On the Nature of Public Interiority

Liz Teston

University of Tennessee, Knoxville
USA

Abstract

This essay explores the intersection between interiority, urbanism, and human perception. I view interiority as a condition of the senses rather than an indoor place. Revelations of interiority can be discovered within the urban realm, in public spaces, and in intimate interior conditions. I am especially interested in "public interiority" or these cases of interiority that can be found in exterior urban places. Understanding interiority as a perceived condition grounds the built environment in phenomenology, varied human experiences, and everyday conditions. Herein, I begin with an ontology of interiority, which focuses on various ways of perceiving the nature of things—phenomenology, structuralism, and object-oriented-ontology (OOO). From there, I will analyse a taxonomy of public interiorities, including various strains of form-based, programmatic, atmospheric, and psychological public interiorities. Using real-world examples from my previous research in Bucharest, Romania, New York, and Knoxville, Tennessee as well as well-established examples in art and design, I will then analyse various urban experiences of interiority, and the way built conditions shape experience. In this way, I will bring the interior to the city.

Keywords: public interiority, phenomenology, atmospheres, urbanism, ontology[^1]

Correspondence Address: Liz Teston, 1715 Volunteer Blvd., Knoxville, TN, USA, 37917. Email: eteston@utk.edu

Introduction

This essay responds to recent advances in interior architecture—both in theory and in practice. It also emerges from my research on interiority in the urban outdoors, meditations on the nature the interior, and real-world observations of these conditions. It contributes to both the practice and discipline of interior architecture, acting as an aide for those seeking interiors within urbanity, making available tools for identification within a designer's lived experience.

Herein, I focus on a kind of transient, situational condition: public interiority. I argue that while we frequently experience interiority inside structures, public interiority is also a perceived condition found in the public sphere, without structure. It is possible to have a place that feels like an interior, without the constraints of architectural form. Or an interior-feeling place that is primarily delineated by atmospheres, and merely supported by architectural form. These public interiorities, or interior-feeling places, are shaped by many conditions such as psychological conditions, atmospheres, form, programme, or a mixture of all (Teston, 2018b). The taxonomy of interior-feeling settings is almost limitless given this construct. We could devise typologies (shown in Figure 1), such as landscape interiority, thermodynamic interiority, luminous interiority, shady interiority, sartorial interiority, and, of course, form-based architectural conditions.

Contemporary explorations in interior architectural theory have matured beyond earlier ideas that were driven by professional territories, materials, or evidence-based design. Overwhelmingly, current interior architectural theory questions the nature of the interior. This explosion of scholarship examines how far we can push the relationship of the interior to human scale and perception. Ranging from edited volumes like *The Interior Architecture Theory Reader* by Gregory Marinic (2018) and *Interiors Beyond Architecture* by Amy Campos and Deborah Schneiderman (2018) to publications like Harvard Design Magazine *Inside Scoop* (2019), and articles on situational interiority like *Thinking Beyond Dualities in Public Space: the Unfolding of Urban Interiority as a Set of Interdisciplinary Lenses in Interiors* (2019), the new scholarship explores ways the interiors can be urban, ephemeral and interdisciplinary. The recent fascination with interiority amongst a wide variety of disciplines shows no signs of abating as shown in the responses to the American Association of Geographer's annual meeting in Denver (2020), Carola Ebert's provocation for the *Interior—Inferior—In Theory?* conference in Berlin (2018), as well as Richard Sennett's lecture at the Harvard GSD on *Interiors and Interiority* (2016).
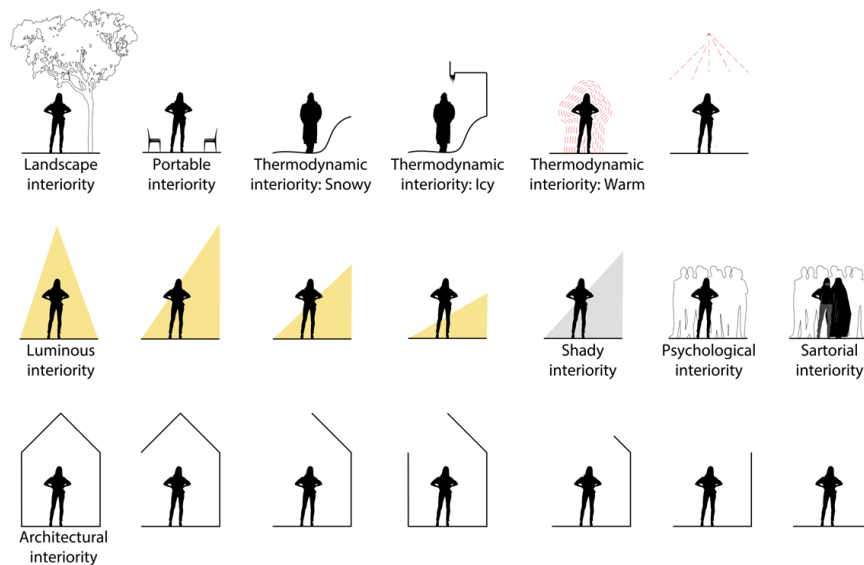
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Figure 1
Taxonomy of
public interiority
(Image by author)

