Workshop

Experiencing the Relationship of Spiritual Practice and Architectural Practice: Toward Craft of Preparing Loci for Presencing Architecture.

Michael Karassowitsch
Post–doc at Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
michael@karassowitsch.ca

Summary statement
This workshop is for experiencing an approach to architectural practice via the essential relationship of spiritual practice and architectural practice. The approach is based on learning from spiritual practice (rajayoga) to reveal terms of architectural practice's essential service in support of well being as 'aspiration'. Rajayoga and its antecedents[1] inform the practice and the programme of architecture. It is the result of research and my dissertation[2], with a thesis that supposes that spirituality and architecture are 'original'[3] and mutually essential. The experiential approach of spiritual practice and the science behind it supports 'after-technological' architectural practice in the sense of Rem Koolhaas's assertion of an "after-architecture" in *Bigness*. This claims our consciousness that extends beyond the limited bubble of technology and its hegemony. This workshop evokes the 'alternate cognitive knowledge' of spiritual practice as essential to architecture in terms for evolving its current profession and as essential commonality between us. We will partake in the development accordingly, opening it to insight, input and feedback.

Topic
Spirituality is understood as practice for achieving nearness and/or sameness with an ultimate condition possible for a dwelling soul, whatever that may be. It is 'true' entirely on authority of an individual according to personal experience. The experiment and experimenter are the same. This is always part of us, whereas its 'goal' is imperceptible as it might be 'around a bend' of a path, hence the term 'aspiration' that unites the path and the goal. Architectural practice is taken as having responsibility to this, registering the *raison d'etre* of dwelling as well being in intentional environments. "The spiritual value of the highest human capacities" transcend the measure architects give. Architecture is not bounded within objective scientific knowledge or technology. Care for environments of consciousness dwelling begins with each individual crafting well being and is sustained by every one in community. Architecture is essentially a natural condition of human consciousness and its evolution. It is the purview of architectural practice.
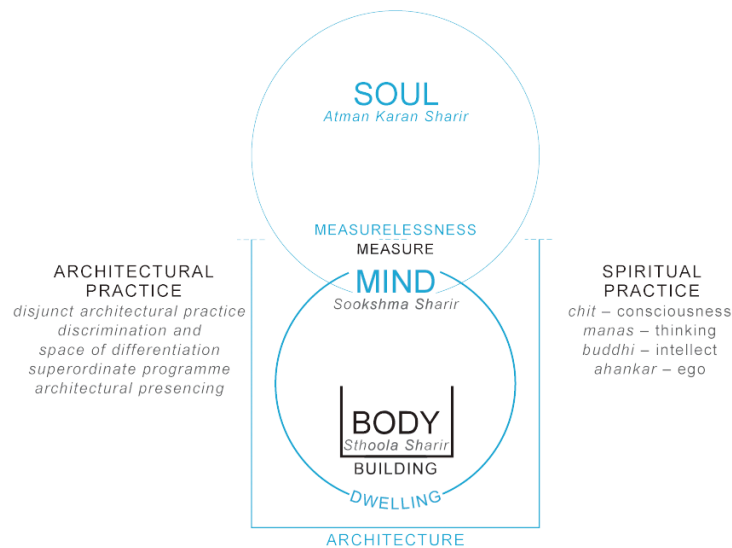
Architectural practice is superordinate programme to the programmes of place, use and construction, its means is 'questioning'. It is the age old question, 'What is 'I' and what is all else?' The programme of this workshop is for considering this questioning in practice as a personal condition of making of loci to presence aspiration. This is craft of 'questioning' in

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[1] This includes Patañjala Yoga, Samkya, Sastitantra withi influence from Buddhism, and the wide field of the Vedanta. Authors who inform this are Patañjali, Vivekananda, Larson/Bhattacharya, Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh U.P./Ram Chandra of Shajahanpur U.P./P. Rajagopapachari/K. D. Patel. A good translation of Patañjali's *Yogasutra* can be found in Vivekananda's *Raja–yoga.*

[2] Michael Karassowitsch, *The Goal in Architecture: The Essential Mutual Claiming of One Another of Architecture and Spirituality.* Dissertation, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna 2016. (Manuscript in preparation.)

