

Painting in Space – A Narrative Art

Aparna Tarar

Assistant Professor, Priyadarshini Institute of Architecture and Design Studies,
Nagpur, Maharashtra, India
E-mail: tararaparna7@gmail.com

Abstract—In architecture education, educator always needs to deal with the teaching methods for different architectural theories in design studios and workshops. For certain tasks both teachers and students struggles for the learning methodology. Sometimes they both become learners and share their experiences under a certain theme. They are all in search of the new methods of working and abstraction that manifest in art, as well as new techniques of representation to explore different ways of learning and communication. Experiencing learning of different art forms plays a significant role in developing and transmitting subject knowledge among untrained individuals. This has paved the way for an intense relationship between art and architecture in recent years. The principles of art help architecture not to portray, but to evoke the ideas lost within the chaos of daily life. This paper intent to exhibit the work of Summer School 2018 activity 'Wall painting- A narrative art', by the students of "Priyadarshini Institute of Architecture and Design Studies, Nagpur" to learn different architectural isms. The manifestation of thoughts and philosophies have been done and depicted by art of painting for knowledge transmission of architecture subject through art of pictorial narration.

Keywords: Architecture pedagogy, Experiential learning Theory, Art and Architecture, Knowledge Transmission.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning is a tri-polar process, where educator, student and surrounding environment all factors are equally important. Learning can be considered as a process that involves the whole experiences of an individual influenced by different factors such as his distinctiveness, educational environment, social environment, skills, abilities etc. Although learning is mainly a student-centered, the attitudes of instructors, the curriculum goals and the conditions of the learning environment are also very effective in the process. Thus learning can be defined as the outcome of an individual who is constantly active and interactive with her/his environment. Learning is contextual; it takes place in a social context. On the other hand, for the art related learning, environment and context plays very important role. One can design a space with the beautiful articulation of building elements, but expression of space can only be achieved with the addition of any art in that space such as wall painting, textures, murals, sculptures etc. Selection or application of art form in any space, either open or enclosed, is also an important part to be taken care of to not to affect or disturb the actual purpose of the space.

1. Architecture Pedagogy

Architecture education is one of the most distinctive branches of education, which requires various capabilities and educator needs to adopt various methods of teaching. We may broadly divide the architecture curriculum into three parts i.e. Skill related, Knowledge related and Application related subjects. All these three types of subjects need different approaches. Art related subjects like visual arts and architecture design needs to proceed from empirical to rational. Art related task needs to be start with hands on activities, some experimentation which allows the full participation of students in the activity and learning process. Educator needs to plan for every learning process in different ways. There are many teaching and learning theories, which one can adopt for better and smooth learning. Experiential learning theory is one of the best theories to be used for skill and art related learning, e.g. visual arts, workshops, model making, design and applied art etc.

2. Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning is characterized by personal involvement of the learner. Learning occurs at the same time as the doing. It is almost as if, out of awareness, the learner reviews what he/she has done, and stores the knowledge or skills somewhere in her experience. The theory of experiential learning has been proposed by Carl Ransom Rogers, an American psychologist.

Roger's tried to distinguish two types of learning- cognitive and experiential. Cognitive learning is knowledge based, the experiential learning on the other hand is quite vital to ones progress and welfare. The experiential learning is learner centered.

Experiential learning is a process through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting.

Learning that is considered "experiential" contain all the following elements:

- Reflection, critical analysis and synthesis
- Have a lasting impact

- Experiential learning involves the whole student: their cognitive, affective and physical domains
- Experience-based projects offer a change of pace from traditional classroom assignments
- Opportunities for students to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results
- Opportunities for students to engage intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, or physically
- Experience-based projects can help bring the students and the teacher closer together
- A designed learning experience that includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes.

3. Art and Architecture

Art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power (Oxford Dictionary). There are three forms of visual art: Painting is art to look at, sculpture is art you can walk around, and architecture is art you can walk through. (Dan Rice, American entertainer) Very often, we judge something as art or architecture by its functionality (architecture has a practical function while art does not) but, it is clear that it is not always possible to draw a clear line between art and architecture. Throughout history, there have been various interpretations of art or architecture. The Bauhaus in Germany had a deep relation between art and architecture. In fact, they designed houses that had works of art in all the walls because they thought that art could change people and society. Art needs an appropriate built environment within which it can be showcased to greatest effect, while architecture needs art to turn bricks, steel and concrete into a space in which people want to live, to learn, to shop and to work. Architects and artists need to have the experience and creativity to know precisely how and where to blend art and architecture in a way which turns the synthesis of both into much more than the sum of its parts. Places and spaces can be both commercially successful and aesthetically pleasing, but it requires good planning. It is important that the context is taken into account, whether in terms of the individual space, the local geography, the culture, or what the user wants to express. It is also vital that the effect be one which doesn't look cluttered or mismatched, and which enhances rather than detracts from the surroundings.

