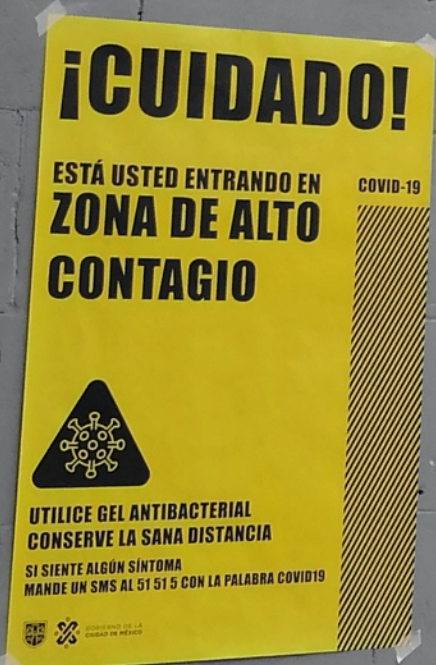
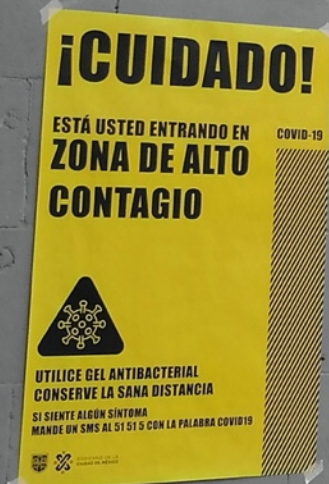




Pandemia & Patrimonio







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¿tienes algo que decir sobre patrimonio?

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VirtuoReal Design.

How the Psycho-anthropology can stimulate a new Design Thinking

Federico Agen
Alessandro Bertirotti

ABSTRACT

The emotions are present in every human actions and thoughts, because the 85% of our brain's functions is composed of emotions, and the rest 15% is awareness rationalization. During any action, or thought, our mind builds connections, links, bridges, between the interior and the exterior of itself. The structure of this constant and continuous interaction, between the inside and the outside, defines the psycho-anthropological a perception of the Self. The Self, in social psychology, is the synthetic consequence of this connection and it appears in the form of personal and collective identities. In essence, each of us carries in our minds what he/she thinks he/she is and how other people perceive him/her. From this perspective, studies and research of psycho-anthropology for Design can support planners, designers and architects, in their respective goals.

The global world today, following the covid-19 pandemic, has recognized the relevance of the notion of "system". "All things are joined together by invisible bonds. You cannot pick a flower without perturbing a star," Galileo Galilei said (1564-1642). This truth, in the post covid-19 reality, is most manifest. Therefore, we must think how to "create a system", in order that the world cultural heritage is available to all, affecting every human being. To make all these

things, it is necessary to "build the emotional experience of every landscape, architectural and design project", as this is formed in everyone's mind.

WE ARE THE ENVIRONMENT (Alessandro Bertirotti)

We often read that there are distinctions between *thinking* and *feeling*, emotional processes and cognitive processes. These differentiations are artificial and strictly arbitrary, even if they are useful from a scholastic point of view. They inhibit a real comprehension of how our mind works. All mental functions are always emotionally marked information, such as the perception of an object with a simple and predictable form. Emotion is energy that manages, increases and orchestrates all our mental activity, because emotions construct and design us in our life experience, which is subjectively lived, with defined characteristics. Emotions are deeply involved in the activity of the mind and they modulate our relationship with the environment. For this reason, it can be declared that "we are the environment".

The philosophical controversy, present in both the West and the East, between rationality and emotionality, according to which the two elements, as well as being separate, are also in contrast, it is

definitely over. The neuroscientific research strongly demonstrated that emotion is a mental phenomenon which allows the structuring of neurobiological, experiential and expressive components (C.E. Izard, R.R. Kobak, 1991). The capacity of our species to conform to the habitat, modifying also internal factors (mental and physical-organic) is the result of the limbic system's synergy action with the neocortex. The limbic system assigns meanings and values to the incoming stimuli, both distal and proximal, and it intermediates them by the processing of information. The emotions are dynamic manifestations that are developed within the brain's processes of evaluating meanings, circumstances and events. Therefore, they are influenced by social and cultural conditions (Tomasello M., 2014).

Let us now examine how these dynamic systems are working, and the vital role they play in defining the quality of our existence and design projects.

The daily actions result in a three-stage sequence. At a first stage, the goals towards which the actions are addressed appear in our mind. In the second stage, people act and construct their goals carefully, after having memorized, on a sensory level, the implications of their actions. Finally, in the third stage, learning topologically modifies the patterns of the neuronal networks of the brain.

