Choreographing spatial experiences with water:

(Re)investigating the role of water in architecture

By

Hoe Yin Chuang, Raymond
HD991296J

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ABSTRACT

the issues

The role of water in architecture and urban spaces has been evident since ancient times. Water features such as fountains, ponds, cascades, channels, swimming pools and more recently, spas, provide points of relief, amusement, pleasure and orientation in many parts of our city and especially so, in recent designs of dwellings. Yet in many of these designs, water is hardly considered as an integral part of the urban spaces and within the dwellings per se, apart from their functional roles such as swimming pools and waterscapes. Water in any form can provide more than just a visual interest.

the investigation

Therefore, the objective of this proposal is to study and explore water beyond its role as a visual tool and its potential to offer a diversity of spatial experiences to create complex and meaningful spaces. The investigation would cover the many exhilarating qualities of experience of water and consider the many states and transformative properties of the substance, and the ability of water to transform and to manipulate spatial experiences.
How, then, can water be used as a tool to create these complex and meaningful spaces and how is it different than that encountered in natural landscapes?

How can designers harmonised the vibrant nature of water with static materials (the walls, the columns, etc) to create compositions with texture, colour, pattern, movement and spatial dimension?

It is my hope that this investigation will provide some answers, prompt further inquiry and spur design innovation.

In some design strategies, water does not exist as a sole entity, but has been used primarily and distinctly with other elements (such as light, stones and etc) in a greater spatial compositional design effort to communicate design values and intentions. The focus is to examine and explore through selected case studies, how water has been used to choreograph not only physiological and psychological spatial delights, but also meaningful relationships to the environments and contexts.

the aims

Hopefully, this study would serve as a platform of understanding of the various ways using water as architectural tools that create meanings in our environments. The end-result aimed at will be an overall statement of how water can be integrated in the overall design effort of great effect and versatility and how, with a careful arrangement of water and architecture, to create a masterful combination of spatial experiences.