

Bodies, Movement and Space

The Place of the human Body within the Production of Space

A PhD study on bodily presence, experience and adaptation to the environment, and the tacit knowledge on bodily experience modern dance has to offer the field of architecture.



Outdoor dance performance at the Western Harbour area in Malmö, Sweden, 2007. Öresund bridge in background.



Bodily movements, challenges and presence.

In my PhD project I develop an understanding of our *bodily* experiences of spaces (as opposed to only visual aesthetics). I study how design affect human experience, movement, behavior and actions within spaces, and in turn how architects can make use of that better understanding to improve the design of urban spaces.

The architect profession has historically focused on visual representations of spaces and we orient ourselves, are trained and communicate by visual means. In developing a more bodily understanding of the use and design of urban space, we would also take into account all our senses, and understand more groups of inhabitants (elderly, visually impaired etc.) experiences of urban spaces.

Architecture and the dance arts are the two professions working with the relationship between bodies and space, and dancers and choreographers are trained and in relating to their surroundings with their bodies. Therefore I believe dancers and choreographers to possess useful knowledge to the field of architecture.

In the guide *Sustainable urban planning* (2008), written by the Swedish Association of Architects, they declare

with regard to social sustainability that “Everybody has a right to the city, to its range and possibilities for social, financial and cultural exchange./.../ the city should be interlinked and available to everybody.”

In gaining a more bodily conscious approach to the experience, movement in and uses of spaces, not only taking the vision into account, architects could carry out a design that do not exclude, but rather invite and include all different bodies.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT

To develop an understanding of the place of the human body in (public) space and the importance this may have on the production of space.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can an understanding of the different terms & conditions for different (human) bodies in public space increase social sustainability?

- For what bodies is the urban space available?
- What, in public space determines the different bodies' possibilities to claim public space?

How can the understanding of different (human) bodies' terms and conditions matter in the production of space?

- How do we create environments that invite, allow, include and welcome all (human) bodies?

In what way may modern dance and choreography contribute with knowledge to the discourse of space?

- Of what importance are our other senses, besides vision, in perceiving space?
- And in what specific way (that differs from for example environmental psychology, neurology and cognitive science) is modern dance a carrier of knowledge and experience of the human body's relationship to space?