

Observations of a landscape photographer and architecture



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The objective of this thesis is to see how the observations of the landscape photographer can further inform the relationship of architecture and the landscape. Observing how landscape photographers perceive their subject and define the issues that influence their personal perspectives becomes the tool for better understanding issues shared by architecture. For example, framing, the role of the horizon, natural and artificial light, texture, mood, scale, geography and the juxtaposition of man-made and natural elements are issues shared by both disciplines. In addition how landscape photographers observe and interpret the landscape in its many moods challenges architects to understand realizing how similar transformations occur in works of architecture over time. To demonstrate such findings, relevant examples of photography and architecture will be juxtaposed, discussed and supported by explanatory diagrams. In this manner, an analysis of landscape photography will hopefully clarify and inspire alternative ways of defining the interface between the building and the landscape.

TYPES OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Figure 3:

Man in water

Abstraction

Barcelona, Spain

Abstract

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Types of Landscape photography:

- Representational

- Impressionistic

- Abstract

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TYPES OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

“ Photographers usually use three different styles in landscape photography, which are representational, impressionistic and abstract”(1). Representational style results in pictures that show us the most realistic and natural look of the scene without any artifices. It is straight forward, that is what you see is what you get. Although the photographer does not add any props or foreign components to the scene, the best result is not a simple snapshot, rather far from it. The best attention is paid to composition, and details of texture, light, foliage, timing and weather are critical. For the architect who chooses to incorporate this style of photography in his or her work, paying attention to all the details mentioned above is mandatory. Then a personal interpretation of the work can manifest itself in the related architectural subject(Figure 4, 5).

The second style of photography is impressionistic. Photographic techniques result in images with elusive or vague quality. These pictures are less touchable and more unreal, while they still retain their values that make them landscape pictures. Studying the works of this second group has helped me to have a better understanding of texture in design(Figure 6, 7). One example is when I used the unclear glass in the building, and the onlooker could not tell what or how the inside looked. He or she could have their own imagination about the subject.

The last style of photography is called abstract, which deals with shape, form, contrast and color in a particular scene, of which often nothing may be recognizable. One part of the landscape may be combined with another in order to bring out the beauty or danger, water or desert, or red and blue of the scene. Abstract landscape photography isn't really intended to depict a particular scene at all, rather to create a piece of art that is only loosely based on a real scene in the real world(Figure 3, 8). One good architectural example is the work of architect Luis Barragan. His works deal with texture, light, shadow and repetition, which he applies to his creation. His works for me represent the transition of abstract landscape photography to architecture.

Figure 4:

San Sebastian, Spain

Representational photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

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Figure 5:

Sidi bou said, Tunisia,

Representational,

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 6:

Musse Historie Naturelle,

Paris, France

Impressionistic

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 7:

Chateau de Chenonceau,

Tour, France

Impressionistic

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 8:

Anger

Abstract

Maryland, USA

Abstract photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

1-Landscape photography. <http://www.photographyicon.com/landscape/index.html>.

-Sontag, Susan. On photography. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux. d.

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ISSUES FOUND IN LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Geography:

Landscape photography consists of three important sub-sections. First, it is about geography of the site and the contrast of sky vs. earth, cliff vs. plateau, sea vs. land and the rule of horizon. Architects deal with the same issues in their work, for instance the Cliffside house by Michael Rotondi , which explores the concept of sky vs. earth; Salk institute by Louis Kahn for the concept of rule of horizon; Casa Malaparte by Adalberto Libera in the concept of cliff vs. plateau; and Gilardi house by Louis Barragan in the concept of sea vs. land. I do assume that each of the aforementioned

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examples were somehow influenced by landscape photography. An architect should have a good grasp of the effect of the terrain and climate on his design and in achieving that the work of the landscape photographer can be beneficial.

