Design and Cinema
Design and Cinema
Form Follows Film

Edited by
Belkıs Uluoğlu, Ayhan Enşici, Ali Vatansever

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Editors’ Introduction

Belkıs Uluoğlu, Ayhan Enşici, Ali Vatansever

Why has cinema become so closely acquainted with the design disciplines, and vice versa? What valuable or significant experience can come out from this brotherhood, both in terms of substantial and in terms of representative means?

Design, when defined as the realization of the imagined, comes close to the world of the cinema, as cinema provides a rich tool for exercising the imagined. This is one thing that brings design and cinema together. Yet, another, and perhaps more important thing is, the change in our conception of existence and space.

The timelessness of optic space replaced by the time-bounded experientiality of haptic space is totally a different means for conceiving and experiencing space. The geometrically defined container metaphor is now replaced with the corporally and psychically defined interactive, dynamic and reproducible life form metaphor for space. Discussions on relations of cinema and design provide means for understanding the designed object in a different state of mind which can be related with the latter, the life form metaphor and this necessitates a different way of theory making.

Possible forms of theory making are, (i) objectivist understanding of the natural sciences, (ii) interpretive understanding of the structuralist and hermeneutic approaches, and, (iii) naturalistic understanding of the idealized experiences of human sciences whether they be in the form of prototypes, memes, or similar abstract-concrete patterns. The third would then be what we are talking about here. By introducing a naturalistic understanding, the description of the stage of events in producing designed objects, is taken away from both the object-centered (as in the objectivist understanding) and subject-centered (as in the interpretive understanding) descriptions and replaced by patterns of experience which exist somewhere between the lived and the made, between the experiences and their material forms; this is what we label as abstract-concrete forms. This requires or brings about a different ontological basis for explaining the designed world. And, finally, this is where cinema becomes a poetic medium and an important tool for representing the so-called patterns.
This book took shape after two meetings in Istanbul on design and cinema taking place two years apart; the first one being design and cinema: design in wonderland (2003 / national) and the second one, design and cinema: form follows film (2005 / international). The book heavily lies on the works of the latter, in which we were interested to see in what formal categories, those patterns that we have discussed here, would fall into. Representation of experiences and the knowledge it produces would expected to be in different forms depending on the intent of the person who communicates this knowledge to others. Hence, the same content may be poured into different moulds at different times creating different forms, depending on that which is under examination or on the purpose of the message intended to be communicated. Other than the ideational forms that came out of the meetings (existential, structural, narrative, and others) and which we will be discussing in the proceeding lines, the meetings were organized in such a way that they involved different forms of productions and presentations also, to encase those different ideations. Invited lectures, paper presentations, works (of students and professionals), workshops, and exhibitions took place. This book includes works selected from both meetings, which are rewritten, refereed and finally edited. It is organized in two parts, Discourse on Form and Film and Works on Form and Film, to be able to reflect the rich environment, the ‘event’ experienced in the meetings, to this book. Now, let us proceed with discussing the works of people included in the book:

Juhani Pallasmaa’s introductory text, The Lived Image, introduces a general scope of the first issue that we have raised here, relations of the real and the imagined: How cinema has become a new paradigm for architecture, as well as other arts, by bringing in a new way of understanding our experience of place and time, and by blurring the boarders between the real and imagined worlds, and hence alternating the ways we perceive ourselves. He continues with how this new paradigm not only transforms our conception of the world that surrounds us, but also expands the realm of our imagination. In the center of this imagination lies the concept of image; images being made of real life experiences. As a distinguished theoretician and architect, J.Pallasmaa has a lot to say on existential qualities and sensorial experience.

The first part of the book – discourse – is intended to give a picture of current thought on forms of design-cinema relations, which here fall in existential, narrative, structural, constructive, temporal, digital, social, and fragmental categories.

In the first chapter which is on existential forms, Juhani Pallasmaa furthers his discussion of lived image as lived space, via which geometric
space turns into an experiential one intertwining the physical with the mental worlds. He considers A. Hitchcock’s and A. Tarkovsky’s works as powerful creations of existential worlds, though each with opposite motives.

Gül Kale’s work on feminist discourse reflected in A. Varda’s films, is one other way of interpreting existential space by introducing a discussion on how people interact with their environment as a form of social, cultural and bodily experience. A. N. Erek & A. C. Orlandi’s interpretation of the designed object in cinema, emphasize the necessity of a specific theoretical approach, which would be expected to explicate the relations of the object itself and its image, and the differences and similarities of the cinematic and the real object.