I aim to build upon the work already undertaken by these and others. My focus on conditions of interiority in the public sphere advances new foundational theories and engages the broader discipline through empirical study. Unravelling public interiority reminds us that an understanding of place can increase interdisciplinary advocacy for human-centred, inclusive design. An intersectional approach to design includes the perspectives of many people while acknowledging mundane, everyday contexts. This approach represents a shift from conventional models that typically elevate the formal and material aspects of design. Examples of thought that are firmly rooted within the disciplinary interior include many, but not all, of the presentations at the annual Interior Design Educator's Conference and articles disseminated by professional organizations like the International Interior Design Association—more information on the inadequacies of disciplinary methods can be found in philosopher Peter Osborne's excellent critique, *Problematizing Disciplinarity, Transdisciplinary Problematics in Theory, Culture & Society* (2015).

Because the edges of the interior architecture discipline are porous, we should incorporate views from allied disciplines to enrich and reinforce these pockets. By re-appropriating methods from other disciplines like architecture, cultural geography, and anthropology, we emphasise phenomenological and inclusive design (Teston, 2018a).

In 1969, urbanist William Whyte established the empirical observation methods later deployed in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. His approach, human-scaled and focused on how people use existing urban spaces, continues to impact contemporary

urban design. Following Whyte, curator Brendan Cormier posits that the threshold between interior public spaces and exterior public spaces should be blurred such that typically-exterior-activities occur on the interior (Ljubanovic, 2016). The converse is true too—these blurred conditions encourage typically-interior-activities on the exterior. Porous thresholds coax more people into public streets, sidewalks, and plazas because given the opportunity, people will engage in more everyday activities outdoors. This holds true for a variety of threshold types—atmospheric, psychological, programmatic, or form-based—because conditions of public interiority, like Whyte's Seagram Building plaza and Cormier's Victoria & Albert Museum lobby, create the most socially sustainable exterior-urban-conditions. Blurry, thickened thresholds create a balanced human experience. These overlapping territories, or conditions of public interiority, are pliant and human-centred urban places bring people together.

Within this study of public interiority, we can follow frameworks already established by others—form-based urban interiorities (Poot, de Vos, & van Acker, 2019), programmatically driven urban spaces (Whyte, 2007), and psychological urbanisms (Sennett, 2016). There are also outliers, such as Sean Lally's atmospheric architectures, that may borrow from both formal and psychological interiorities (Lally, 2014).

An Ontology of Interiority

Let us look at the ontology, or the nature of, of interiority. As mentioned above, an interior-feeling place can be within a building or outside. We can perceive conditions of interiority based on several factors—formal, psychological, programmatic, and atmospheric conditions. There are numerous contemporary approaches to understanding the nature of things. Most of these approaches fit within three primary schools of thought: phenomenology, object-oriented-ontology, and structuralism. These have been articulated by great thinkers like Kant, Simmel, Pallasmaa, Ahmed, Harman, and many others.

Structuralism

As Paul Guyer (2011) suggests in *Kant in the Philosophy of Architecture*, Kant's structuralist approach to aesthetics in art changed the way architectural theorists conceived of the built environment. Following Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, architects began to see their work as a vehicle for abstraction and communication of ideas, rather than merely a beautiful or utilitarian Vitruvian exercise. In

structuralism, objects and events exist within an overarching system. In the case of Kant and aesthetic art philosophy, this system includes the primacy of beauty over utility. In other words, art aims for beauty supported by the rational expression of concepts (Guyer, 2011). Human perception occurs within this structuralist system of ideas and beauty. Early application of structuralist architecture exemplars include, amongst many others, the German expressionist works like Erich Mendelsohn's *Einstein Tower*. Later structuralist theories, like the theories of German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, could likewise be associated with overarching systems that see the beauty within the utility, like the work of Mies van der Rohe or Walter Gropius (Guyer, 2011). The key to structuralist thought is in the systemic, and the hierarchical, as well as tangible forms. While the above focuses on structuralist aesthetic philosophy, there is a myriad of structuralist semiotic approaches to design theory published elsewhere, such as C.F. Munro's analysis of culture and language in architecture (1987).