By the *Topological Modification of Neuronal Networks* (thanks to Neuronal Plasticity), we mean that the *neuronal pathways* (axons and dendrites) have a concrete transformation of their map. When we learn something new, and we want to memorize these new features for a long time, our neural network is topologically modified. All intentional behaviours are necessarily emotional too, and they result from the self-organization of neural activity, thanks to the limbic system's action.

During our daily life, we can experience a mental landscape where we realize that something important, original and new is happening. It can be a sensation of melancholy, because we suddenly find ourselves thinking about a happy past; or it can be something exterior, such as anger in the face of an abuse of power against a disabled person who is crossing the street on the crosswalks. In these scenarios, our mind becomes alert, i.e., it tries to respond quickly to what it did not anticipate and it adapts to action quickly. In other words, the emotional process predisposes our mind and body for action, based on an evaluation of the stimulus immediately. The evolutionary

advantage is clear: we learn to estimate quickly positive or negative happenings in the environment. Thus, we learn to adapt, choosing between the two categories of "attack" or "escape".

This evaluation process (which is a cognitive process) is based on multiple drivers, some external and some internal. Some of these criteria are:

- a)** Previous experiences related to the stimulus that is displayed, including emotional and representational elements which can be recaptured in the long term memory;
- b)** Internal emotional moods and the social environment in which the stimulus develops;
- c)** The degree-intensity and level of the stimulus's familiarity;
- d)** The set of hopes that the individual may have in the specific moment, and which are correlated to the stimulation's occurrence.

Based on these premises, the emotions we all lived in the Covid-19 lockdown have certainly influenced the way we look at the world. The impossibility to go out; the isolation: the life in the narrow spaces (sometimes) of one's own home; the social distancing which health workers and other public officials have suffered, have changed our feelings towards the whole world. And the repercussions of these alterations in our mental attitudes have yet to be fully carried out, and the future we have to face certainly is more complex than before. One of the most important aspects that we have learned, and that we are learning more and more, is that all the world's things that happen are binding us to each other. Even though we live in different Nations, with specific cultural traditions, every human being is linked to all the others, because a pandemic of this nature, still in progress, provides us with an effective comprehension of the idea of a network.

On the basis of these considerations, the world's architectural cultural heritage has also become, in our perception, more deeply intimate. We saw in the media the squares, the cities, the monuments, the no life art. All the beauty of art no longer had those who could appreciate, admire and love it. With the aim of not making world tourism die, each Nation has tried to publicise its artistic and architectural treasures by using apps allowing virtual travel. Trips that certainly cannot replace the concrete and physical experience of finding ourselves in front of "La Pietà" of



Michelangelo (Fig. 1), in St. Peter's Basilica, but which can however stimulate the emotion linked to motivation. The technology is certainly capable of creating that emotion "as if", stimulating users in desiring to go and experience live that beauty tasted virtually.

That's why we should think, according to a valid market and cognitive strategy, about the use of these applications, and their design is entrusted to the designers who will be able to create renders connecting the virtual to the real. It is not a question of praising the former as a replacement for the latter, but of allowing users to use both possibilities in their experience of artistic and architectural beauty.

Technology can thus increase endogenous motivation towards art and can help with a series of useful hypertexts the same real experience of the art. In this way, we could all understand that it no longer makes sense to speak of *virtual* versus *real*, but we should think of a *virtue-real* design.

EMOTIONS AND TECHNOLOGY (Federico Agen)

The role emotions playing in our daily routine is usually underestimate. In the common opinion the emotion continues to be perceived as an impalpable essence, biologically determined. Nevertheless, recent neuroscientific studies allow us to look at the emotions with greater attention to the significant implications that they have in our life and in our social relationships. And this makes us increasingly aware of the importance of knowing how to manage them.

In the last years, many theories of emotions have interpreted the experimental data with a constructivist vision, describing emotions as elements impacting the main domains of cognition and human behavior, taking distance from the idea of emotions as merely instinctive responses, at least as regards the basic emotions of the classical view (Hoemann et al., 2019). Recent studies reject the contrast between cognition and emotion as separate processes, endorsing social, cultural, and linguistic factors in the construction of emotional meaning (Ogarkova, 2009). This vision leads to the redefinition of the concept of rationality as something different from the absence of affect (Hutchinson & Barrett, 2019).

Taking this premise into consideration, emotions can be defined as complex processes that involve specific affect, cognition, behavioral and psychological elements. The emotions are personal reactions to the surroundings, whose intensity depends on the subjective evaluation that influences the individual well-being. Emotions are

learned through experience and inherit the intentional content of other mental states such as memory and deep affectivity (Coliva, 2009).

In the last decades, emotions have attracted the interest of several fields of research and application. Several disciplines have pointed out a deviation towards the affective aspects of human conduct. This turn in trend has not only affected psychology, philosophy, literature, sociology and neuroscience, but also areas such as computer science and architecture.

