

The idea of space is in constant flux. It is both a product and a process. It is a product of unceasing definition and redefinition that those in the practice of designed environment have been trying to grapple its various manifestations. As a process, it undergoes as many permutations as many as those who experience it in its various dimensions. The designed environment discipline has taken its conceptualization, layered, textured and constantly flowing.

The concept of designed environment has been gaining grounds as the world becomes more urbanized. In this context, the idea of the existence of a “non-designed” environment is hard to imagine as the pervasiveness of human influence can be felt in almost all aspects of existence. The “natural” has seemingly succumbed to the artificiality of life, that is if we see existence as a dualism between the natural and artificial, with humans and their products and process as outside of nature. From the heart of Manila’s old downtown district to the most inaccessible moss forest in Mindanao, the ubiquity of human influence is palpable. Almost every square meter of the world has been mapped and is available in Google Earth, while remote uninhabited islands have seen garbage that has travelled thousands of kilometers from the nearest town. The human footprint can be seen in almost all kinds of surfaces with social media to document each conquest.

The perpetuity of human impact on the environment has led to the discussion on the environment as the idealized space. The idealization of the environment is hinged on the anthropocentric need to idealize space that is conducive for human life, perpetuation, and development. This need has led researchers and designers to look into the different perspectives of space and its conception. The production of multitude of meanings and preferences has resulted to a plethora of different concepts of space. The designed environment discipline has been trying to keep pace and put sense of order to the different perceptions and elaborations of space. The design field of the discipline has been trying to evolve with the demands and the technology, leaving the introspection on the implication to the academe and research. New forms and systems have been developed, integrating the currents that shape the practice of the design while the fields of the academe and research have been trying to uncover the different layers of space.

Muhon 5 looks into the different layers of space, setting its sights beyond its physical confines and bounds. The articles delve into space as the backdrop on the discussion of its sustainability, quality, comfort and sense of place, and practice and pedagogy. In the tradition of promoting

the culture of research in the designed environment, the current edition of Muhon aims to continue the standard of research in the college as well as serve as a medium in publishing researches in Architecture, Landscape Architecture and related disciplines. It is inherent in the practice and research within the designed environment discipline to be multi- and inter-disciplinary, transcending the traditional bounds of study. The discipline often requires the consideration of the human dimension, going beyond theoretical concept and promoting the practical application or praxis.

Fischl and Teodoro map the practice of sustainability in the Philippines, wherein practicing architects were surveyed on their awareness of certain concepts and their application in the practice. The paper found that most of the practicing architects are familiar with the language of environmental sustainability but exert little or no influence in decision-making, thus necessitating the empowerment of designers in integrating sustainability in their design. Architects also need to be more adept in the economic and social considerations of sustainability in order for them to operationalize the concept into their design.

As a model of institutional space, the University of the Philippines Diliman Campus serves as setting for two papers that discuss the social quality of spaces and the creation of identity. As an institution, it has served as a case study for various analysis, particularly as a model for academic landscape. Sabido and Ramos looked into the different spaces based on their social function beyond the academic function of the campus. Being open to the public, the campus serves an important urban function as a recreational open space, facilitating interaction and social networking among users. This important urban function of the campus is reinforced by its character, which the authors suggested, should be replicated or simulated in the planning and design of the campus. Gozon, meanwhile, looks into one of the elements that has strengthened this identity and character of the campus, the iconic acacia trees. Based on the university’s mandate to utilize native trees in the campus landscape, the author came up with viable candidate trees as a substitute for the iconic tree, which happened to be an introduced species. Probing on the attributes of acacia which have shaped the sense of place of the campus, Gozon assessed the different layers of the physical attributes of the candidate trees which could achieve the same effect that the acacia trees has on the campus landscape.

Ancestral houses of Vigan have been subjected to different analyses and assessment. Their heritage values have often been the subject of inquiry, thereby facilitating the recognition of their importance in architectural study. In

---

Lozano's paper, the ancestral houses are assessed if their indoor thermal comfort, focusing on their interior common spaces. Looking beyond the intricate ornamentation, form, and function, the paper examines the efficiency of indigenous technology in achieving thermal comfort.

Transcending the space as a product, two papers look into the consequence of the process: pedagogy and the practice. Architectural education is challenging in the sense that teaching design requires comprehension and application of abstract concepts to a mostly visual audience. The incongruity in the message and the audience requires creativity and non-traditional methods to facilitate learning. Dytoc discusses the integration of motivation and guided complex learning in teaching basic solar geometry. Developing the students' appreciation of the topic and allowing them to interpret the concept, the students were expected to apply the techniques learned in an actual study project. The resulting learning outcomes of the interface of an abstract concept with actual project, according to the study, are encouraging. On the other hand, Galingan and Basman examine the career choices of graduates of the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. The paper found that a significant number of graduates prefer to practice in the design field, signaling the availability of opportunities in the industry in absorbing the graduates.

To further promote the research efforts of the UP College of Architecture, this edition of *Muhon* features a research paper by graduate students of the M. Architecture program. The paper is part of the course requirement, allowing the students to develop proficiency in research and the opportunity to apply concepts discussed in class. The class of Prof. Tomeldan proposes the urban redevelopment of Makati City into special precincts. The class identified Special Precincts for Urban Redevelopment (SPUR) sites in the city to spark social and economic regeneration. The identified sites are planned to improve access, minimize nuisance and improvement of the physical environment. This class effort along with the other papers included in this edition exemplifies the different perspectives of layered spaces. The study of these layered spaces is linked by the discipline of designed environment.