To explore the nature of interiority as structuralists, we can also reference the writing of sociologist Georg Simmel. Of *Rome* and Perception, he wrote,

> The typical tourist's attention is only directed to the individual sights…He does not perceive the second-degree beauty which constitutes itself out of and above these beauties in their singularity…what is globally furthest and more foreign in time, origin, and soul has undergone adaptation, interaction and integration through the shared experience of being in Rome and of partaking in its fate. In such wondrous circumstances, the individual significance of things reaches its maximum, as does the significance of the unity into which they fit together as elements. (Simmel, 2007, p. 33)

Simmel goes on to quote philosopher Immanuel Kant, "Among all ideas, connection is the only one that is not given by objects but must be accomplished by the subject itself because it is an act of its self-activity" (Simmel, 2007, p. 35). Within structuralism, our understanding of the greater correlations between things shapes our understanding of interiority.
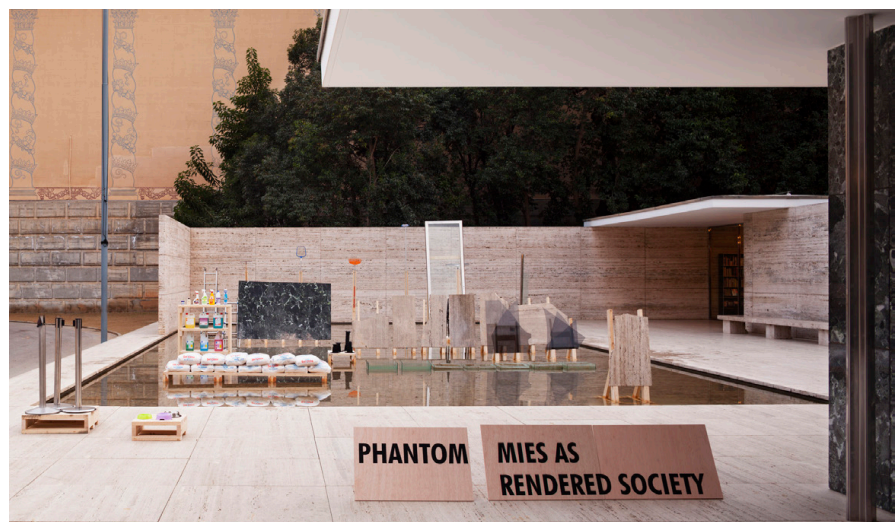
Phenomenology

The preeminent writing on phenomenological experience in architectural theory has been Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa's *Eyes of the Skin* (1996). Serving as the primary model for phenomenology in design theory, much phenomenological

design theory (in my experience) begins by citing Pallasmaa quotes such as "door handle [as] the handshake of the building" (Pallasmaa, 1996, p. 56). Phenomenologists argue that objects and events are only understood through human consciousness. This can be seen as a post-structuralist paradigm as it flips philosophy from a deductive, systemic territory to an inductive, individual territory. In phenomenology, if a person cannot perceive an object or event (phenomena), it does not exist. There are many valid, but different, world views.

Sarah Ahmed (2006b) contemporises this concept in her book *Queer Phenomenology*, by focusing on the term orientation. In this setting, orientation is not merely sexual orientation, but a human-first and body-first spatial orientation, a multivalent and perceptive way of seeing the world and the built environment (Ahmed, 2006a). Ahmed's orientation represents a specific vantage point for understanding architectural theory that is characteristically modern, with its intersectional agenda. The critical practise of Andrés Jaque and his Office of Political Innovation offer an intersectional, phenomenologist approach to design. His works recognise the various orientations of the people and contexts they operate within – particularly Jaque's intervention at the *Barcelona Pavilion, Phantom: Mies as Rendered Society* which highlights the experience of the workers who maintain the pavilion (Madlener, 2018) (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Art installation by Andrés Jaque/ Office for Political Innovation (*PHANTOM: Mies as Rendered Society*) at Barcelona Pavilion, 2012. (Image courtesy of Andrés Jaque/Office for Political Innovation, 2012. Art Insitute of Chicago, Fundació Mies van der Rohe)

