

# ARC 605 SENSORY ARCHITECTURE

Associate Professor Beth Tauke

Tuesday + Thursday: 1:30 - 7:20 pm

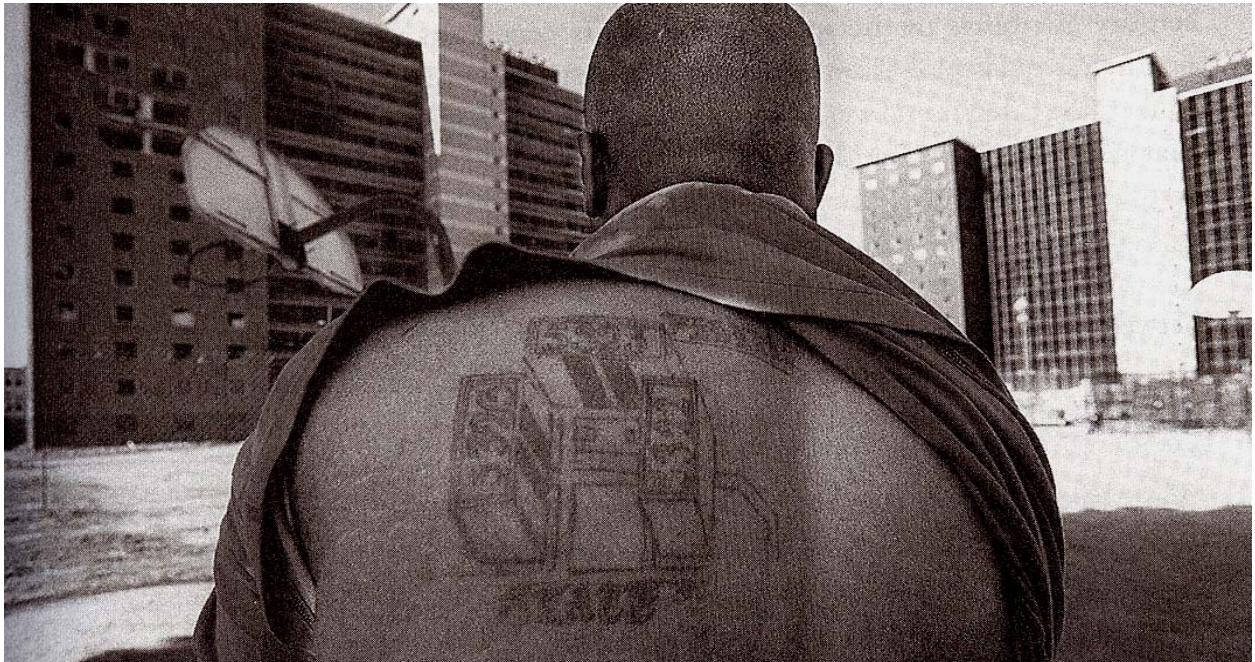


Photo by Ovie Carter, 1998

Architecture is the art of reconciliation between ourselves and the world, and this mediation takes place through the senses.

*Juhani Pallasmaa*

While our experience of the world is based on our combined sensory systems, Western culture and its architectural production historically has favored sight. The “ocular bias of our culture” has suppressed other sensory realms, and this has shifted our understanding of the role of architecture. Because of technological advances, often our first exposure to architecture today is through visual media. As a result, our understanding of architecture is an understanding of its representation rather than its actuality (or, at the very least, representation and actuality become ambiguated in the process).

In this studio, we will explore several realms of sensory experience including those described by J.J. Gibson as the visual system, auditory system, taste-smell system, the basic-orienting system, and the haptic system. Rather than subscribing to the notion that technological advances have “ordered and separated our senses,” as some critics have argued, we will study ways that various forms of architectural production can lead to integrated and multi-sensory modes of engagement.

Those participating in the studio will investigate sensory experience in architecture within the context of inclusive design practices. Critics of inclusive design have accused it of neutralizing our built environment—of erasing difference. We will make the case that inclusive design, if practiced conscientiously, actually does the opposite—it focuses on difference and personal empowerment through multi-sensory approaches to design. Our challenge will be to even the sensory playing field—and in so doing, to develop convincing proposals that not only enrich conventional visual concepts of space, but also open choices for those with other sensory preferences.

Questions to be explored include:

- How do physiological differences and changes affect our sensory perception?
- How has our understanding of sensory systems changed throughout history?
- How have technological changes affected our understanding of sensory experience?
- How do various sensory qualities affect our experience of our environments?
- How does architecture suppress and/or support sensory systems?