[3] 'Original' is defined according to Heidegger in the referenced texts and Edward Said as what is part of our time but has no beginning within it and is 'always' present beyond any 'facts'.

practice that supports shifting the ends of practice from built object to support of conscious awareness aspiring the *raison d'etre* of the soul dwelling.

SOUL
Atman Karan Sharir

MEASURELESSNESS
MEASURE

MIND
Sookshma Sharir

ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE
disjunct architectural practice
discrimination and
space of differentiation
superordinate programme
architectural presencing

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE
chit – consciousness
manas – thinking
buddhi – intellect
ahankar – ego

BODY
Sthoola Sharir
BUILDING

DWELLING

ARCHITECTURE

Scope
Architecture is the unavoidable result of our need to 'choose' taken in hand. Freedom-of-choice is our destined 'freedom's' bottom rung. The 'alternate cognitive knowledge' of spirituality can be understood as dealing with freedom-of-choice, duty and the evolution of consciousness through devotion and stages beyond. Technology appears to answer this capacity, but it conceals choice in 'answers' that become ends. Often programmed as desire, such concealment nevertheless operates as means for preparing architecture's presencing as its concealment. Architecture is developed within each of us in community, like spirituality. It addresses the Mind of anyone with dwelling's purpose as evolution in consciousness beyond choice to duty. Spirituality as architecture's practical grounds and its 'content' implies that experience and personal authority over its 'truth' is active in architecture and architectural practice. This is architecture's superordinate programme. There are many layers to this, from forms of professional authority through acting in practice and the craft of preparing loci of architecture. This workshop is based on a provisory architecture to engage personal experimentation with the superordinate programme of architecture according to one's own spirituality and to bring this experience into the community of the symposium.

aspiration
bhakti – love/devotion

Architectural Value
Design and Planning

Dwelling's Purpose

jnaana
knowledge

karma
action

Freedom–of–Duty
Freedom–of–Choice

Workshop Activity
1. *Introduction: Spiritual Practice, Experience and Experiment*
• After an introduction we begin with a session of relaxation and meditation with the assistance of a certified trainer. This is an orientation to spiritual experience through meditation (rajayoga) to bring personal experience nearer the level at which we experience architectural practice and its education as part of dwelling materially.
30–40 mins Introduction, relaxation and meditation based on Heartfulness. (Sahaj Marg rajayoga)

15 mins reflection and discussion.
2. *Terms for a Practice that Connects Spirituality and Architectural Practice*.
• Introduction of terms for practice of architecture and architectural value derived from spiritual practice. Discussion on how spiritual practice coheres with architectural practice in terms of the self–evolutionary principles of spirituality.
10 mins Outline terms for practice: disjunct practice, discrimination and the space of differentiation and the superordinate programme and how architecture 'presences'.
20 mins discussion. Develop what this means in practice and education; studio, design-build and the profession.
3. *Exemplary Practice: The Play of Concealing and Revealing of Means and Ends in Architecture.*
• Present works with exemplary aspects for describing disjunct technicist architecture and to locate architectural value according to four characteristic areas in recent well known projects.
15 mins to present examples in terms of the four characteristics.
20 mins discussion of the way architecture presences in these projects.
4. *Conclusion: Serving Spirituality: Craft of Presencing Architecture*
• Questioning the personal approach to the superordinate programme of serving spirituality in architectural practice; finding it in ongoing work and differentiating it in the work. as spirituality and aspiration are always present, each participant might find it active in their own work.
10 mins introduction of the personal space of practice.
±15 mins discussion and conclusion.

