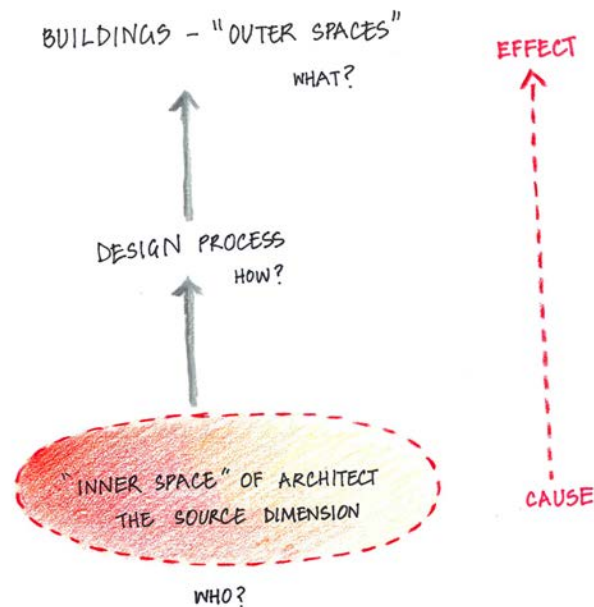


Becoming Mindful Architect: A Contemplative Design Process to Create Spaces of Continuity (Workshop)

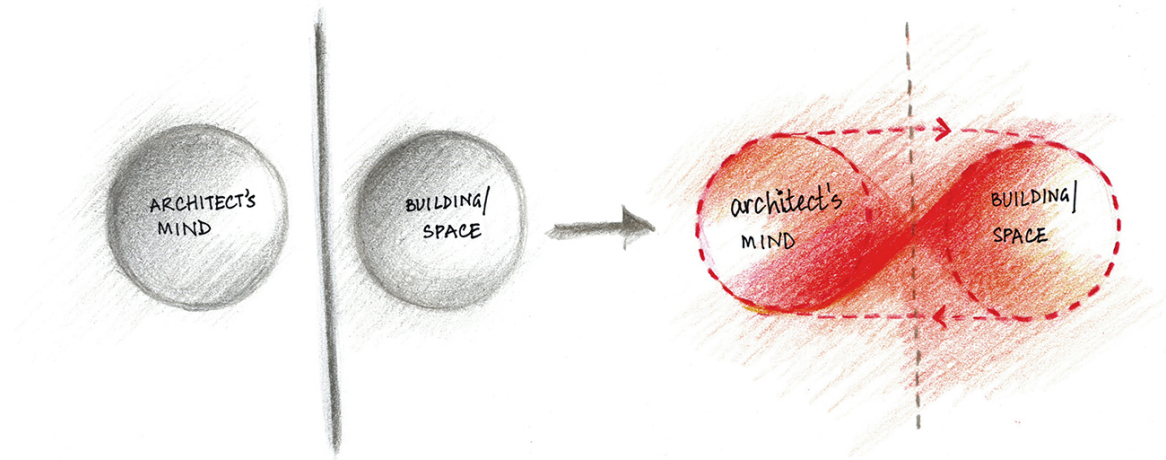
Sarika Bajoria
Sarika Bajoria Unlimited
sarika@sarikabajoria.com

Why is it that we, as architects, know so much about the physical attributes of profound architecture and spaces (the *what-product*) and the design methodology (the *how-process*) but very little about the inner space (the *source dimension-cause*) of the architects who designed these buildings?



