

Peripheral Perspective

The visualization of space, and its depth¹, is primarily explored through the process of perspectival representation. Perspective, in a classical sense, is a mathematical rationalization of space that has become static and disembodied due to the 'point of view' that expresses a single, non-mobile eye of a bodiless observer². This limited snapshot of space is unable to reveal haptic experience or sensory information beyond focused vision. However, the mind perceives the world through the body and its senses³. Visually, perception comprises of the retinal gathering of stimuli through momentary 'points of view' during the movement of the gaze⁴. This process of the mind begins to suggest the potential of incorporating layers of sensory information and time in spatial representation to enhance the perception of space. According to Juhani Pallasmaa, "the very essence of the lived experience is molded by hapticity and peripheral vision"⁵. Acknowledgment and exploration of indirect perception through peripheral representation can inform perspectival design. Representational exploration of peripheral vision and the haptic experience creates possibilities to unlock layers of perception in perspective.

Peripheral vision is the antithesis to the traditions of classical perspective. It is unfocused, subconscious and envelopes us into space while focused vision pushes us out of it⁶. Unlike perspective, bodily experience and the perception of space is about movement. Coincidentally, architectural perception is more about movement through space rather than a stationary point in it. In a vision-centralized society, representation of peripheral perception could reach beyond the limitations of primary focus to reveal embodiment within space through the haptic experience. Peripheral representation, as have previous methods of perspective⁷, could create the potential to influence the way space is conceived leading to an architectural understanding of peripheral space.

There has been a search for unification and truth in space from the unsystematic perspective space of Antiquity to the rationalization of 'modern space' in Renaissance perspective⁸. This mathematical conception of space went unquestioned until Picasso and the cubists by the representation of simultaneity⁹ and expression of felt atmosphere. This historical framework provides insight to perspective as style¹⁰ and its influence on the conception of space. Historical context and precedent studies have provided implications of embedded peripheral thinking to inform the development of peripheral representation. Through the utilization of perceptual concepts, the notion of peripheral perspective can be developed as an explorative style of an experiential representation of peripheral space.

To begin to explore the architectural implications of peripheral space, the methodology of peripheral perspective must express concepts of peripheral perception, atmospheric perception, haptic experience and embodiment. This process should evoke a sense of subconscious engagement and allow the understanding of atmosphere of a place. The application of peripheral perception in place making creates an agency for exploration of peripheral space and its relationship to architecture and typology. This process of discovery consists of representing space through peripheral vision and its relationships to atmosphere, haptic experience, embodiment and indirect perception through exploration of peripheral space.

¹ (Allen 2000, 7)

² (Panofsky 1997, 29)

³ (Pallasmaa 2005, 12)

⁴ (Merleau-Ponty 1948, 53)

⁵ (Pallasmaa 2005, 10)

⁶ (Pallasmaa 2005, 13)

⁷ (Pallasmaa 2005, 26)

⁸ (Panofsky 1997)

⁹ (Pallasmaa 2005, 35)

¹⁰ (Panofsky 1997)