Chapter Two deals with narrative forms. Narrative forms differ from the existential by being reconstructions of our experiences; it is a world mentally constructed, not existentially experienced. While the narrative deals with the mind, the existential deals with the experience realm. Here, discussions on narrative forms have taken place in organizing, space (real world of Chinese Garden, filmic space of hotel as double metaphor), film form (analogue vs. digital) and the timeline of the film (linear vs. layered). Andong Lu and François Penz present an investigation on the Chinese Garden as a narrative form, and discuss how it produces a time-image, and i.e. immersive spaces. Marshall Deutelbaum argues that as one frees himself of habitual modes of perception, it will be possible to perceive the intended narrative of a film. A discussion on Hong Sang-soo’s film Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors is presented proposing that a thread of events exists as the narrative, opposed to views of considering it as retellings of the same event. Ferenc Boné proposes that the sign function of designed objects (the aesthetic) in cinema does not overlap with the characteristics of time-based modalities in narrating; yet, the image – as an object of design and as the innate thing – can do this. Digital media, by acting as a cultural interface between the designed world and reality, and with its world of design, brings about another form of communication than the analogue; it is the cinematic way of perceiving the world. What Boné says is that this helps us relate cinema and design on a theoretical basis more than ever. Dilek Altuntaş, by raising a discussion on the metaphoric potential of spatial design in cinema, and by specifically referring to the hotel notion, intends to question the relations between reality and representation.

By proposing a category of structural forms in Chapter Three, we intend to cover those issues which deal with the structuring of the parts of a film, or of a space, to form a whole as the resulting product. It is merely a coincidence that two articles under the same category deal with sound as structural element. Halit Refiş is one of the most prominent film directors in Turkey.
Here, he discusses the changing nature of dramatic structure in film making and explains his interpretation by favouring the knowledge of architecture and music rather than that of painting and literature, in the dramatic structure of his films. We have included excerpts from his films in the DVD accompanying this book, for a better understanding of his way of relating musical structures to the structure of his films. Arthur Lizie explores ways of associating a formal cinema aspect, here sound, with ideological aspects in structuring the film. He chooses two similarly popular yet ideologically different films, *Almost Famous* and *Velvet Goldmine*, to demonstrate this. Tuğyan Aytaç Dural traverses the book’s thematic title from ‘form follows film’ to ‘film follows form’ and argues that it is form making via different types of composition that determines the properties of any artefact designed. A design studio making use of the composition style of selected films in designing an object is exemplified here. Although composition is a different form of putting things together than the conventional meaning of structuring, it is still a form of structuring a whole in general terms.

Chapter Four’s theme is constructive forms. One may ask what difference is there between the structural and the constructive. Yet we all know that structuring and constructing recall different content. Structuring reminds us of elemental nature, of parts being put together in a defined order, constructing may or may not include elements; here, the style of making the whole becomes more important than the ordering of elements. Fatoş Adiloğlu, for instance, concentrates on body-space-form relations in Süha Arın’s documentary films in constructing visual information and elucidates how he does this by “capturing, enclosing, molding and organizing form to enhance and articulate meaning”, in her words. Seçkin Kutucu remarks to the transformative power of cinematic spaces, as ‘real’ architectural spaces are decontextualized and reconstructed in a different representative medium with filmatic techniques – montage and superimposition – and provide us a new medium for the representation of space.

Without a chapter on temporal forms, this book would be incomplete. As you would suppose, the new conception of space is basically concerned with temporality. The frozen time conception of the past shattered, leaving its place to change and spontaneity in the design and production of objects. Works included in Chapter Five emphasize the temporal aspects of space and design, and cinema as a very compatible tool for reflecting and representing this temporality. François Penz deciphers Le Corbusier’s interest in cinema and his collaboration with film-maker Pierre Chenal, and the problem of filming an “immobile subject”. The sequential order of shots in the film is Chenal’s way of editing, i.e. his way of bringing movement to the immobile and letting people experience the temporal qualities of a building.
Penz concentrates more on the narrative qualities, yet we thought it would also be interesting to draw your attention on the differences of the two people’s approach, an architect and a film-maker, one dealing with the immobile while the other with the moving object. Lutz Robbers by grounding his thesis with relevant work from various fields – dance, photography, art, etc. – proposes that Mies’ work, as he dematerializes space, was distinct from that of his contemporaries (Bauhaus, constructivists) and that he was well aware of the potentials that cinema has provided to architecture. Türker Armaner questions the capability of our mind to represent a moving image and discusses differing conceptions of time-space relations: Aristotle, Kant, and Wittgenstein.