So, wearing our phenomenologist hat, we can understand that interiority is about perception, or a state of mind, the character of a place—not a particular space. Interiority is a condition of feeling-inward, whether that condition is literally inside, or a sensation of psychological otherness distinct from your physical surroundings or others around you. It is a feeling of exception, not

of the ordinary. Without being self-aware, we cannot experience interiority. Because interiority is invisible, we need to comprehend it in relation to something else to understand it, for example, an interior void in a building, a pocket of warm air on a cool day, or anonymity within a crowded city. Feminist scholar Sara Ahmed (2006a), writing on orientation and phenomenology said,

> We are reminded that what [s]he can see in the first place depends on which way [s]he is facing…We perceive the object as an object, as something that has integrity and is in space, only by haunting that very space, by cohabitating space, such that the boundary between the co-inhabitants of space does not hold. The skin connects as well as contains. (p. 543)

OOO (Object-Oriented Ontology)

Because modern culture is increasingly made of intersectional thinking, contemporary architectural theory can rightly see Harman's object-oriented-ontology situated adjacent to Ahmed's queer phenomenology. Object-oriented-ontology places the things on the same playing field as humans. By expanding this field beyond human existence, object-oriented-ontology firstly considers the agency of objects and their related qualities. Humans are one of the many actors in this philosophical domain and use sensory-based understanding to sneak a peek at parts of the larger world that exist outside of human consciousness (Harman, 2018). As Aaron Betsky wrote in *The Triple O Play* for *Architect Magazine*, students at many design schools use object-oriented-ontology as the foundation for their design work (Betsky, 2017). Conceptual artists have promoted these theories for several years, as evidenced by Dylan Kerr's 2016 Artspace article on the work of Pamela Rosenkranz. In Figure 3, Ola Rindal's image of Pamela Rosenkranz's installation *Skin Pool* at the Okayama Art Summit, exemplifies the object-agency of theorist Graham Harman's object-oriented-ontology. Eli Diner (2019) writes,

> Pamela Rosenkranz has filled a swimming pool with pink liquid, a gurgling cosmetic soup that, they say, is 'based on a standardized European skin tone' and 'reflects on the human subject as a fluid trace, one whose physical and psychic constitution has been manifestly transgressed and altered through the omnipresence of synthetic materials.

In object-oriented-ontology, the various public interiorities would fall into different groups. Harman focuses on the relationship

of things and non-human object agency, subverting human experience-based knowledge in favour of object-centred sensual qualities. Harman (2018) claims that "no one is in possession of knowledge or truth" (p. 6) and that things are relational. This is not unlike the inductive viewpoints in phenomenology. The main difference is Harman's conception of object agency. In object-oriented-ontology a *real object* is an object with an underlying and pure essence that humans cannot understand. Humans can only access the *sensual object* versions that objects exude. We perceive their sensory-related qualities and their relationships in the world, not the real object essences (Harman, 2018). Following this framework established by Heidegger's well-known tool analysis from *Being and Time* (1962) and furthered by Harman's object-oriented-ontology (2012): When is an exterior no longer an exterior? What are the most discrete, finite, real qualities of an exterior? The answers to these questions might change depending on the space, or the person identifying the finite qualities of the space, or the time of day that the questions are explored.

Figure 3
Art installations by Pamela Rosenkranz (foreground, *Skin Pool*, 2019) and John Gerrard (background, *X. laevis (Spacelab)*, 2017) at Okayama Art Summit, 2019 (Photograph by Ola Rindal)

To understand the (real and sensual) qualities of interiority, let us begin with a description of a yard: Beams of sunlight scatter across the front yard in the afternoon. A shadow forms under the front porch, tracing the edges of the stone steps. The shadows created within its limits provide refuge for a housecat. As I write about this yard, it exists. I sense it, but it does not exist in a physical form at this time.