Landscape photography

Architecture

Sky vs. Earth

Figure 9(Left):

Marmata, Tunisia

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 10(Right):

Cliffside house by Michael Rotondi

Rule of Horizon

Figure 11(left):

Ocean City, Maryland

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 12(Right):

Salk institute by Louis Kahn

Cliff vs. Plateau

Figure 13(Left):

Gozo, Malta

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 14(Right):

Casa Malaparte

Sea vs. Land

Figure 15(left):

Gozzo, Malta

Figure 16(Right):

Gilardi House by Luis Barragan

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

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ISSUES FOUND IN LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Scale:

These second section deals with the question of scale, whether grand, pieces and part, close up, or micro. From the beginning of architecture, architects, such as Andrea Palladio, used the ratio founded in nature to create the harmony with the building. In addition there are some buildings that are designed based on human's body. It means that there is a proportional correlation between human's body and building's elements such as doors and windows size. Sometimes, building are scaled more to their environment or purpose that it's the building elements landed their self to present the grand, over powering or even transcended appearance. Regardless of these approaches, the way architect chooses to manipulate scale affect the users by making the building feels, comfortable, divine or even unreal. In short, the scale of architecture is not only the system of size in various levels (physical, visual, technological, economical, etc.), but also the all relations between the proportions, which exist in similar forms of different size each other.

Landscape photography can help him acquire a better sense of detail in his design, one thing which can be of utmost importance.

Landscape photography**Architecture****Grand**

Figure 17(Left):

Naples, Italy

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 18(Right):

Casa Malaparte, Capri, Italy

Pieces and parts

Figure 19(left):

Paris, France

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 20(Right):

Beyeler Foundation

by Renzo Piano

Close up

Figure 21(Left):

Paris, France

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 22(Right):

Beyeler Foundation

by Renzo Piano

Micro

Figure 23(left):

Paris, France

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 24(Right):

San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane Chapel, Rome, Italy

Jenkins, Eric. To Scale. New York: Simultaneously, 2008.

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ISSUES FOUND IN LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Light:

Both of paramount importance in the work of a landscape photographer and an architect is lighting, which encompasses bright vs. dull, clear vs. mist, sun vs. rain and day vs. night. The photographer and architect both have to consider the light and shadow and their different qualities in their work. The photographer considers which light applies best to his object and the architect does the same in his design process. Light is a necessity for the sight and a utility in architecture, but also a powerful, though ephemeral, vehicle of expression. Since light moves back and forth from its source, it

changes character and has the power to convey many of the quality of nature to the inert mass of architecture. An architect may not be able to control the light, but can predict its behavior well enough to catch it meaningfully in his work, he channels it through the openings into his space and then molds it into masses, and brings the site to life by contrasting it with the shadows.

Architecture

Landscape photography

Bright vs. Dull

Figure 25, 26(Left):

Ocean City, Maryland

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 27, 28(Right):

Citroen Park, Paris, France

Arab Ins., Paris, France

Clear vs. Mist

Figure 29, 30(left):

Viaduc Des Artes Park, Paris, FR

Luxembourg Park, Paris, France

Photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 31, 32(Right):

Arab Ins., Paris, France

Sun vs. Rain

Figure 33, 34(Left):

Capri, Italy

Paris, France

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 35, 36(Right):

Dominus Winery, California

Day vs. Night

Figure 37, 38(left):

Capri, Italy

Figure 39, 40(Right):

Effie Tower, Paris, France

photo by

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Rouzbeh Mokhtari

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ISSUES FOUND IN LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Texture :

The last section deals with texture and the comparisons smooth vs. rough, foliage vs. dying, spring vs. fall and fertile vs. barren. Texture lends a dimensional quality to photos and enable the photographer to break up large areas of tone to create special effects. It has long been used by architects too in order to breath life into buildings as well create a unique experience visually for the visitor. To express the true quality of materials, to shape an interior space or simply to articulate a pattern, texture is a fundamental tool in all of the above. It can also be used to create a more complex language for architects to express themselves. The juxtaposition between both digital and natural materials will certainly emphasize texture via patterns and rhythms. In addition, texture between the two will call for varying degrees of occupant touch.