Chapter Six starts with Digitella, a successful metaphorical term recalling Barbarella, created by Feride Çiçekoğlu to discuss digital forms. Çiçekoğlu in Digitella proposes that the spatial reality preceding digital technology is related to a unisequential conception of time. Yet, the spatial aspect of digital technology is related to a multisequential conception of space-time, which is defined as a navigable interactive environment with steerability and hapticality being its main characteristics. Alex McDowell has been nominated for the British Academy’s Best Production Design Award in 2005 with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory; he is also the production designer of a number of famed films like Minority Report, Fight Club, The Lawnmower Man, and others. Here, he discusses the importance of rapidly changing technology in film production, carrying the production designer to the center of this process. He proposes that with digital technology and digital tools introduced, a non-linear work flow is observed in pre-production, i.e. the structure of the design process as well as the design teams has radically changed. Gül Kaçmaz Erk’s statement underlying her article’s title – Form Follows Media – is that the medium used “to develop and communicate an idea forms and limits both the creative process and the creation”. She chooses The Matrix as an explanatory world, with it being represented in four different media – the feature film, the animated film, comic book, and digital game.

With a chapter devoted to social forms, we intended to focus on those studies which question social patterns via films. In the first article of Chapter Seven, Joaquim Moreno’s analysis of R.Mallet-Stevens’ Villa Noailles tells us how a set design turns out to be an architecture to live in, in other words to act in, and how real life and movie film set could be handled within a unified conception for the sake of modern architecture. Aydın Hasan Polatkan traces two conceptions of trauma via two films produced 30-years apart: La Jetée and Twelve Monkeys.
Fragmental forms are discussed in Chapter Eight. It is not a coincidence that the two articles dealing with fragmental forms consider urban space as their main source for examination. While the first one, Helmut Weihsmann’s considers perception of urban space in cinema, the latter one, Ayşe Şentürer’s, is more interested in the use of cinema for conceiving urban space. The background thesis for both studies is that the city is made up of parts which have no intention of coming together as a meaningful whole and both search for ways of dealing with this fragmented world. Cinema is a very powerful representative tool for dealing with this chaotic world.

The second part of the book presents works, conducted either in the form of workshops or films. Julie Talen’s film-work Pretend in which she explores a new language for film making, Olga Vázquez-Ruano’s workshop plotting space-time relations, Otto von Busch and Henric Benesch’s workshop on ‘cities and clothes’ considering worn identity, and Belkis Uluoğlu and Işıl Baysan Serim’s workshop on relations of the natural with the made, with questions raised which are of ethical and political genre, took place in this part of the book.

We owe great debt to those who have made the meetings possible in the first place, out of which this book was born. Pelin Tan, one of the ideologues of the meetings, Bahar Aksel Enşici and the editors of this book took place in this project. We invited Juhani Pallasmaa to author an introductory text when this book project took start, and he accepted this invitation with his kind and positive approach. We would like to thank him for his warm support and contribution throughout the whole process. Valuable effort has been made by those who have evaluated and made productive critiques for the articles. Günkut Akın, Nigan Bayazıt, Feride Çiçekoğlu, Dietrich Neumann, Juhani Pallasmaa, François Penz, and Halit Refiş acted as referees in the formation of this book. Bahar Aksel Enşici spent great effort in formatting the whole work. Ali Can Doğramacı designed the graphics of the cover of this book. Our students also contributed; Kübra Gür with transcriptions, and Eren Biroğlu with technical assistance in the preparation of excerpts from films. And finally, we thank Andy Neressian for his cooperation in concretizing this book.
The Lived Image

Juhani Pallasmaa

In its formative years, cinema was seen as the newcomer in the esteemed realm of the arts, and referred to as the “seventh art”\(^1\). Ever since, the moving image – cinema and its derivative, television – has undoubtedly become the quintessential expressive medium of the modern and post-modern eras. Cinema has incorporated the qualities of all other art forms in its vocabulary and syntax. “It was poetry that invented the technique of montage, not Eisenstein”, Joseph Brodsky suggests.\(^2\) At the same time, the cinematic narrative mode has reshaped and rejuvenated traditional art forms. It has also given rise to totally new artistic expressions, such as performance and video art. As the invention of cinematography turned 100 years old, Peter Greenaway pointed out that cinema had developed from its early phase of mimicking other arts into a powerful new influence in its own right: “Now that cinema celebrates its first century and it has evolved to a point where it is mature enough to reinvent itself, there is evidence to make us believe that all art is moving towards the state of cinema.”\(^3\)

