



AIC2016 INTERIM MEETING COLOR IN URBAN LIFE: IMAGES, OBJECTS AND SPACES

SANTIAGO DE CHILE, OCTOBER 18-22, 2016

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

(with USB Flash Drive enclosed)

Edited by Ingrid Calvo Ivanovic

Published by Asociación Chilena del Color

Santiago de Chile, October 2016

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Urban Environmental Color: Experience, Sense and Identity in the Contemporary City

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary world, the recent urban transformations represent new material and contextual conditions; therefore, there are new ways to use the urban space that presume a change in its concept and appreciation and as a consequence, of the city as well. The present urban conditions confronted in a game of tensions focus on the nature of the urban experience with the purpose of recovering it in a broad sense, and more specifically, as an essential place for urban life (Mongin 2006). In this context, the role of environmental color is vital since it suggests atmospheres that promote ways of understanding and experiencing the space (Zumthor 2006), being this a primary element in the strengthening of urban life and the idea of the city as a collective space to inhabit.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, the discussion of the urban space and the city is considered a priority. The combined impact of worldwide phenomena such as the globalization and the development and evolution of technologies plus the local ones, for example the changing socio-economic-cultural context in Latin America, makes us focus on the transformations in the urban space that have taken place specially in the city of Córdoba, Argentina.

The sense of color and the chromatic environment are part of the urban experience and participate in everyday city life. The environmental color, that unique and general chromatic impression of the urban environment, has shared and taken part actively in the changes of societies that become evident in different ways in the city and its places.

Within this framework, the intervention of environmental color is essential. The communicative aspect of color has been enhanced by new ways of production and physical and digital resolution systems and these, in turn, have increased its capacity to inform, suggest and develop synesthetic associations and create environments bringing about the experience of the city and the promotion of urban life which are vital for its identity, design and construction.

2. THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN CONDITION

The problem concerning the urban space is the issue of an ongoing debate in different disciplines. The various perspectives and viewpoints as regards the features of the contemporary city focus particularly on the meanings of the urban, the public or collective in societies, among others.

The present urban condition in search of a multidimensional light on the city presents two ways to consider it. On the one hand, an urban condition of corporal and experienced sense exemplified in an ideal kind of city connecting the physical-spatial with the mental-imaginative, such as European cities or the traditional Latin-American one. On the other hand, an urban condition intertwined with new technologies, communications and global deals which place flows before places expressed by the so-called global cities and contemporary megalopolis. In this context the so-called

urban conditions confronted in a game of tensions focus on considering the nature of the urban experience with the purpose of recovering it in a broad sense, and more specifically, as a sense of place that is essential for urban life (Mongin 2006).

There are new ways to use the traditional urban spaces and new collective uses that presume a change in the concept, image and value of the urban space and therefore, of the city. The urban experience and the sense of belonging of the inhabitant with his city are modified by socio-cultural or environmental conflicts, among others (Arroyo 2011). To sum up, the city as a collective place, public event or social life environment expresses evident changes in the urban space, which reinforce the idea that this space matches the ideas of the 'city' according to different times. Moreover, the idea of inhabiting keeps its meaning since the urban experience is mainly the combination of physical and mental facts not only material but imaginary as well.

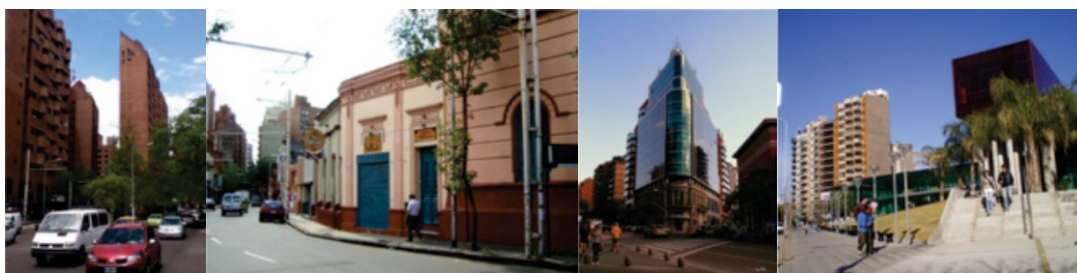


Figure 1. The Chromatic Expression in The Contemporary City. Córdoba, Argentina.

3. URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL COLOR

The color in the city appears as essential information that stimulates the perceptible channels that lead to action, recognition and visual tours that promote different behaviors (Sanz 1993). In the chromatic field this takes on foundation when color is considered to serve different functions since it identifies and locates in space and time, describes the properties that define its character and possible uses and categorizes characteristics among other actions (Avila, Polo 1996). In addition, cities are dynamic and as well as their inhabitants, they are changing organisms. Cities remain the same, become deteriorated, are renewed or go through transformations. Moreover, their environmental color is the reflection of a single moment and can change with time according to the different variables that influence those changes. This unique and typical dynamics is the source of its polysemy and attraction.

With the aim of interpreting the urban environmental color and verifying the color perceived by the inhabitants of the city of Córdoba, a chromatic survey is carried out using the NCS. On the other hand, work is developed on some chosen study fields with observations, interviews and questionnaires to permanent or occasional inhabitants.

The purpose is to relate the physical-spatial context with the temporary-historical one, which are considered essential in the experience and sense of place of the urban space and confirm the influence of color on the urban experience and city identity.



Figure 2. Chromatic chart of Córdoba urban environmental color from the 80s.

3.1 Method of the chromatic survey

The environmental color, as a psycho-physical phenomenon, is perceived together with other variables such as textures, chromatic contrasts, cesias, the material nature and aspect of limits, the position of the observer and the manner and speed of movement among others.

After recognizing paradigmatic urban places in the city of Cordoba, the environmental color is verified in order to determine the color palette that defines it.

The steps to follow for the chromatic survey are:

- the study fields are chosen, considering a priori those in which it is possible to read and interpret the environmental color and relate it to the urban experience and the sense of place
- color is measured using The Natural Color System (NCS), which has already been used in previous works, to reveal the different hues and shades that shape the urban spaces.
- the chromatic survey is conducted at different times of the day and in different seasons.
- a synthesis matrix is laid out to present the readings of different variables of the physical-spatial context.
- chromatic palettes that define the urban environmental color are devised.

3.2 Record to interpret the interaction between color and chromatic-spatial experience

The original function of colors is to represent concepts so as to establish a communicative relationship between the individual and the physical environment. As a consequence, the chromatic experience depends on the quantitative and qualitative interaction of the different components and contexts that take part in it.

Some observations, questionnaires and interviews are carried out to confirm the relationships between environmental color and experience, sense and identity. These actions are aimed at recording the associations, interpretations and meanings inhabitants confer to their chromatic perception by means of the urban spatial experience. The purpose is to confirm that environmental color encourages the experience, fosters the sense of place and stimulates enjoyable atmospheres for the people who perceive and inhabit those environments.

The steps to interpret the interaction between color and urban chromatic experience are as follows:

- an interpretative observation is carried out with the aim of determining the behavior and appropriations in the different selected testing environments. This observation takes place at different times of the day, on different week days and different seasons.
- with the aim of completing the analysis, questions are made to casual users to verify the association and the meaning the inhabitant relates to the perception of chromatic elements influencing public spaces.
- A synthesis matrix is laid out to present the results.

4. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the above mentioned some provisional conclusions are drawn since the research is still under development.

- Environmental color can be defined as the reading of predominant hues and shades that tinge the environment with certain color. In addition, the perception of the chromatic expression of a city does not only depend on the physical-spatial context but it is also influenced by the emotional and cultural condition of the person who perceives it and by the historical-cultural context.
- The environmental color as the reading of predominant hues and shades that are perceived depending on the appearance and material nature of limits is an essential element in the urban experience, recalling atmospheres that encourage ways to inhabit and relate to the space.
- The interventions in the city with emphasis on the chromatic aspect contribute with criteria for the building of urban spaces that prompt the experience of the city, essential for its identity, design and construction.
- The environmental color has been enhanced by new ways of production and physical and digital resolution systems, which increase its capacity to inform, suggest and develop synesthetic associations and create urban environments.

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The aim of AIC2016 Interim Meeting is to share experiences regarding the use of color in images, objects and spaces, from different perspectives and disciplines. All of these to contribute to a better experience and to improve life quality in our cities. The fields of inquiry include environment, architecture, design, art, education, media, culture as well as psychology, colour science, perception, materials and wellness.

The International Colour Association (AIC) is a learned society whose aims are to encourage research in all aspects of color, to disseminate the knowledge gained from this research, and to promote its application to the solution of problems in the field of science, art, design and industry on an international basis.

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The bottom half of the page features a decorative graphic composed of several overlapping, colorful geometric shapes. From left to right, there is a yellow trapezoid, a red trapezoid, an orange trapezoid, a green trapezoid, a teal trapezoid, a red trapezoid, and a yellow trapezoid. The shapes are arranged in a way that they appear to be part of a larger, abstract architectural or landscape design.