The art world is perhaps privileged in letting us experience positive emotions, such as the ecstatic joy of admiring a work of art, like "La Pietà di Michelangelo" (figure 1), but its emotions' elicitation is not limited to this. The approach to the art, like in any other area, is made up of emotional states that bring us closer or further away. The emotions guide attention, memory, decisions and consequent actions.

Looking at the world of architecture and art, we can ask ourselves what categories of emotions are at stake in these areas. From the point of view of the categories, the most commonly evaluated are the basic ones, the big six - anger, fear, disgust, sadness, surprise, and enjoyment (Coppin & Sanders, 2016). These include a prevalence of negative discrete categories, the first four, surprise, with ambiguous valence, and only a positive category, enjoyment. This already contrasts with the approach that everyone tends to have with the art, expecting more positive emotional reactions. The secondary emotions can fill this lack, but the categorization of emotions still have not a general consensus among academics. Indeed, the concept of basic categories of emotions has recently been revised by various studies. A substantial number of researches agree with the hypothesis that categories are abstract, conceptual, highlighting a substantial variation of characteristics within a category, as well as affinity among different categories. Recent meta-analyses reveal that the autonomic nervous system responds with different characteristics depending on the experimental context, indicating that there is no specificity for certain emotional categories (Barrett et al., 2019).

A historical analysis of the study of emotions would help us to better understand the concept of basic, universal category, that continues to be subject to debate. The most recent appraisal and constructivist theories lead us to interpret the emotions not as natural processes independent of social norms and personal conscious interpretations, but on the contrary to evaluate them according to the context and the past personal events one has

experienced. In a syncretic attempt we could indicate basic emotions as fundamental categories of a given context, instead of defining them as biologically fundamental, basic, primary and discrete. This conceptual change would have the aim to embrace the technology development arisen around the basic emotion concept categories as natural kinds, as FACS (Facial Action Coding System), with the wide constructivist consensus that the emotions refer to a collection of affective and psychological states, including subjective experience, expressive behavior, culturally situated (Tomasello, 1999).

Thus, we should look for what are the basic categories of artistic experience. We could identify the basic emotions of a field, and decline them into secondary emotions that represent the emotional nuances of each main category. The aim is to understand the emotions that are aroused by an experience in the artistic and architectural fields. The knowledge of these can guide us in building a virtual itinerary of art and architecture, suitable to awaken interest and curiosity, to persuade people to visit actually the works themselves.

Once identified the emotions involved, it is possible to create those virtual spaces that elicit them, utilizing an application ad hoc. Indeed, in addition to usability, the app's designers have to keep in mind the way to solicit the perception of emotions, including interest and curiosity, but above all the ability to stimulate an emotion of pleasure, as if a person was contemplating the real work. The final result might be to bring the users to want to deepen their knowledge actually visiting the work in person, to perceive the emotional intensity of reality, anticipated by the virtual experience.

What we can ask of an application in the field of art and architecture is to educate emotionally a person to look at the work. For this reason, designing the application, it is necessary consider which emotions are functional to the purpose and how to recall them for a positive and stimulating perception of the virtual experience. For this evaluation an analysis is necessary.

The analysis of emotions is made up of various parameters. The designer will have to work together with an emotional analysis expert to build a virtual involving environment. Today an overall evaluation of the objective and subjective parameters appears necessary. The self-assessment questionnaire reveals the subjectivity of the emotional experience, to be analyzed in conjunction with objective analyzes, made such by automation through computer programs for evaluating facial expressions, the traceability of the gaze, the response of the autonomic nervous

system, such as epidermal conductivity and heart rate, in addition there are less available means as the electroencephalogram and fMRI.

By having reliable data, we can reconstruct the emotions perceived within our interest and determine which emotions are basically representative of the emotional states experienced. These emotions will be evaluated during the use of the application.

A sample of users allows to collect data of which emotions the layout and the chosen contents are able to activate. The tracking of eye movements allows to understand how the user interacts with the screen. At the same time the FACS allows to collect the expressed emotions. It is also possible to evaluate the level of physiological involvement through the conductivity of the epidermis and the heartbeat.

These data allow feedback on the characteristics that most excite a visitor in relation to a given work of art or an architectural element (Fig. 2), also being able to help operators in the sector to understand which are the most emotionally engaging steps, positively perceived by people, which are subsequently underlined in reality.// **FA / AB**

IMAGES

1. Buonarroti M. (1498-1500). La Pietà (Città del Vaticano)
2. Olmec civilization (before 400 BCE) Monument A (Tres Zapotes, Mexico).

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Olmec civilization (before 400 BCE) *Monument A* [Basalt 1,47 x 1,5 x 1,45 m.]. Tres Zapotes, Mexico. By HJPD - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7546360>

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