Cinema has become the new inspiration and paradigm for architecture. Paul Virilio declares the emergence of an era of cinematic architecture and urbanity:

“After sculptural architecture the era of cinematic artificiality will emerge both literally and metaphorically. From here on architecture is cinema, an enormous dark space for the purposes of enchanting the masses . . .”\(^4\)

In addition to cinema’s impact on other arts, it has fundamentally changed the ways in which we experience place and time, sequence and causation as well as past, present and future. The difference between reality and fiction, document and artistic representation has been decisively blurred.

Photography and cinematography have structured our very understanding of reality and made perceptible phenomena that are either too slow or too fast, too small or too huge for unassisted human perception. . Indeed, cinematic montage has offered us a model for the structuring and representation of the shapeless flow between reality and dream, observation and
fantasy, actuality and memory. It has, in fact, altered the ways how we perceive the world as well as our very lives and ourselves.

Like architecture, cinema is a conglomérate and “impure” art form in the sense that it fuses together numerous ingredients. Whereas architecture fuses the material language of space, matter, structure, and light with an emotive use of all the non-visual senses, cinema amalgamates narrative structures with visual expression, as well as auditive and musical means with ideated sensations of movement, touch, smell and taste. In accordance with Walter Benjamin’s view, both architecture and film are fundamentally tactile arts. This observation emphasizes the inherent reality sense, or experiential realism, of these two arts.

The discipline of architecture is “impure” also in the sense that it fuses utility and poetics, function and image, rationality and metaphysics, technology and art, economy and symbolization. These inherent contradictions resist theoretical analyses and give rise to the dismissal of architecture altogether from the realm of the arts. Raymond Durgnat comments on the similar “impurity” of film:

“Ever since the cinema began, aestheticians have sought to define ‘pure’ cinema, the ‘essence’ of cinema. In vain. The cinema’s only purity is the way in which it combines diverse elements into its own ‘impure’ whole. Its essence is that it makes them interact, that it integrates other art forms, that it exists ‘between’ and ‘across’ their boundaries. It is cruder and inferior to every other art form’s ‘home ground’. But it repairs its deficiencies, and acquires its own dignity, by being a mixture.”

Unlike other arts, architecture and cinema are entangled with the theoretical impurity of the phenomenon of life itself. These two art forms pull us into experientially real situations of life and they loose their artistically isolated conceptual purity as a consequence of this mediation. In the Finnish language, the word for cinema – elokuva [living, or life picture] – acknowledges the affinity of cinema and life.

In his intriguing book *The Philosophy of No: A Philosophy of the New Scientific Mind*, Gaston Bachelard explains the development of scientific thought as a transition from animism through realism, positivism, rationalism and complex rationalism to dialectical rationalism. This is the closed orbit of scientific thought. “The philosophical evolution of a special piece of scientific knowledge is a movement through all these doctrines in the order indicated”, the philosopher argues.

Significantly, artistic thinking seems to struggle to the opposite direction. An artistic image works its way from the realist, rational and analytic
understanding back towards a mythical and animistic grasp of the world. Science and art, therefore, seem to move past each other in opposite directions along the same continuum. Whereas scientific thought progresses and differentiates, artistic thought seeks to return back to a de-differentiated and experientially singular oceanic world. Artistic imagination aspires for expressions that are capable of mediating the entire complexity of human existential experience through a singular image. In that sense, art is a perpetual tautology. It keeps repeating one and the same message: how it feels to be a human being in this world. This paradoxical task of uniting singularity and universality is achieved through poeticised images, which are experienced and lived rather than analyzed and understood. A work of art, cinema, or architecture is not a symbol that represents, or indirectly portrays something outside itself. It is an image object that places itself directly in our existential sphere and consciousness. It becomes part of us and we become part of it. Jean-Paul Sartre describes this reality of the artistic image using Jacopo Tintoretto’s painting of the Crucifixion as an example:

“Tintoretto did not choose that yellow rift in the sky above Golgotha to signify anguish or to provoke it. It is anguish and yellow sky at the same time. Not sky of anguish or anguished sky; it is anguish become thing, an anguish which has turned into yellow rift of sky, and which thereby is submerged and impacted by the proper qualities of things, […] That is, it is no longer readable […] there will remain only things haunted by a mysterious soul. One does not paint significations; one does not put them to music.”