We are unaware of the source dimension of profound architecture

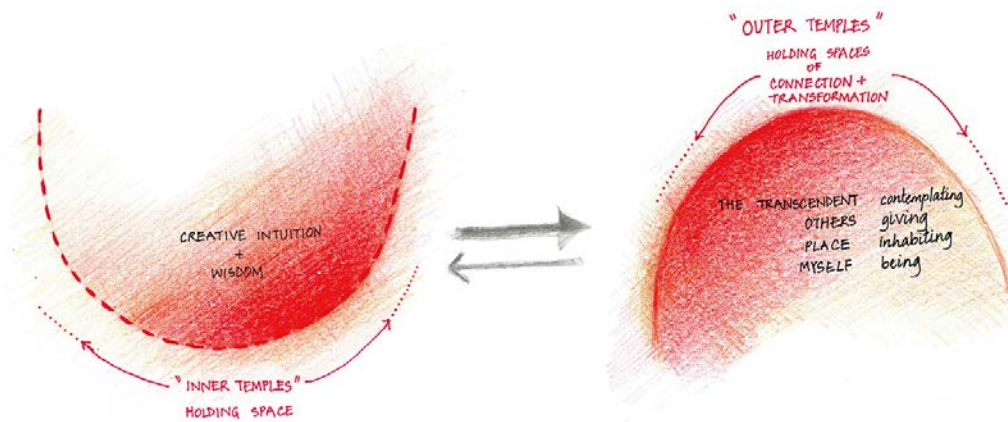
Mindful Architect is a contemplative and generative design process that seeks to develop the mindset, skillset and toolset for the creation of meaningful and transformational architecture by intentionally turning the camera from the building (the effect) to the mind of the architect (the cause). Through an understanding that the creative process is not the creation of an object outside of ourselves, but a continual intertwining of mind and object, and that the quality of the product is a function of the quality and depth of the mind, the architect can learn to truly design from the “inside-out”. This can be done through building and accessing the conscious intention, deeper awareness, attention, beauty and wisdom of his/her “inner temple” in order to design compassionate “outer temples” in the built world that instill deeper continuity with our environment, others, and ourselves.



The design process is not the creation of an object outside of the architect, but an intertwining of the object and mind. This is truly designing from the “inside-out”.

How do we transform the act of design from an unconscious reactive process to a conscious creative process?

Through the lens of the symposium's theme of *Continuity*, *Mindful Architect* aspires to understand the continuity of minds that springs from the architect's “inner temple” during a highly creative design process in “flow”, which then manifest spatially and emotionally within the “outer temple”, the aura of which is intuitively experienced by the inhabitant as a holding space of connection that emancipates his/her sense of being in the world. *Mindful Architect* is founded on the understanding that inner temples build outer temples and, in turn, experiences of outer temples build inner temples. Once the architect realizes that the duality between mind and the conception of the object it creates “out there” is an artificial construct - a building/space is both understood as “by” the mind and “of” the mind – he/she becomes an intentional vehicle of the inner temple imbued with passion and compassion.



The interdependence of Inner Temples and Outer Temples

Within the continuity of a design process are myriad momentary, discrete, present-centered minds that are the true cause-effect engine of the creative continuum. The design process is therefore a journey constantly unfolding in a perpetual present tense of “*becoming*”. *Mindful Architect* recognizes that it is at the level of these momentary minds that the trajectory of the design process, and hence the built environment that is its endpoint, can be truly directed and transformed.

The Workshop

Based on my training as both a practicing architect and a student and teacher of contemplative Buddhist practice, I have developed the following framework of experiential movements for *Mindful Architect* within which the inner technologies will be practiced, interrogated, and evaluated.

After a brief introduction of the overarching conceptual and practical framework of *Mindful Architect*, you will be tasked with choosing a personal design-related problem or challenge- at an individual, team, or organizational level - that will serve as your focus during each phase of the workshop. Within the first three movements below, you will see this design-related challenge from multiple perspectives, each of which will provide insights into its origin and potential resolution. You will also begin to understand how to deploy and integrate some of the *Mindful Architect* inner technologies into your daily architectural/design practice or academic work.

1. Creating Space for Creativity

When you bring to mind your design-related problem, you usually perceive it within the context of your academic and professional training and expertise, and within the tight space of identification with a limited self who must react in a familiar way to solve the problem. Through a guided contemplative practice, you will consciously pause, examine your mind as an observer non judgmentally, creating a present centered “awareness buffer” that is able to absorb the initial impact of any design-related challenge, providing you with a more expansive inner space to gradually welcome both the challenge itself and the self who is responding to the challenge. From a resilient meta-observer perspective, you can begin to transform the design problem into a creative resource by changing your relationship to it.

