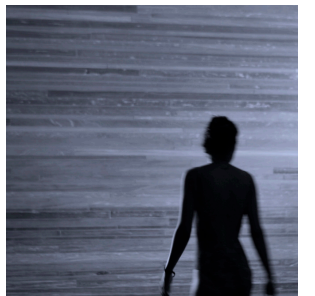


Fig 22: Strolling around, photographed by: Fernando Guerra

25 Ibid 2, p. 43
 26 Ibid 1, pp. 96-99
 27 Ibid 4, p. 180
 28 Paul Reuber (2002) 'Therme Vals', Canadian architect, 47(6), p. 25

By naming these acts within the spa other elements of this theme have been mentioned, such as the temperature or a space and tension between interior and exterior. In a way these two elements go hand in hand, not in every building, but in Therme Vals. The connection between the outside and inside is found all around, through large windows overlooking the valley, several thresholds to the exterior and outdoor areas, in a way one can't escape the surroundings when strolling through. *"We can dream and sense our being outdoors, but we need the architectural geometry of a room to think clearly."*²⁹ What Pallasmaa states here is how we can view the relationship between the exterior and interior in Zumthor's Spa. Because the exterior spaces is created by balconies and terraces which function as an extension of the interior, one can enjoy the nature around but still find hints of geometry/interior. The setting, similarity extend into the interior, landscape and views have as much calming effect as the spa itself and so the two elements become one and play in harmony with each other. This relationship leads us to the element of temperature, when you are being as much inside as outside the temperature changes and likewise with the different heated bodies of water. During the winter period this becomes even more evident, it can be 30 degrees in the water and minus 15 outside, meaning that water becomes a shield for the coldness similar to the building itself. It's a ying-yang contrast³⁰ in both elements, various temperatures and various settings. The temperature can likewise be found in the materiality, by feeling the cold stone underneath your feet as you stroll through the building. Which leads us to the element of material compatibility, the complex of the baths is built up by valser quartzite slabs and takes the form of a cave or quarry like structure.³¹ The quartzite extends over the whole building as it comes out of the water and continues to the ceiling, there is no cladding only stone.³² The materialy is simple, but several of the stones attributes can be discovered here as it interacts with the water and mimics the mountain in the exterior walls, making materiality itself a thing to be discovered.



Fig 23: Ourdoor pool, photographed by: Fernando Guerra

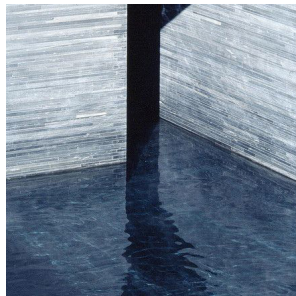


Fig 24: The stone meets the water



Fig 25: Therme Vals and the surrounding mountain

The mountain presents the final element, surroundings, we touched on this element before, how the setting blends into the interior. According to Ayala this element can be viewed as *"The concept of shakkei (borrowed scenery or landscape captured alive), developed into an art form in Japan, is inspiring. A borrowed view invites further exploration through the use of interpretive exhibits, thereby increasing the complexity, authenticity, and educational value of the experience."*³³ With this view we can see the landscape that surrounds the Therme Vals adds an additional experience and that the value of this spa becomes greater than a spa that would have a less impressive view. The mountains and the breathtaking sight completes the whole wellness experience and brings the sensual atmosphere to its fullness. Because when faced by the things of nature they too emit a certain atmosphere *"which takes hold of us, the perceiving ones, which puts us in a certain mood, which enwraps us"*³⁴

29 Ibid 14, p. 48

30 Frampton, K. (2014) The practice of architecture : visiting Peter Zumthor. San Francisco, California, USA: Kanopy Streaming.

31 Ibid 23

32 Ibid 30

33 Ayala, H. (1996) Resort ecotourism: a master plan for experience management. Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 37(5), pp.54-61.

Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/001088049603700524> (Accessed: 9/11/2021)

