

THEATRON ANIMUS



SUPPLEMENTARY
DOCUMENT

BDes (Hons) Interior & Environmental Design

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THE

Who is it for?

This article is not directly aimed at any specific group of reader. Rather, it is intended to captivate those who may be unaware to the creative industries to spark inspiration and encourage more participation. In other words, I would hope that if an onlooker were to gaze at the publication, it would ignite a natural curiosity and find an aspect of set design, or the research gathered therein with the aim that they may explore design in their own lives – even if it merely settles as a hobby or eventually becomes a profession. This article reaches those who have an interest in Spatial Design (within Architecture, Interior Design or Set Design) as well as the reader who is interested in psychology or wants to find another perspective on mental health and how it can be examined in a design context. However, the prominent audience that this would be aimed for – if I am to be specific – is the Theatre enthusiast. This would most likely reach students who're interested in Interior Design – more specifically, Set Design. Although, it would also reach Art students and Product Designers as there are aspects of the research which explore the use of colour, materiality, light etc to trigger an emotional response.

Why is it important?

Design is in a constant state of evolution with new ways to approach the combination with science. It is important because it can reach any audience and never runs out of reason why something needs to be design; it can be to solve a problem; it can be for aesthetic appeal or to be used as a means of therapy. Therefore, it's important to learn as much as we possibly can – in this case, regarding something that is incredibly relevant as mental health which effects each person directly or indirectly. The survey conducted as part of the Primary research used to gather further insight for the article shows how different generational groups views the subject or mental wellbeing. The goal here was to use an unbiased language to open a dialogue from a large audience. To achieve this, the link to the survey was posted on social media (which can be accessed below) as well as 'word of mouth'.

<https://forms.office.com/e/YwnQiv78Bw?origin=IprLink>

As stressed previously, this article hopes to encourage curiosity in the design disciplines which is important because it allows fresh perspectives and ideas which can ultimately be utilised to enhance the human experience.

How Does it compare to other publications?

As this publication has such a specific topic, it does not compare directly to other publications in a straightforward manner. Other magazines and journals can be quite broad either referring to Theatre productions, Psychology or Design individually. Whereas this publication uses a mixture of these fields to investigate a question of how they may come together. However, the writing style in this publication should be viewed with less formality than such publications as 'Psychology Today' who look in more details in fact and figures and touch on very emotive subjects such as suicide rates and the effects of artificial inelegance on social media whereas 'Theatron Animus' strives to discuss similar subject of mental health with the more 'lax' style of writing like 'Arch Daily', the magazine/blog focused on the continuing achievements in all things architectural design which also includes the Spatial Design practices.

THE PRACTICE

During the early stages, there was no initial thought in the structure of the article. The project began by trying to finalise what this to be about. It was only after conducting an interview with Barend Slabbert, Interior Design Lecture at the University of Derby, that it became clear that the article should be a journey for the reader in the same manner of a theatrical piece. It should have a beginning which should establish context, a middle as the main act for the reader to grip the material and form opinions and thoughts and an end – however, this ending serves as a potential for sequel which for the reader is continued through any curiosity they’ve gained throughout the article. Initially, the physical layout of the magazine was going to reflect this journey by being an interactive puzzle; something for the reader to bend and fold as they progressed through the article. However, after looking at inspiration (refer to Fig.1 - 5) it felt as though this would detract too much from the content.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

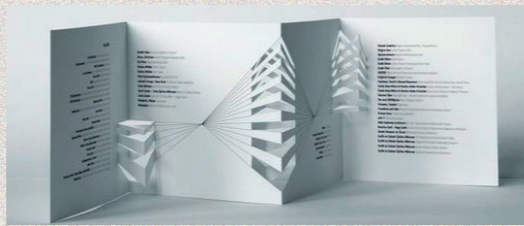


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

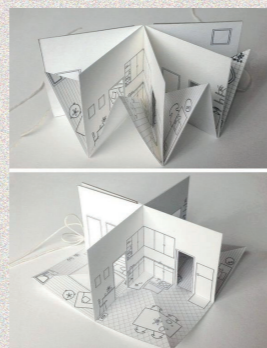


Fig. 5

Following this, I decided to find the articles structure by combing the ‘making’ side of Design with the ‘Identity’ aspect of psychology with by creating the geometric mask which now sits as the cover – a nod to the mask used to depict tragedy and comedy in the ancient Greek theatre. This took shape through finding inspiration in Photography, architecture, and art magazines. See Fig.6 – 9.