Architecture

Landscape photography

Smooth vs. Rough

Figure 41, 42(Left):

Capri, Italy

photo by

<https://assignbuster.com/observations-of-a-landscape-photographer-and-architecture/>

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 43, 44(Right):

France

Foliage vs. Dying

Figure 45, 46(left):

Paris, France

photo by

Stanley Hallet

Figure 47, 48(Right):

Quai Branly Museum

Dominus Winery, California

Fall vs. Spring

Figure 49, 50(Left):

France

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 51(Right):

Egerstrom House

by Luis Barragan

Fertile

Figure 50(left):

Washington, DC

photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

Figure 51(Right):

Paris, France

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SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Figure 52:

Natural Frame

Capri, Italy

Photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

- How are they explaining these

issues?

- What kind of the issues that photographers interested?

- Shows different issues on each one:

- Rule of reflection

- Rule of Sky

- Rule of extend

- How does he set up the camera to do this?

- Where the sun will be? Or moon?

- Deconstruct photos

- o Analyzing each photograph:

- Foreground

- Background

- Color shot

- Black and white shot

- What do I learn from each one

- What kind of lenses are they using

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ANSEL ADAMS

One of the most famous landscape photographers is Ansel Adams, who has influenced many people in different fields. He likes black and white because there is no distraction for him and he is really interested in the grand panorama and in how much detail can be shown in the large context. Most of Adams' work is about the relationship between the sky and earth. He is aware of the sun's position at any given point of the day and knows how to use it. He also pioneered the idea of visualization⁽²⁾ (which he often called 'previsualization') of the finished print, based upon the measured light values in the scene being photographed. One of the best known and most sought after photographs in the field of fine-art photography is called "Moonrise". Adams took this photo in Hernandez, New Mexico in 1941 (Figure 53). He used a technique called "rules of thirds", which many artists think of as boring, that is looking at symmetrical images, divided in three parts. This type of photograph has three layers and each a different tone: the black sky, the white cloud and the gray landscape (figure 54). Adams made an interesting composition that became very popular. Adams said "Moonrise combined serendipity and immediate technical recall"⁽³⁾. Serendipity means lucky chance. He "felt at the time it was an exceptional image"⁽³⁾ and when he took it, "he felt an almost prophetic sense of satisfaction"⁽³⁾. Ironically, Adams happened upon this shot by chance while driving along a roadside heading towards Santa Fe, New Mexico, after an unproductive day of photography. The conditions were perfect, but he was basically unprepared because he didn't have access to his light meter. Adams used his knowledge of the luminance of the moon and was able to get this precious shot. He said "it is a romantic / emotional moment in time". Another example is called the "Winter Sunrise" (Figure 56). Adams never intentionally included a human or

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an animal in his creative landscape, but in this picture, horses have added an earthy touch to the un earthly beauty of the scene. Control, as absolute as possible, was at the heart of Adams' photography. For him, the critical variable was light and he used light, reflection, rule of thirds, layers and different tones in his work. Each of these techniques can be used in architecture as well. Studying this process can help me as a designer to improve my work and have a better understanding of the correlation at work.

Figure 53:

Moonrise

Photo by

Ansel Adams

Figure 54:

Deconstruct Moonrise

Figure 55:

Winter Sunrise

Photo by

Ansel Adams

Figure 56:

Deconstruct

Winter Sunrise

2-Adams, Ansel. The camera. New York: little brown, 1972.

3-Adams, Ansel. The making of 40 photography. New York: little brown, 1980.

-Adams, Ansel. Auto biography. New York: little brown, 1987.