34 Ibid 4, p. 97



PERSONAL CONNECTION

Fig 26: Courtyard in Parador Granada, photographed by: My Nilsson

To represent the third and last theme a personal space is used, which is Parador De Granada, or rather the courtyard located within this hotel. The word Parador comes from the word parar which in Spanish means to stop, halt or stay and on a hot summer day in Granada this hotel made me stop and stay for a while. Before even starting to write about this theme the realisation has come that it was a sensual atmosphere that was experienced. Because it was a day of exploring which brought out a physical presence through sensing various elements and these elements match the elements within the sensual theme. Parador Granada is located inside the grounds of Alhambra which is considered to be one of the world's great architectural wonders. The hotel was constructed between 1332 - 1354 and rests on the enchanting gardens³⁵ providing views over the whole complex. Already at this point one element can be detected, the surroundings, which in this case is not the mountains around Therme Vals but the Alhambra palace it's impressive gardens. The hotel was found halfway through the visit, meaning that the famous palace had a constant impression on my mind; it was a part of the journey and likewise a part of the atmosphere. It brings back the concept of shakkei/borrowed scenery which shows once again how a location and views can add value and bring out a certain mood within the visitors. Continuing on this theme the element of tension between interior and exterior could likewise be found here. The middle of the building was created by two parallel courtyards, the first one (the one that I stood in) was open to the sky above and the other (the one that moved me) was filled with natural elements and again an open ceiling to let in natural light. Courtyards function also as a piece of extended interior, same as the terraces in Therme Vals, the four walls that surrounded me provided geometry and therefore a clarity for the mind. The natural parts, such as the open sky and the plants and fountain within the second courtyard allowed me to dream away. Maybe this is why Alhambra itself didn't move me the same way, there was no geometry, no clarification. There are buildings within that provide walls but they are all built with an organic touch and filled with carved out details.

³⁵ Parador Granada (n.d.) Parador Granada – History
Available at: <https://paradorgranada.com/Parador-Granada-History>
(Accessed: 10/11/2021)



Fig 26: The first courtyard in Parador Granada



Fig 27: The second courtyard in Parador Granada

In these natural components located in the second courtyard that moved me, we can find the element: sound of a space. There were two bodies of water, one small pond and also a fountain that made the sound of running water, which is known to be relaxing. Further bird chatter could be heard which contributed to the natural sound within this courtyard. Böhme talks about how *“Music shapes the way the listeners finds himself, or herself, in space”* and how birds have developed their own music, which is a type of natural sound such as a fountain.³⁶ Meaning that the two go hand in hand and created a sort of natural symphony in this space. He goes on and says that music or sound for that matter is a language of emotion and provide a gratifying awareness of being in the world.³⁷ This points to the conclusion that it was a sensual atmosphere that I experienced. Backing up this idea by going back again to the location, the Alhambra. It’s a place of discovery, similar to Therme Vals again, where you stroll around, which brings in the element of: Between Composure and seduction. How undiscovered places lead you around, reveal surprises and make you aware of the current moment. Other elements of atmospheres can probably be found at Parador Granada, such as the light of the sun that warms your skin, but these do not stand out, they exist but they did not move me that particular day. Similarly in the previous themes we can not deny that elements such as light and sound that was found in Mountain Tindaya can likewise be found in Therme Vals, in the light shaft in the ceilings and the sound of the water. But in this case these elements express themselves stronger in Tindaya, they take over the space because they are so distinctive and so they triumph over the same elements found in Therme Vals. Allow for a small conclusion of elements within atmospheres, let’s take light as an illustration, we see light every day and it becomes sensual to us, when it helps us find things in the dark and when it provides heat, but we do not find light spiritual every day and it’s when this happens that it becomes a part of an atmosphere.



Fig 28: Fountain in the courtyard



Fig 29: Self taken image of the courtyard

36

Ibid 4, p. 171

37

Ibid 4, pp. 173-174



Fig 25: Carved wooden fence that separated the two spaces

But there is something else, something that can't be said with elements of architecture and interior design, it was me and my feelings. *"What else moved me? My mood, my feelings, the sense of expectation that filled me while I was sitting there. Which brings that famous Platonic sentence to mind. <Beauty is in the eye of the beholder> Meaning it's all in me."*³⁸ It was a feeling of being on vacation, which always seems to bring a sense of calmness and curiosity. The feeling of visiting a place you always wanted to visit. Combined with a final feeling, a basic human behaviour, wanting what you cannot have. Because the second courtyard that moved me couldn't be reached. It was fenced off and could only be used by the guests of the hotel making it feel untouchable and more desirable. This theme showcases the personal view of atmospheres, meaning the personal attachment that people can find to a certain location. Here one subject's emotions towards a subject can be found. Even though this essay has discussed the elements of design that can create an atmosphere, does emotional state somehow have the final say? *"But on the other hand atmospheres are not beings like things; they are nothing without a subject feeling them."*³⁹

38 Ibid 2, p. 17

39 Ibid 4, p. 2

CONCLUSION

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So can we design atmospheres? As viewed for the case studies designers have created atmospheres that moved people, or at least one person. All the elements discussed are all used when designing a space meaning that a designer can create them but to say that this would also create an atmosphere might be incorrect. As the final theme leans towards, the subject, the visitor, the guest would always have their own emotional view. Böhme explains that *"Paradoxically, we grasp the atmosphere of a place before we identify its details or understand it intellectually."*¹ This would mean that the idea of atmospheres is an instinct, we as subjects feel the atmosphere before even releasing all the elements that created it. Combining this with the idea a space that moves me might not move you, similarly a space that moved me today might not move me tomorrow, this would make it difficult to design something that gives the instinct feeling on everybody that enters, the key is how the subject receives the space. But when designers use these elements in a way that is not seen or felt every day, when they are made sensual or spiritual this is when we can grasp the idea of designing a space that moves people.