Neither do cinema project significations or symbols, or architecture construct symbolic structures; they both expand the reality of human life to the realm of dream and imagination. The poetic image is a reality in its own right. Brodsky expresses this essential view concisely: “… [A] poem […] is not a paraphrase or a metaphor for reality, but a reality itself.”

The artist looks at the world with innocent eyes, and projects a sense of life to inanimate matter. All artists are fundamentally alchemists in their search for a particular kind of gold; the gold of experiential truth. Joseph Brodsky points out the alchemist essence of poetry:

“Language is a diluted aspect of matter … by manipulating it into a harmony or, for that matter, disharmony, a poet […] negotiates himself into the domain of pure matter - or, if you will, of pure time - faster than can be done in any other line of work.”
INTRODUCTION

The artistic eye, ear and sense of touch experience material entities as movements, interactions and dialogues. Even the simplest artistic or architectural image is an embodied and lived metaphor, which directs our consciousness to heightened existential experiences.

This animistic world is the world of the poet, painter, composer, film director, and architect alike. In this artistic consciousness we are in constant interaction, exchange and dialogue with the world; I exist in the world and the world takes place in me. In fact, we lend the inanimate world our own sense of life, empathy and compassion. Paul Cézanne points out this animation of the object and the simultaneous mental exchange:

“The landscape becomes reflective, human and thinks itself through me. I make it an object, let it project itself and endure within my painting […] I become the subjective consciousness of the landscape, and my painting becomes its objective consciousness.”

This is also the mental state which gives rise to authentic architectural images, regardless of the unavoidable filter of reason imposed on this art form. As a consequence, the discipline of architecture contains a fissure; one part of it wants to advance along with scientific thought and technological development, the other desires to focus on the eternal enigma of human existence, and rather regress to an earlier mode of consciousness. With the exception of rare personal cinematic miniatures, the art of film is, likewise, bound to balance between artistic and existential poetics, on the one hand, and a host of economic constraints, cultural codes as well as technical, economic and logistical realities, on the other. Besides, both art forms are by necessity products of a complex collaborative effort, at the same time that they have to be works of a singular auteur in order to obtain their artistic integrity.

The central notion in all arts is the image. The image is a multifaceted and ephemeral concept. Our experiential reality is constantly flooded with perceived, remembered and imagined images. The current phase of industrial culture is frequently characterized as the “culture of images”. In fact, we have entered a threatening “deluge of images”. We live in a culture that fabricates and mass produces images for the purposes of commercial exploitation, political and ideological conditioning, entertainment, instruction and learning.

An analysis of the multifarious meanings of the image is a wide and controversial task, which would justify an entire conference itself. I am mainly concerned here with a specific category of images: poetic images. “There is only one way of thinking in cinema: poetically”, Andrey Tarkovsky writes. Brodsky goes even a step further: “[I]t can be argued that
all reality aspires to the condition of a poem: if only for reasons of economy.”\textsuperscript{15} There are images that deliberately focus our attention to an object, and entertaining images that hypnotically dull the senses and weaken our sense of self, whereas poetic images open up streams of association and affect. Poetic images strengthen our existential sense and sensitize the boundary between ourselves and the world. These are invigorating images that emancipate and charge human imagination. These are images with an ethical potential.

An artistic impact is one of the mysteries of culture and communication. How can a picture, a melody, a fictitious story, or a constructed space move us to tears? The shared mental ground for all arts is the poetic image, a mysterious existential icon, that causes a momentary short-circuiting of our rational and analytic faculties and entices us into an unconditional existential identification with the object of perception. In an artistic experience a curious mirroring exchange takes place; the image takes its existence in me and I settle in the image.

Ezra Pound, the poet, describes the essence of the poetic image as follows:

“An image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. Only such an image, such poetry, could give us that sense of sudden liberation: that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.”\textsuperscript{16}

Poetic images are condensations of numerous experiences, percepts and ideas. They are not mere formal inventions of an artistic imagination; they are fruits of profound life. Rainer Maria Rilke, another master poet, expresses the idea of artistic condensation touchingly, indeed:

“[…] Verses are not, as people imagine, simply feelings […] - they are experiences. For the sake of a single verse, one must see many cities, men and things, one must know the animals, one must feel how the birds fly and know the gesture with which the little flowers open in the morning.”\textsuperscript{17}

The poet continues almost endlessly his list of life experiences that eventually condense into poetic images, but concludes:

“And still it is not enough to have memories. One must be able to forget them when they are many and one must have the great patience to wait until they come again. For it is not the memories themselves. Not till they have turned to blood within us, to glance and gesture, nameless and no longer to be distinguished from ourselves – not till then can it happen that in a most rare hour the first word of a verse arises in their midst and goes forth from them.”\textsuperscript{18}
Profound cinematic and architectural “verses” are similarly born of real experiences of life. They are not merely aestheticized objects and spaces, or aesthetic propositions; they expand our experiential sphere of life. They are lived images.

