Beyond the Eyes:
Sensorial Mapping of Public Urban Spaces

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ABSTRACT

The paper starts off with the exploration of the reading of spaces beyond the eyes but one that engages the sensorial perception of people. Through a multitude of technological invention and the endless multiplication of images in our time, the hegemony of vision is reinforced. The isolation of the eye from its natural fusion and interaction with the other sense modalities limits the experience of space into the sphere of vision.

Hence, this leads one to wonder whether modernization necessarily bring about sensorial deprivation of our spaces? As Asian cities are often a site of contestations between the traditional ways of living and rapid modernization, the most striking aspect is the large-scale substitution of buildings and streets; and the relentless pursuit of images and the 'picture perfect' architecture.

A study to look into the relationship between modernization and sensorial perception is hence apt, as Asian cities are developing at such a rapid pace, it is deemed crucial and undeniably necessary to look into this possible relationship.

A 'mapping' methodology will be used to study two streets, which have the qualities of both sense-rich and modern, and relate the effect of sense-rich streets to pedestrian activities and street use. The various factors involved in the make-up of successful sense-rich streets will be analyzed and hopefully be used to facilitate the future creation of successful streets in our Asian context. It is noted that these factors established will have to work hand-in-hand with city planning policies that are urged, through this study, to be stipulated.

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