

*Even visual perceptions are fused and integrated into the haptic continuum of the self;  
my body remembers who I am and where I am located in the world.  
My body is truly my navel of my world, not in the sense of the viewing point of the  
central  
perspective,  
but as the very locus of reference, memory, imagination and integration.  
Architecture articulates the experiences of being-in-the-world and strengthens our  
sense of  
reality and self;  
it does not make us inhabit worlds of mere fabrication and fantasy.  
(Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin. Architecture and the Senses*, 2005)*

Regardless of our conscious actions, cognitive endeavors, and social practices, we, as human beings, together with our companion species and co-existing life forms, are much dependent on the emotionally charged and sensitively filtered environmental circumstances we find ourselves in: be they physically built structures or virtual realities, spaces of social life or the most intimate private spheres, artificially created architectonics or just plainly found buildups of both material and immaterial nature. We do not only find ourselves immersed in - and ingressed by - those atmospheres but also prone to respond to them, modify them, or create new ones straight away. More often than not design and other creative practices would confess the atmospheric and emotional factor as their innermost driver provided such a confession wasn't felt too unprofessional on their part. Building and feeling architectonics are different sides of the same coin - both have to do hugely with what we can call experiencing our own existence, including eminently the bodily and somatic aspects of it. In order to articulate those existential experiences and assess how these are entangled with atmospheres we have more and more pathways at our disposal: we have more intuitive and hunch-based approaches from poetry to phenomenology, from human geography to various philosophies of space; simultaneously we have stricter, more experimental and scientific approaches as well, such as neurosciences, sociology of space, and experimental psychology. The aim of this conference is to invite and combine all those approaches to arrive at a better grasp of what we feel and what drives us when we actively and creatively, or passively and meditatively entwine with our spatial environments, our habitats and dwellings, our fantasy-lands and media worlds, be they integral or partial, multimodal or monosensory, socially conformist or rebellious, habitual or eventful in their nature.

Our ambitions - which are also connected to plans concerning an academic volume - naturally rely on earlier results. In the 1990s, thanks to the introduction of phenomenology in the contextualization of architecture (Holl, Pallasmaa, Perez-Gomez, Wigley), the impact of the humanities on the discourse of architecture and design increased substantially. Going even further back in time, we can say there has been an authentic philosophy of dwelling since the mid-twentieth century that examines existence within a space and body through experience (Bachelard, Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz, Merleau-Ponty, Rasmussen). In addition, the concept of

atmosphere – psychologically, aesthetically, philosophically, and architecturally (Schmitz, Böhme, Griffero, Zumthor) – has also been outlined through various developments of experience in designed, inhabited, and built space.

Recognizing the significance of these interweavings, we deemed it appropriate and essential to involve four distinguished **keynote speakers** who may stimulate a fruitful dialogue between neighboring but different fields connected to the broad themes of embodiment, spatiality, and atmospheres. Each of them represents one of these crucial demarcations and the subsequent developments: **Steven Holl**, one of the world's leading architects and a hero for generations of practitioners seeking a more humanistic and meaningful built environment; **Richard Shusterman**, the American pragmatist philosopher and initiator of somaesthetics; **Vittorio Gallese**, the Italian neuroscientist who took a leading role in discovering mirror neurons; and **Sarah Robinson**, one of the most lucid and orienting voices in present-day architectural humanities.

This conference aims to initiate a dialogue between outstanding experts coming from fields that are relevant to gaining a better understanding, use, and creation of architectural, medial, technological, and natural atmospheres. In our understanding, this goal needs collaboration between different fields: those of the philosophies of embodiment and spatial experience, architectural humanities and environmental psychology, neuroscience and architectural practice. To this end, the conference invites researchers, practitioners, and doctoral students from the relevant fields who are ready to contribute to the emergent discourse on atmospheres and design.

The call is open to those who are interested in contributing from both a theoretical-interpretive and practical-applicative perspective. Our call is addressed to all types of design: environmental, systemic, sensory, material, technological, etc. We encourage practitioners and young researchers as well.

**Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Environmental, Architectural and Interior Atmospheres - Designing and Feeling Sensory Atmospheres (Sound design, Lighting design, etc) - Atmospheres in Systemic Design and Urban Design - Media, Interactive, and Virtual Atmospheres - Soma Design and Somatic Atmospheres

We are expecting original and unpublished articles/presentations of 20-30 minutes. A selection of the papers will be published in the forthcoming issues of the peer-reviewed, online, academic research journal, *The Journal of Somaesthetics* or in a volume on somaesthetics and atmospheres, published in the Brill series *Studies in Somaesthetics* (series editor: Richard Shusterman)

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