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Eliot Porter is a photographer much influenced by Ansel Adams, yet more interested on the effect of color and its distribution throughout the landscape; detail and texture in nature was his focus, so he expanded his attention in order to celebrate the sheer beauty of nature(4). Porter's photography was more about balance, layering and object vs. the field. To him, photography was a creative art and was the first to successfully bridge the gap between photography as a fine art and its roots in science and technology. Eliot porter is known to be the first nature photographer to artistically craft color images, in both the taking and developing processes, to a degree achieved by Ansel Adams in black and white photography. So delicate was Porter's processing technique that a leading photography critic at the time, Weston Naef, wrote that " Porter was captivated by colors that had not yet been named". In architecture also, an architect tries to breathe life into buildings by bringing different textures along thus creating a visual experience for the eyes to see. Texture is a fundamental tool in expressing the true quality of materials, shaping an interior space or simply to articulate a pattern. It is as I mentioned before, used by architects to create a more

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complex language of expression. Visual textures are produced by the patterns given to the lighting of the surface, both through the way materials are worked (e. g., vertical or horizontal chiseling of stone) and through the way they are employed in the building (e. g., vertical or horizontal boarding, projection and recession of courses of brick). Like all patterns, visual textures create association of movement, giving rhythm to the surface. A single texture is rarely used in buildings. The variety of materials and treatments typically produces a complex of textures that must be composed and harmonized like the forms and spaces of architecture, into a consistent expressive whole. So understanding the perception of a photographer in relation to texture can give the designer a better outlook in choosing the right pattern and texture for his work.

ELIOT PORTER

4- Porter, Eliot. The place no one knew. Utah: gibbs smith, 1991.

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JERRY UELSMANN

There is another photographer with a completely different technique, Jerry Uelsmann. In his work, he combines several negatives to create surreal landscapes that interweave images of trees, rocks, water and human figures in new and unexpected ways. He uses several enlargers, each of which have a different negative placed under the lamp. The photographic paper is sequentially moved from one enlarger to the next, “ burning in” and “ dodging out” the light wherever it needs to be manipulated. The paper is

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then processed to create a one of a kind (irreproducible) print. As an architect always has a concept behind his work, so did Uelsmann. He believed that “ a picture should show your own familiar world”, that’s why his photography wasn’t about thinking; it was about surprise and discovery. Both in photography and architecture, there exists a concept, vision, idea or inspiration, which most likely emanates from one’s own experiences. When one has worked arduously on a project, and for a long time, his or her inspiration or rather light of inspiration, shines through. In photography, the subject or the concept behind it can be upside down and still be effective. The photographer can play with your mind and make you see things you won’t normally see. In architecture also, the architect can create a compositional concept and take you on a journey not expected.

5-Uelsmann, Jerry. Process and Perception. New York: university press of Florida, 1986.

-Uelsmann, Jerry N. Photo Synthesis. New York: University Press of Florida, 1992.

– Ward, John. The Criticism of Photography As Art: The Photographs of Jerry Uelsmann. New York: University Press of Florida, 1988.

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SPECIFIC EXAMPLE IN ARCHITECTURE

Figure 65:

Representational

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Vals, Switzerland

Photo by

Rouzbeh Mokhtari

- How do these issues effect architecture

- Opening as a framing device:

- The Doorway

- The window

- The Close porch

- The detail in the landscape

- Architecture holding the landscape(Court)

- Architecture in the landscape(site)

- Architecture viewing the landscape(widows)

- The following are examples of how photography and architecture are correlated. The first example, talks about the effect of the frame and how it can make you focus on a certain point. Second one is the concept of nature and how it can be incorporated into a

building. Third, talks about the pattern and how your eyes can lead to a certain impression. The last one, is about

reflection and layering , which are both essential in architecture.