“Cinema is the new epoch of Mankind”
Marcel L’Herbier

Notes

1 Ricciotto Canudo first used the expression “the seventh art” in 1912. See Bacon, Henry (2005), Seisemäs Taide (The Seventh Art), Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 10, 396. According to Canudo, the other six arts were: architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, music and dance.
3 As quoted in Bacon, H., op.cit., 14.
6 Durgnat, Raymond (2005) “The Mongrell Muse”, as quoted in Bacon, ibid, 9
8 Bachelard, G., ibid., 15.
9 Bachelard, G., ibid., 16.
11 Brodsky, J. op. cit., 386.
12 Brodsky, J. op. cit., 311.
15 Brodsky, J. op. cit., 386.
18 Rilke, R.M. ibid., 27.
19 As quoted in Virilio, P. op. cit., 42.
PART I

Discourse on Form and Film
CHAPTER ONE

Existential Forms
Lived Space in Architecture and Cinema

Juhani Pallasmaa

In its inherent abstractness, music has traditionally been regarded as the art form which is closest to architecture. Musical structures are often described in terms of architecture and vice versa. Philosopher Friedrich Schelling’s notion of architecture as frozen or petrified music, usually remembered as an idea of Goethe, well exemplifies this view. Cinema is, however, even closer to architecture than music, not solely because of its temporal and spatial structure, but fundamentally because both architecture and cinema articulate lived space and mediate comprehensive images of life. In the same way that material buildings and cities project and preserve images of culture and a particular way of life, cinema illuminates the cultural archaeology of both the time of its making and the era that it depicts. Both forms of art define qualities and essences of existential space; they create experiential settings and frames for situations of life.

Geometric and Lived Space

The mental task of real buildings and cities is to structure our being-in-the-world and to articulate the encounter between the experiencing self and the world. But doesn’t the film director do exactly the same with his projected images? Cinema projects cities, buildings and rooms where human situations and interactions take place. More importantly cinema constructs spaces in the mind of the viewer and projects an architecture of mental imagery and memory that reflects the inherent archetypal architecture of the human mind, thought and emotion.

Architectural constructions are built in the world of matter and Euclidian geometry, but lived space always transcends the rules of physics and geometry. Architecture structures and domesticates meaningless physical space for human habitation by projecting existential meanings onto it.
Lived space resembles the ephemeral structures of dream and the unconscious, organized independently of the boundaries of physical space and time. Lived space is always a dialectical combination of external space and inner mental space, past and present, actuality and mental projection. When experiencing lived space, memory and dream, fear and desire, value and meaning, fuse with the actual percepts. Lived space is space that is inseparably integrated with the subject’s concurrent life situation.

We do not live separately in material and mental worlds; these experiential dimensions are inseparably intertwined. Neither do we live in an objective world. We live in mental worlds in which the experienced, remembered and imagined, as well as the past, present and future are intermixed. "Who are we, who is each one of us, if not a combinatoria of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined?," Italo Calvino asks: “Each life is an encyclopedia, a library, an inventory of objects, a series of styles, and everything can be constantly shuffled and reordered in every way conceivable.”

The modes of experiencing architecture and cinema become practically identical in this mental space that meanders without fixed boundaries. Even in the art of architecture, a mental image is transferred from the experiential realm of the architect to the mental world of the observer, and the material building is a mere mediating object, an image object. The obvious difference that images of architecture are eternalized in matter, whereas cinematic images are only a fleeting illusion projected on the screen, has no decisive experiential significance. Both art forms create frames of life, situations of human interaction and horizons of understanding human events and the world.