2. Connecting to a Mental and Emotional Blueprint

When encountering a design problem, it is common to attempt to resolve it by relying on past experience and habitual patterns of thinking within the myopic view of the design problem at hand. Instead, through the understanding of a new definition of “intention”, a *Mindful Architect* design process is constitutively imbued with purpose and momentum that is intricately linked to your personal vision of the emerging future architect you want to become and the architecture you want to co-create. Through a series of journaling, creative visualization and drawing exercises as personal reflective tools you will tap into deeper levels of self knowledge, wisdom, and heart’s aspiration, and begin to explore your personal mental and emotional blueprint through the process of drawing an embodied “parti” that organizes and energizes the intention within your mind. Reframing your design challenge through the lens of this blueprint gives it focused attention and direction, and situates it within the larger purpose of your design life.

3. Expanding Perspectives

Within the blinkered alleyways of a current design challenge you tend to rely even more on your familiar and highly individual guidance system to navigate a path forward, even when it bears diminishing benefit. *Mindful Architect* proffers that the ability to both deeply listen and receive is a key mobilizing agent for creativity in response to any design

problem. Here, you will engage with your peers in small “Wonder and Empathy Circles” and, through a set of interactive group and embodiment exercises, you will access their compassion and wisdom to see your problem through “new eyes” and develop fresh approaches as a response. Emphasis will be placed on engaging in generative conversations within the context of an openhearted, playful, and empathetic space where you temporarily suspend judgments and open yourself to wonder. In such a space, all participants of the design process – site, community, team, materials, can be given a voice. The expansive perspectives imbues the field of the design project as a whole with a sense of permeability, possibility, and passion.

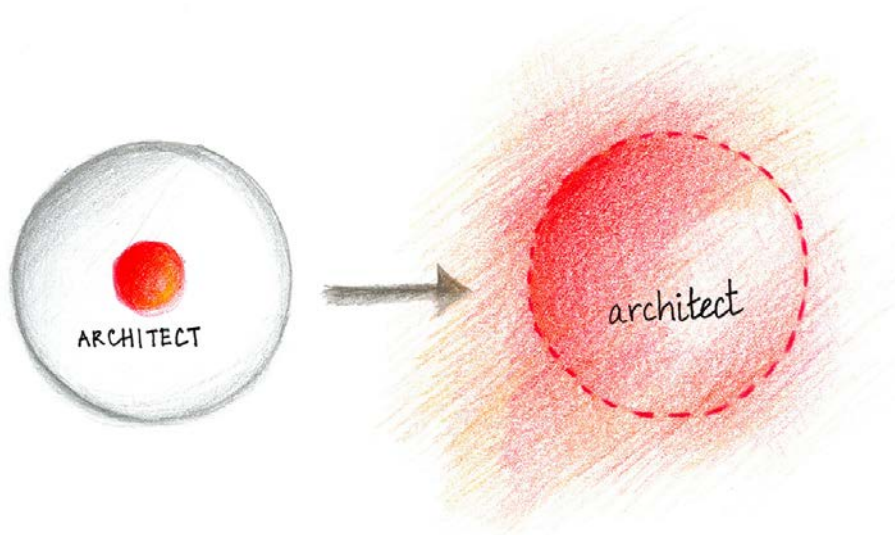
4. Dissolving Boundaries (to be introduced only)

In an open flow state, you will allow insight and understanding to arise by connecting to the contemplative space of future possibilities. You will experience transformation from observer to an active, interdependent participant with agency within the design project who is one with your inner temple, not separate from it.

5. Iterating and Becoming (to be introduced only)

You will integrate the intelligences of the head, heart and hand as an iterative force by bringing forth experiential microcosms of the future to the present through active imagination and confidence. Here you will rely on greater and greater familiarity with, and control over, the momentary minds that are the cause and effect engine of any design process. The Mindful Architect becomes an intentional instrument of the inner temple to create outer temples.

In conclusion, *Mindful Architect* is a work in progress that aspires to help practicing architects, designers, and students learn the inner technologies of how to access their inner temple, how to create a holding space for it, build and activate it, listen to it, and finally become it, in their day-to-day design practice. When we learn to communicate from the inner temple and trust its wisdom, we begin to function as an intentional vehicle for the highest vision of the future self we want to become, bringing about the transformation of the independent “*EGO- architect*” to the interdependent “*ECO-architect*”.



Transformation of the Ego-Architect to the Eco-Architect

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