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MARY MISS

The artist Mary Miss has been redefining how art is integrated into the public realm since the early 1970's. " For more than three decades, Mary Miss has reshaped the boundaries between sculpture, architecture, landscape design and installation art. She has articulated a vision of the public sphere where communal and private experiences co-exist."(6) Her work is grounded in the context of a place, from which she constructs situations where the visitor becomes aware of the site's history, its ecology, or aspects of the environment that have gone unnoticed. The individual viewer moving through the site, experiencing it in all of its configurations, becomes the primary focus. One of the best examples is Battery Park City Landfill project in 1973 New York City. Its five rough wood panels with descending circular cutouts were aligned as you walked up to the opening. The built and natural materials are both laid out for examination, consideration and potential redefinition of their relationships. The visitors were engaged in the making of the piece and movement was necessary for it to become visible. Also it is intended to relate the visual with the physicality of the objects and landscape. She is not the photographer nor the architect. She is an artist who is following the rules of both in her work. She used rule of horizon, sky vs. earth, fore ground vs. background, layering, composition and object vs. the field.

All the issues discussed above are also influential in architecture. For instance, one issue that the photographer deals with is framing, the same goes for the architect also. When the architect deals with the landscape, he may create a space called court or window, which can be directly associated with the way the photographer creates a frame.

6-Abramson, Daniel M. *Mary Miss*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003.

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CURZIO MALAPARTE

Italian rationalist architect Albetto Libera, for Curzio Malaparte, conceived Casa Malaparte house around 1937. Malaparte actually rejected Libera's design and built the house himself with the help of Adolfo Amitrano, a local stone mason. The conveyance of communication of values and beliefs through architecture, which best defines the intention of writer and political activist Curzio Malaparte in the design and construction of his house on a bluff in Capri, Case Malaparte is a great example. All of the rules are going against established theories of architecture, such as building should fit in with its natural surroundings. Malaparte was determined to construct a house that would be his house, conveying his values, beliefs and personality. The house is an object in the landscape and it stands alone. When you enter, each window is a snapshot and frames the landscape, and this is due to the way the frame is made.

It's according to the Le Corbusier theory, when exterior and interior of a building become one. When you are in the main hall, the walls are white and the floor is stone, you don't feel as if you are inside. When you are on the roof, the vertical vs. horizontal line connects the nature to the building, or as Vittorio Savi and Adalberto Libera have said, "one realizes then that there is an extreme contrast between looking from the inside or from the outside. They (windows) are empty like 'hollow eyes'. From the inside these windows however are filled with the isolated worlds they frame; terrific worlds provoking a sublime anxiety through revealing the distance between subject and object, man and nature, and the impossibility of processing those worlds that they create"(7). Photographers have their camera and work with their lens to create a frame, where as architects construct the building and bring out their windows as their frames.

7-Talamona, Mardia. Casa Malaparte. New York: Princeton

Architectural Press, 1992.

15

PETER ZUMTHOR

A great example of framing the landscape is when you cannot say when the building starts and landscape stops; and it can be seen in the work of Peter Zumthor called Therme Vals. Zumthor uses images of quarries and water flowing spontaneously from the ground to describe the conception of the building, its geometric rigor reflects a huge rock embedded in the hillside. When you are in the building and in front of the glass wall, the sun is moving

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from behind the mountain during the day and it is a great example of grasping the landscape through the building. When you are outside in the water, it is still framing the landscape. The building is made of local Valser quartzite and concrete. Water, light and to some extent steam and heat, add to the definition of areas within the ritual of the bath(8).

The Therme Vals offers a seductive shift from the paradigm of the Bilbao effect, where architecture is a vehicle for economic health through spectacle and display. The space is used for the engagement of mind, body , soul and the whole community. This is a great example of how photography can play an important role in framing the landscape in architecture.

8-Zumthor, Peter. Therme Vals. New York: Annalisa Zumthor, 1991.

16

As I mentioned before, sometimes the architect holds part of the landscape and creates a court, such as Renzo Piano having the court yard in the middle of lobby of New York Times building. This cube of space, open to the sky, isn't accessible , but it's like finding a park in the middle of an office building. The sight of it alone has a calming effect. Retail tenants are required to keep their glass walls uncluttered in order to preserve the view from either side of the court yard. On one side of the courtyard, there is a theater and has a view to the yard, which can be seen as a background or foreground in photography. This is a great example of how landscape photography, and framing it is useful to architecture prior to design.