In his seminal essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” Walter Benjamin deliberates on the connection between architecture and film. Somewhat surprisingly he suggests that, regardless of their apparent visuality, the two art forms are, in fact, tactile arts. In Benjamin’s view, architecture and film are communicated primarily through the tactile realm in opposition to the pure visuality of painting. This idea suggests that, although the normal situation of viewing a film turns the viewer into a bodiless observer, the illusory cinematic space gives the viewer back his/her body, as the experiential haptic and motor space evokes powerful kinesthetic experiences. A film is viewed with the muscles and skin as much as by the eyes. Both architecture and cinema imply a kinesthetic way of experiencing space. The first takes place through actual embodied movement, the second through ideated action. In opposition to the visual understanding of memory, Edward S. Casey, the philosopher, makes this explicit in his argument:
“To sharpen the issue [of the essence of the act of remembering] … Let me state baldly that there is no memory without body memory. In claiming this, I do not mean to say that whenever we remember, we are in fact directly engaging in body memory … Rather, I am saying that we could not remember without having the capacity for body memory.”

I suggest that the images stored in our memory are embodied and haptic images rather than retinal pictures. We remember the world as lived spaces and situations, not as mere pictures.

Analyzing the difference between painting and film, Benjamin gives a provocative metaphor; he compares the painter to the magician, and the cameraman to the surgeon. The magician operates at a distinct distance from the patient whereas the surgeon penetrates into the patient’s very interior. The magician/painter creates a complete integrated entity whereas the surgeon/cameraman’s work is engaged in fragments. Benjamin’s metaphor can be reversed to illustrate the difference between the film director and the architect. The film director is the magician who evokes a lived situation from a distance through the illusory reality of projected images, whereas the architect operates with the physical reality itself in the very intestines of the building that we happen to inhabit.

Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung saw a strong metaphoric association between the human body and our mental constitution, on the one hand, and our unconscious imagery of landscape and the house, on the other. In fact, the house, the body and the cosmos are all metaphorically related. This identity gives further justification to see the architect in the role of the surgeon. The director operates through the distance of mental suggestion, whereas the architect takes hold and touches our very bodily constitution, and he conditions our actual being in the world.

The Architecture of Cinema

There are hardly any films that do not contain images of architecture. This statement holds true regardless of whether buildings are actually shown in the film or not, because already the framing of an image, or the definition of scale or illumination, implies the establishment of a distinct place. Establishing a place is the most fundamental of architectural acts; the first task of architecture is to mark man’s place in the world. In Martin Heidegger’s words, we are thrown into the world. Through our physical and mental constructions we transform our experiences of outsideness and estrangement into the positive feelings of insideness and domicile.
Figure 1.1: Lived space in both architecture and cinema transcends geometric space. Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, *The Andalucian Dog*, 1929.

Figure 1.2: Projected cinematic architecture often expands the realm of architectural expression beyond the boundaries of architecture built in matter. Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968.

Figure 1.3: “Poets and painters are born phenomenologists” (van den Bergh) and, consequently, they, as all artists, sense the fusion of life and architecture, event and setting, material and mental. Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Jesus Heals the Blind Man*. Predella of the Maestà altar. National Gallery, London. The image of Christ is presented twice against different architectural backgrounds that reflect the specific essence of each event.

Figure 1.4: The realities of material actuality, image and imagination have an equal significance in artistic phenomena. René Magritte, *The Menaced Assassin*, 1927. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
The structuring of place, space, situation, scale, illumination, etc., characteristic to architecture - the framing of human existence - enters unavoidably every cinematic expression. In the same way that architecture articulates space, it also manipulates time. “Architecture is not only about domesticating space,” writes philosopher Karsten Harries, “it is also a deep defense against the terror of time. The language of beauty is essentially the language of timeless reality.” Re-structuring and articulating time - re-ordering, speeding up, slowing down, halting and reversing - is equally essential in cinematic and architectural expressions.

Lived space is not uniform, neutral and valueless space. One and the same event - a kiss or a murder, for instance, - is an entirely different story depending on whether it takes place in a bedroom, bathroom, library, elevator or gazebo. An event obtains its particular meaning through the time of the day, illumination, weather and soundscape. In addition, every place has its history and symbolic connotations which merge into the incident. Presentation of a cinematic event is, thus, totally inseparable from the architecture of space, place and time, and a film director is bound to create architecture, although often unknowingly. It is exactly this innocence and independence from the professional discipline of architecture that makes the architecture of cinema so innocent, subtle and revealing.

**Artists as Phenomenologists**

“All poets and painters are born phenomenologists,” argues J.H. van der Berg. The phenomenological approach of the artist implies a pure looking at the essence of things, unburdened by convention or intellectualized explanation. All artists, including film directors, are phenomenologists in the sense that they present things as if they were objects of human observation for the first time. Poetry returns the reader back to an oral reality, in which words are still seeking their meanings. Architecture re-mythologizes space and gives back its pantheistic and animistic essence. Art articulates the boundary surface between the human mind and the world. "How would the painter or poet express anything other than his encounter with the world," as Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes. How could the architect or the film director do otherwise, we can ask.