Part 1 is an orientation and experience of a condition remembering spirituality. In Part 2 I will introduce some terms for architectural practice that are derived from spiritual practice (rajayoga). This is to provide means to express elements of architectural practice in support of spirituality and the *raison d'etre* of dwelling, while spirituality is also 'content' of architecture due to the nature of the conscious Mind that 'sees' itself. The associated activity brings the experience of the first part of the workshop together with the second. We will consider one's aspiration for one's self and for humanity and how we locate architecture in our awareness as we experience it. The discussion is to clarify this experience and to develop terms for the value of architecture that do not refer to technology or material means to define its value.

In Part 3 we will look at well known examples to seek the 'presencing' of architecture including where architecture is 'disjunct', 'absented' as means of realizing aspiration at loci. This can be described using four provisory thematic categories. By locating architecture in these works, we can develop the capacity to discriminate architectural ends from its means of forming environments and the manner in which each of us engage the superordinate programme in our practice or teaching, to develop terms for discussion that do not need the profession's technicist proxy to do so. These four are:

1. 'Locus of Emptiness or Place of Measurelessness'. This will be exemplified by three of Louis I. Kahn's projects.
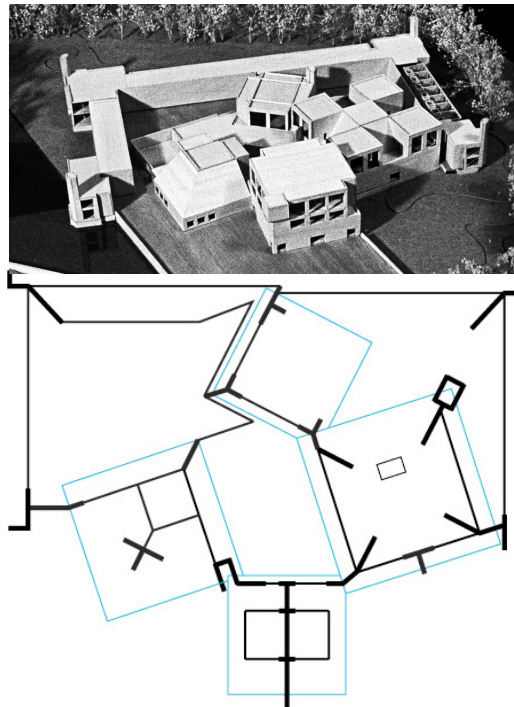
2. Isolation. The architect forms a practice to secure the architecture as a distinct gesture within 'disjunct' technicist practice. (Coop Himmelblau, Gehry)

3. Symbolism. Architectural elements signify architecture. (Venturi/Brown) The discussion is that it is not the symbols that are architecture but that the architecture's concealment as technic of symbol is the means of the architecture. (Venturi–Brown, Johnson)

4. Technicist Valuation. The technological value that the profession uses as proxy for architecture's value in these latter stages as defined by Rem Koolhaas in *Bigness*. (Koolhaas) This work can be seen as describing the threshold to post–technological architectural practice. I will propose that Rem Koolhaas named his outcome "after–architecture" because for him technology *is* architecture.[4] He reinforced this with his *Fundamentals* exhibition at the 2014 Venice Biennale.[5]

Part 4 returns to more personal aspects of locating the participants' practice in architecture and how it serves spirituality, asking how architecture is provided for the awareness of any individual?

Intended Conclusions
This is about showing one way that we might evolve architectural practice and its profession through to an 'after-technology' practice in a way that shows spirituality is essential as turning to revelation of architecture's singular programme rather than as its concealing in technical means as ends. Although implementation is still a way off, the elements we engage are always present. It is a matter of orientation and intent. The salient outcome of this workshop is for the participants to experience how "practice, craft and making" give measure to the infinite and the immeasurable, which can be felt, while no measure is architecture.

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[4] As defined in *Bigness*. See *S M L XL*, pp.

[5] See the interview with Rem Koolhaas. < www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/video/2014/jun/06/rem-koolhaas-fundamentals-venice-architecture-biennale-video.>

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