Another example of the importance of landscape in architecture can be Katsura detached palace in Japan. The palace includes a drawing room, teahouses, and a strolling garden. It provides an invaluable window into the villas of princes of the Edo period. The strolling garden takes water from the Katsura River for the central pond, around which are the tea houses, hill, sand, bridge and lanterns. Its garden is a masterpiece of Japanese gardening. In this palace, the landscape is framed outside of the main building and the viewer catches it from outside, whereas in the New York Times building, landscape was brought inside and one could experience it from a different angle.

RENZO PIANO vs. KARSURA PALACE

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Luis Barragan is a master at presenting nature in his work through large stucco or plain walls. Shadow is really important in his design and he uses texture, light, shadow and repetition to create architecture. In his work, one cannot tell when the building stops and the nature begins. Barragan said "Beauty speaks like an oracle, and man has always heeded its message in an infinite number of ways...Life deprived of beauty is not worthy of being called human."

Ricardo Legorreta is a disciple of Luis Barragan and took his ideas to a wider realm. He used elements of Barragan's work, like bright colors, geometric shapes, light and shadow and created architecture with elements of nature.

Legorreta said " " This world of Mexican spaces filled my life in such a natural way that light, walls, color, mystery, and water, with all their beauty, <https://assignbuster.com/observations-of-a-landscape-photographer-and-architecture/>

became part of me. I am not an exception, that is the way we Mexicans are.”

Legorreta achieves Mystery and Surprise, through the use of Mass, color, symbol , light and lighting , through holes, slots, squeezes and releases.

His color is Red, deep blue, yellow, pink and Lilac. Pure color, as if it came out of a painter’s tube. His teacher in all this has been vernacular architecture which has been also teacher to many other good architects.

RICARDO LEGORRETA & LUIS BARRAGAN

9-Pauly, Daniele. Barragan space and shadow, wall and colour. New York: Birkhouser, 2004.

– Mutlow, John V. Ricardo Legorreta. New York: Rizzoli international publication, 1997.

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POSSIBLE PROGRAM

Figure 85:

Beyond Being

Photo by

Unknown

Meditation Center

1- Garden / Spread at multiple locations with connotations

a. AID/ help in creating moods and set the scene.

2- Bathing / Purifying

a. Cold water

b. Hot water

c. Jasmine water

d. Waterfall in different locations

3- Healing: Travel with your mind by being exposed to inspiring images

a. Color, light -> Chromatography

b. Smell -> Aromatherapy

c. Image/ Elements/ Shape —> something inspiring

d. Sound/ music

4- Tea house

a. Garden

1- harmony -> Nature

2- purity -> drinking tea

a. Created for aesthetic and intellectual fulfillment

b. it is an interlude in which one leads oneself for the moment to the spirit of beauty, quietude, and politeness toward others.

5- Mediation

a. Single/individual spaces

b. Common spaces

c. rest/ stretch

19

POSSIBLE PROGRAM

The essence of nature, life, and the earth is water. Water provides the means to exist and to live. There are several examples to imply this idea as water being a pure element. In my opinion, Nature eases the mind. Nature provides birth and death, such dervish dance of existence and non-existence creates a spatial environment to not only ease the mind but also to comfort the body. Another example to indicate the importance of water is the human body, which is 60% water. This close relation between nature and water is the epic of ones calmness.

According to Le Corbusier's theory a building's interior and its exterior should be as one to create a comfortable place. Creating such a calm environment requires a neat correlation among each particle to its surrounding nature. Consequently building a Meditation Center, is a metaphorical bridge to transport a negligent mind to the realm of purity and to detach from the

daily pressures of life in order to energize the spirit, and to reconnect with one's inner being. It is a space that is designed to create a feeling of being welcome, safe, and peaceful.

I used three types of photography, representational, impressionist, and abstract, to embody Le Corbusier's idea show itse