We have to acknowledge that all artists - writers, painters, photographers, dancers - step unknowingly into the territory of architecture as they create the contexts of the events that they are depicting and define their setting. In her excellent book *Dwelling in Text*, Marilyn R. Chandler surveys
the ways American writers evoke architectural images and utilize them as metaphors for human character in their writings. These urban scenes, buildings and rooms projected by artists are experientially real. “He [the painter] makes them [houses], that is, he creates an imaginary house on the canvas and not a sign of a house. And the house which thus appears preserves all the ambiguity of real houses,” as Jean-Paul Sartre perceptively states. This experiential realism is true in relation to cinematic houses and spaces as well.

A great writer turns his/her reader into an architect, who keeps erecting rooms, buildings and entire cities in his/her imagination as the story progresses. Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment makes the reader construct the gloomy room of Roskolnikov’s terrifying double murder and, eventually, the endless expanses of St.Petersburg. The reader constructs the spaces and structures of Dostoyevsky’s literary masterpiece in the cavities of his/her own mind. These images of places, created by the reader, are not detached pictorial images, they are experiences of existential and lived space. They are mental and embodied images, lived metaphors, not retinal pictures. These rooms have their specific temperature and odor. We can sense the texture and echo of these floors and walls. These spaces have their unique illumination and shadows. The same applies to cinematic spaces.

The city is a phenomenon that exceeds all our capacity of description, representation and recording and, consequently, it is always experientially infinite. A street in a film does not end at the edge of the screen; it expands all around the viewer as a network of streets, buildings and life situations. This activation of the imagination is the invaluable function of literature and all art, in opposition to the images produced by today’s consciousness industry that are experienced passively and externally as fixed images. Poetic images project an open and emancipatory force that strengthens our sense of self. In the very end of Michelangelo Antonioni’s last film Beyond the Clouds (1994) the protagonist, a photographer, comments on the endless richness of poetic images: “But we know that behind every image revealed, there is another image more faithful to reality, and in back of that image there is another, and yet another behind the last one, and so on, up to the true image of the absolute mysterious reality that no-one will ever see.”

The Realities of Image and Imagination

The essence of architectural space as determined by an artist, is free of the functional requirements, technical restrictions and limitations of the professional conventions of architects. The architecture conceived by artists
is a direct reflection of mental images, memories and dreams; the artist creates an architecture of the mind. Yet, even the works of architects, built in matter, obtain their psychic content and echo from the very same existential experiences and images accumulated in the human mental constitution. Even real architecture can affect our soul only if it succeeds in touching the datum of forgotten memories and feelings. Michelangelo’s stairway of the Laurentian Library in Florence, for instance, moves us to tears through the imagery of melancholy and grief that it releases, not through its functional and structural utility.

Imagination is usually attached to the specific creative capacity of the artist, but the faculty of imagination is, in fact, the foundation of our very mental existence, as well as of our way of dealing with stimuli and information. Recent research by brain physiologists and psychologists at Harvard University shows that images take place in the same zones of the brain as visual perceptions, and that the first are equally real as the latter.14 No doubt, actual sensory stimuli and sensory imaginations are similarly close to each other also in the other sensory realms and, thus, experientially of equal value. An actual touch and an ideated touch are experientially equal. This affinity or sameness of the external and internal experience is, of course, self-evident for any genuine artist without the scientific proof of psychological research. The artist has always known that the physically encountered, remembered and imagined are equal experiences in our consciousness; we may be equally moved by something evoked by the imagined as by the actually encountered. Art creates images and emotions that are equally true as the actual situations of life. Many of us, in fact, can never mourn our personal tragedy with the intensity we suffer the fate of the fictitious figures of literature, theater and film, distilled through the existential experience of a great artist. In a work of art, we encounter ourselves and our own being-in-the-world in an intensified manner. Art offers us alternative identities and life situations, and this is the great gift of art. Great art gives us the possibility of experiencing our very existence through the existential experience of some of the most refined individuals of the humankind.

The Mental Reality of Place

The place and the event, space and mind, are not outside of each other. Mutually defining each other, they fuse unavoidably into a singular experience; the mind is in the world, and the world exists through the perceiving mind. Experiencing a space is a dialogue, a kind of exchange - I place myself in the space and the space settles in me.