Fig.6 – 9 influenced the structure of the paragraphs which determined the columns aesthetic and the use of images to cover full pages allowing a break between each page of reading to act as a ‘breather’. While many of these publications use a greyscale or two-tone colour pallet to illustrate the impact of the subject and further the context of the writing, this publication chose to use a combination of two-tone images and vibrantly colourful images to reflect the serious subject or mental health along with the open creativity involved in design.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

STRUCTURE RESEARCH

Due to the mixture of subjects this publication consists of the research varied on the availability of the images which could be used. Unfortunately, many of the psychological references lacked suitable imagery to illustrate the topic. To adjust for this, Sites like Pinterest were used as a tool to find photography which illustrated mental health within a spatial context. Many of the images used have come straight from the designers referenced in article.

Where the information lacked, the topic was searched in a general manner to find a suitable image, for example, on pages 3 & 4 of the publication, ‘Research Approaches’ it was difficult to find a way of using a graphic to make the spread feel less bare and distracts from the volume of writing. Therefore, the graphic depicting a set model for the production ‘Berlin’ was sourced by searching ‘Theatre Set Design’ on Google Images which came from The Melbourne Theatre Company showing how designer, Christina Smith, researched and designed this set.

While the majority of the imagery is linked to the context of the writing in some manner, this is not the case on all pages. For example, pages 15,16 show the masks, Sock & Buskin – which are famously used in the theatre industry from their Ancient Greek Origins – set a tone for the page regarding the impact design has on mental health through the use of their facial expressions as Comedy & Tragedy. Page 22, adjacent to page 21 which discusses escapism, does not directly link to the context, although, it was sourced from an essay written about escapism in a spatial environment.

The research was difficult to initiate as there was little in the way of secondary research for the topic of Psychology in Set design. Therefore, breaking the publication down into the heading to follow (See ‘The Anatomy’) would prevail a start to searching for secondary research sources. Even if the research gathered didn’t answer a question, rather, asking one, this would then guide the primary research. This became relevant for the psychological research more than the Theatrical and Design. A survey was written and conducted to gain unbiased insight into the topic of mental health – it was important to do this on a broad scale and not focusing on any given group so there would be a clear, overall view of the subject. On the other hand, the secondary research gathered for subject of design was much more accessible through online articles as they included projects which were up to date compared to those found in books. See Fig.10 - 11 for samples of survey questions.

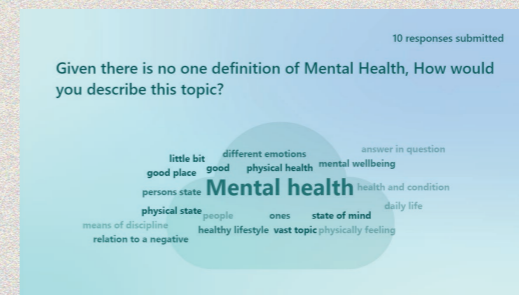


Fig. 10

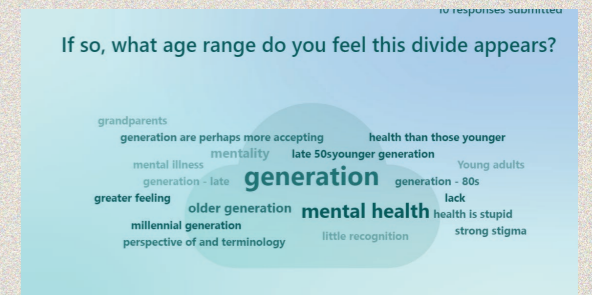


Fig. 11

ANATOMY

THE

Due to the specific nature of the publication, which is a combination of design and psychology, the research was broken down into broad categories which introduced more questions to narrow down the headings:

History & Context of Set Design

This article was originally only the history of set design which was only in a theatrical sense due to its ancient Greek routes. However, it seemed relevant to know why scenography was required at the time and how it is used today. Therefore, this article was split into History & Context. Having researched this topic which was spread over books, online journals and blogs as well as educational videos, it's evident there is a vast history of theatre which spans from the relevance of the Greek gods from which many of the ruins are named after – such as Dionysus – to the use of lighting, the direction of the theatron was position, the structure of the theatre along with the individual section which made up a theatre and who was allowed to participate within this world. Given the wealth of information which could have been written, which could have easily taken up the full word count, it had to be broken down to discuss only What is Set Design, Where it came from and How it was used. While the entire history could not be discussed further, the aim is to allow the reader the curiosity to find out more after reading this.

To properly start the readers journey through the publication, there needed to be some background on this topic in case the reader was uninformed or perhaps new to this field of design. As such, providing a brief explanation of the beginnings was how the structure began to take place for the publication. It's important to know where the study and practice of Scenography have originated as this designer must have an awareness of the past to use this knowledge for designing for the future. The historical nature of set design has deep routes from Greece and carries with it a deep education of philosophy which can be utilised in the field of psychology given the play writes and philosophers of the time. Setting context is also important as it demonstrates the need for theatre which is itself an example of a cognitive response. Without knowing a context, design does not have a direction or purpose in which to move.

The Relevance of Psychology in Design

Having established the beginning of the publication and the readers journey through it by discussing the origins of Set Design within Theatre, the next stage was to discuss where psychology comes into this. Psychology is a broad field of research which spans from child psychology to criminal psychology, and it is still something that is not fully understood today. Psychology is relevant as it relates to everyone in a litany of different ways which is important due to the impact it can have on day-to-day life. In the case of this publication, while it does discuss the responses the human brain can have on tools like lighting, colour and movement, this publication primarily discusses the phenomena of mental health which the public has become more aware of as the years go by. Yet the reason why this is important for this article is that it allows the context of set design and the tools used within to be explored in positive practices for cognitive wellbeing.

However, where there is a lack of research directly linking theatre to psychology, is the opportunity for primary research and in this case, the engagement task, 'BOX SET' which was carried out to investigate the relevance of cognitive responses in design. The idea behind this experiment was to discuss the first thoughts one might have when watching a production which is then put in a visual context. The process see Fig.12 - 16



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

Communication of Set Design & The Impact on the Human Element.

Once the context was set for the readers journey, knowing where set design has come from, why is it needed along with the relevant that psychology has within the field of design, it was then time to guide the reader to the next stage; to discuss how these ideas can be communicated and with what tools do designers have; the 'action and Reaction'. This is an extremely important part as the reader starts to learn about the many ways that designers gain inspiration, how they research and in what manner this information is used. This may also spark interest in something the reader already has an awareness of or bring something new to their pallet. This part of the publication discusses the 'action' as previous mentions being the communication tool itself, whether its sensory, the use of materiality, movement, or a nostalgic tool. The reader begins to understand where the inspiration comes from and how it can be used as a trigger for an emotional or cognitive response, consciously or unconsciously.

The publication then goes onto do discuss the 'reaction' side of the communication tools and how they are impactful on a psychological level. When the use of the primary research though survey's, interviews and the engagement task ('BOX SET') is combined with the secondary research of articles, journals, educational videos and books, they allow the reader to start thinking about how they might use these tools, thus sparking the desired goal of curiosity. Additionally, the primary research is also compared to the secondary to show illustrate differences in generational thinking and how this may impact the human element. An example of this can be seen in pages 15 – 20 of the publication where it discusses the feedback from the survey on the different opinions between age brackets and compared to the theatre production, 'Wozzek'. The results can be seen in Fig.10 & 11 (Research Practices).

Additional images of the online Interview (through Microsoft Teams Fig.18) which has been downloaded into the transcript (Fig.16 & 17) with Interior Design professor at University of Derby, Barend Slabbert can be viewed to the right. This interview was extremely valuable to the publication as this helped to guide what data to gather or what research regarding a Spatial Design Context which then provoked thoughts of the cognitive reactions.