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1 Ibid 1, p. 21



Fig 1: Artwork by Victor Pasmore, 1971

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Introduction:

The abstractness of Atmospheres, personal perception of a space.

“Quality architecture to me is when a building manages to move me. What on earth is it that moves me? How can I get it into my own work?” (Zumthor, 2006, p.11)

Understanding atmospheres, what it is, how it relates to design.

“The elements of the environment are not only causal factors which affect human beings as organisms but they produce an impression on their feeling. And what mediates objective factors of the environment with aesthetic feelings of a human being is what we call atmosphere . The atmosphere of a certain environment is responsible for the way we feel about ourselves in” (Böhme and Thibaud, 2016, p. 1)

“In the theory of design, the situation is comparable: it is not only the function or, say, the use-value of things which is at stake, but what sort of impression the objects make.” (Böhme and Thibaud, 2016, p. 5)

Context:

Defining the key themes of atmospheres and dividing them into sections.

Example below (not to be used): The nine chapters of Peter Zumthor’s book Atmospheres:

Body of architecture - Material compatibility -The sound of a space -The temperature of a space - Surrounding objects - Between composure and seduction - Tension between interior and exterior - Levels of intimacy - The light of things

Introducing the three case studies, providing background about them.

Analysis:

The case studies are to be examples of the key themes of atmospheres.

Example:

Atmospheres key themes 1 & 2 - Case study 1

Atmospheres key themes 3 & 4 - Case study 2

Understanding the Themes throughout a personal space: Case study 3

Case study 1, Eduardo Chillida - mountain tindaya:

“His plan was to excavate a cube of 50 square metres inside the mountain, followed by a 40-square-metre cube, in which two shafts of light would culminate, capturing sunlight or moonlight, creating light of different strengths in each of the cubes. After this existential cosmic experience in the mountain, as visitors walk out of these rooms through a 90-metre-long tunnel, they would become aware of the endless width of the ocean and the horizon, the non-existent border between ocean and sky.” (von Graevenitz, 2018)

Case study 2:

Not decided yet, the idea is to find an example that fits in with one of the key themes of atmospheres.

Case study 3, Parador Granada:

Personal Example of an atmosphere that moved me. Trying to make sense of why it moved me from the findings on atmospheres. Bringing it all together, almost becomes the conclusion.

”So what moved me? Everything, The things themselves, the people, the air, noises, sound, colours, material presences, textures, forms too, forms I can appreciate. Forms I can try to decipher. Forms I find beautiful. What else moved me? My mood, my feelings, the sense of expectation that filled me while I was sitting there. Which brings that famous Platonic sentence to mind. <Beauty is in the eye of the beholder> Meaning it’s all in me.” (Zumthor, 2006, p. 17)

“But on the other hand atmospheres are not beings like things; they are nothing without a subject feeling them. They are subjective facts in the sense of Hermann Schmitz: to talk about atmospheres, you must characterize them by the way they affect you. They tend to bring you into a certain mood, and the way you name them is by the character of that mood.” (Böhme and Thibaud, 2016, p. 2)

Going into the idea that maybe it was not only this hotel that moved me, but also the journey before, when viewing the grounds of Alhambra, the nature and the scenery.

“What is experienced when faced by the things of nature or within environments, is primarily the atmosphere which they emit, which takes hold of us, the perceiving ones, which puts us in a certain mood, which enwraps us.” (Böhme and Thibaud, 2016, p. 97)

“The concept of shakkei (“borrowed scenery” or “landscape captured alive”), developed into an art form in Japan, is inspiring. A borrowed view invites further exploration through the use of interpretive exhibits, thereby increasing the complexity, authenticity, and educational value of the experience. Mythology, folk memory, and literature relating to the viewed landscapes can all be fed into the interpretation. Paintings, sculptures, music, and other forms of the landscape-inspired art can also be used as interpretive tools, providing an insight into the place-specific integration of ecological, spiritual, and aesthetic values.” (Ayala, H, 1996)

Conclusion:

Partly the third case study.

Partly, can we design atmospheres or is the concept too personal?

”We identify ourselves with this space, this place, this moment, and these dimensions become ingredients of our very existence.” (Pallasmaa, 2012, p. 77)