3.1 Painting- A Narrative Art

The illustrated dictionary of Art Terms defines 'Narrative Art' as, art which illustrates or tells a story. It uses the power of the visual image to ignite imaginations, evoke emotions and capture universal cultural truths and aspirations. What distinguishes painting as a narrative art from others is its

ability to narrate a story across diverse cultures, preserving it for future generations. Narrative art can also be seen in 'history painting' from 15th century by artist Leo Alberti, Michelangelo. From the Renaissance to the 19th century, history painting was regarded by academics as the highest, most worthwhile kind of painting. Mural painting can be traced back to cave paintings, but the greatest strides came during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The art became popular again and was further developed in the twentieth century. A mural is a painted depiction created on a wall or ceiling. The earliest art murals were cave paintings. The first paintings were cave paintings. Ancient peoples decorated walls of protected caves with paint made from dirt or charcoal mixed with spit or animal fat. In prehistoric art, the term "cave painting" encompasses any parietal art which involves the application of color pigments on the walls, floors or ceilings of ancient rock shelters. Cave art, generally, the numerous paintings and engravings found in European caves and shelters dating back to the Ice Age (Upper Paleolithic), roughly between 40,000 and 14,000 years ago. The first painted cave acknowledged as being Paleolithic, meaning from the Stone Age, was Altamira in Spain. The most common subjects in cave paintings are large wild animals, such as bison, horses, aurochs, and deer, and tracings of human hands as well as abstract patterns, called finger flutings.

In the modern style we call such wall paintings as theme based paintings, murals and graffiti paintings, where artist tries to narrate a story or a theme through painting. Graffiti painting is a composition of abstracts, texts, colors and narration of bold expressions. As per the building typology, user group and the wall position, one has to select the theme for painting. Now a day's graffiti painting is more popular art form to show the expression and feelings. For social cause at city walls to a simple exterior façade of a building one can paint graffiti. This painting could be a source of information for the future generations.

4. Knowledge transmission

Instead of teacher centered traditional approach, the learner-centered approach is one of the most promising and innovative approaches to adult learning that includes all voices, accomplishes key elements required for personalized, engaging learning. The content of learner-centered approach takes into account the individual viewing and understanding of the subject along with standard knowledge; and the methods, means and forms of teaching allow the learners to be actively engaged in compilation of the contents and organization of teaching, and provide the opportunity to choose the level of acquisition of the material. By adopting this approach transmission of knowledge happens easily between educator and the learner. The innovative and better student outcome again facilitates the knowledge transmission for the other learners and future generations.

5. Case / Example:

5.1 Wall art/ Painting workshop/ activity for summer school 2018.

Wall art workshop under a theme ‘Painting- a narrative art’ was conducted for summer school at Priyadarshini Institute of Architecture and Design Studies, Nagpur. There were four groups of six students from second, third and fourth year.

5.2 Objectives:

1. To understand the importance of wall as a building element in architecture design.
2. To understand how the spaces can be defined with the designing of wall.
3. To understand how expression of spaces can be enhanced with the help of wall art.
4. To learn different wall art/ painting techniques.
5. To learn the knowledge transmission using art techniques.

5.3 Task: To design and paint a classroom wall for four classrooms based on a given theme ‘Architectural Isms’.

The selected isms were expressionism, constructivism, cubism and modernism.

5.4 Design Process:

Students were introduced first with the topic ‘Isms in Architecture’. Students did the group discussion and literature study on the selected ism. They did the composition of selected features and then started actually sketching on the walls. All the four groups were asked to select a single colour for painting.

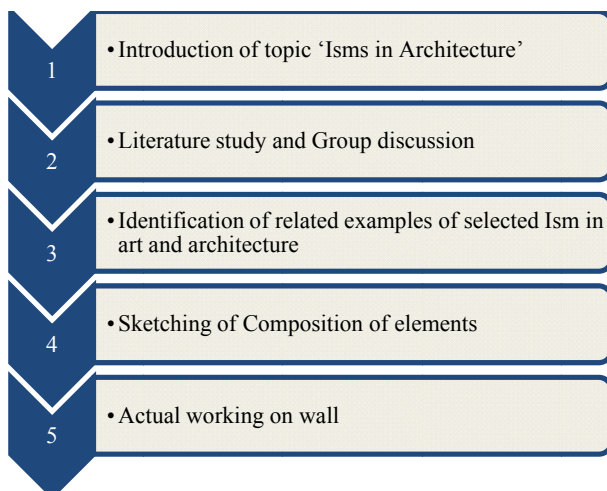


Figure 1: Working stages.



Figure 2: Students doing wall painting (Source-Author)

6. Conclusion

Many examples throughout history show that, built environments can be made extraordinary by the well-judged use of beautiful and interesting art forms, like wall paintings. What is most important is that the resulting combination of art and architecture which makes a place memorable for its aesthetic elegance. Experiential learning is a powerful teaching tool. While classroom lectures primarily address the cognitive domain, experiential learning involves the whole student: their cognitive, affective and physical domains. New concepts and issues in working encourage the students to work in a new way. Systematic framing of working stages does not create confusion, and step wise solutions results in better understanding and outcome. Creative exercises in design process, act as a trigger to start a thought process, and also enhance the working environment. Experience-based projects can help bring the students and the teacher closer together. Because they are sharing aspects of their own actions and decisions, there is a personal element to this type of learning.

Expressionism



Constructivism**Modernism****Cubism**

Figure 3: Final outcome (Source-Author)

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