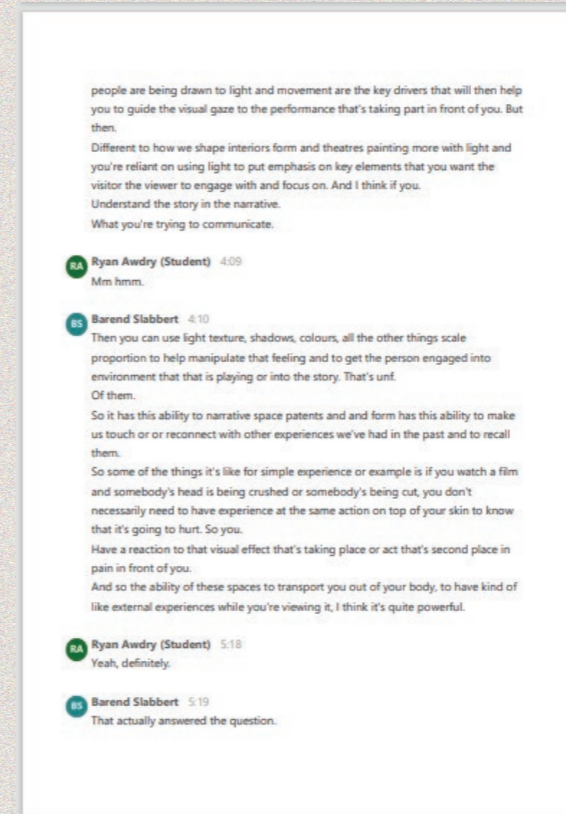


Fig. 16

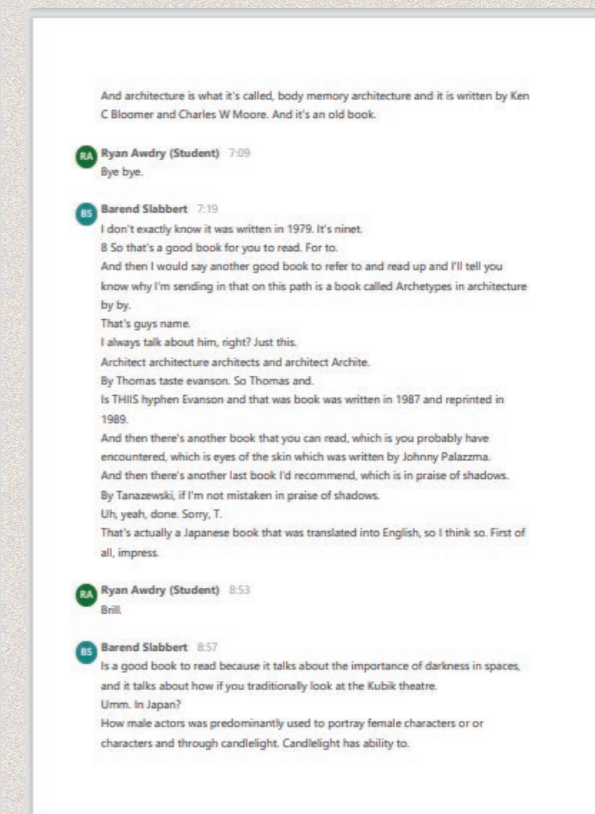


Fig. 17

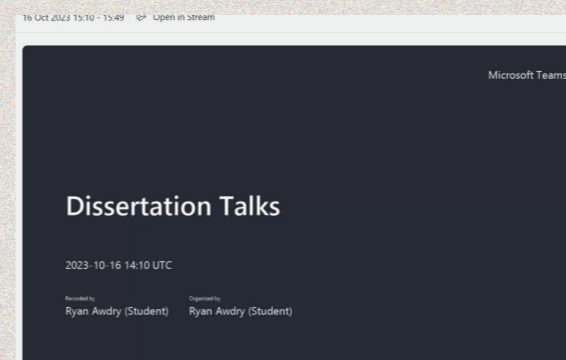


Fig. 18

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