Real objects operate independently from human understanding—the front yard. There is a world out there of real objects and their real qualities—the yard-ness of the yard. Humans exist outside of this world and cannot concretely identify the fundamental *real qualities*

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of real objects. The world also contains *sensual qualities*, perceived and mediated by humans—the attributes of the yard. These sensual qualities act as a kind of device for humans to understand real objects. Sensual qualities give off attributive effects of the real object. There are also sensual objects, things that we can only sense and do not exist concretely in the visual world—the description of the front yard as it exists in this introduction (Harman, 2018). Within the taxonomy of public interiority, psychological, atmospheric, and programmatic interiorities are sensual objects with sensual qualities. Form-based interiorities are real objects, with both sensual and real qualities.

Interior Typologies

In an interiority defined by psychological conditions rather than walls, we elevate varied human experiences over object-agency and structural systems. Phenomenological perception matters in an ontology of interiority because architecture is firstly created for humans and experienced through human perception. Architecture is inherently anthropocentric and political (Teston, 2018a). So, we cannot remove the correlation between context and subjectivity from this type of interiority. Psychological and atmospheric conditions are fleeting, sensory-mediated, and amplify the person-centred architecture of interiority.

Psychological interiority

Interiority is a perceived condition rather than space within a building. Psychological interiorities further develop these phenomena by integrating human perception, time, and senses. Specific to the image in Figure 4, this psychological interiority can be seen through either a phenomenological or an object-oriented-ontology lens. Through phenomenology, psychological interiority only exists when humans perceive it as public interiority. Through object-oriented-ontology (OOO), psychological interiority exists when humans perceive the sensual qualities of an autonomous real object. For example, the fountain-ness (sensual qualities) of the fountain (real object)—sensual qualities being the spongy, effervescent territory that the fountain materializes around the parent and child. In OOO, the fountain imposes its qualities upon the human condition. In phenomenology, the human condition perceives and interprets the qualities of the fountain.

Sympathetic interactions between two people (or between a person and the built environment) generate public interiority. These fleeting conditions shape our perception of *inside-feeling* places. The forces are contingent upon the context. Psychological

public interiorities are one part formal, one part subjective. Interiority can be found inside structures, but also in the public sphere. If we suspend disciplinary boundaries and design exterior urban spaces with the qualities of interior spaces, we infuse diverse and inclusionary practices into the urban condition.

Figure 4
Psychological
public interiority
at Market Square
in Knoxville,
Tennessee (Image
by author and
Erin Collins)

Design scholar Lois Weinthal and cultural anthropologist Ed Hall have also examined this person-centred relationship between the body and space. In her definitive text, *Toward a New Interior: An Anthology of Interior Design Theory* (2011), Weinthal develops a diagram for the book. "[It] considers physical construction and its resulting phenomenal experiences that constitute the interior… this theoretical core begins with the body, which is surrounded by rings representing clothing, furniture, and architecture" (Weinthal, 2011, p. 11). Ed Hall's proxemic theory describes spatial intimacy. We actively perceive and respond to other people and our environment.

> The presence or absence of the sensation of warmth from the body of another person marks the line between intimate and non-intimate space. The smell of freshly washed hair and the blurring of another person's features seen close up combine with the sensation of warmth to create intimacy. (Hall, 1969, p. 114)

This intimacy forms one kind invisible threshold of interiority, pulled taut around two people. In scholar Kristin Ross' analysis of *Dream for the Winter* by Paris Commune activist poet Arthur Rimbaud, Ross describes a multivalent interior condition, an interiority which

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is completely contingent upon time and the interaction of bodies, and the blurring the interior-exterior thresholds. She expresses this non-passive interiority as a "specific form made up of operations and interactions" (Ross, 2000, p. 42).

Our surroundings mediate and amplify this bodily intimacy that Weinthal, Rimbaud, and Hall write about. There is a complex relationship between our near environment and our perception. This psychological brand of public interiority takes individual experiences and reflects them into the urban public realm. As Richard Sennett said in his lecture on Interiors and Interiority at the Harvard GSD in 2016,

> …the importance of this is that interiority is something that is more complicated than simple withdrawal…It's a particular kind of relationship with the world, one which is reflexive, which is what I think of as an observational cruising…This condition…allows the work of memory to go on…because under these conditions, in public, the work of memory can be floating and intermittent. (Sennett, 2016)

Figure 5
Psychological public interiority at sidewalk, Glossier in SoHo, New York (Collage by author, open-sourced photos by Cayce Clifford, Hillary Milnes)

In New York, conditions that psychologically feel like interiors but are in the public realm appear superficially unrestricted. They are supported by formal architectural elements and urban ambiences, internalised spatial experiences, and include feelings of anonymity and voyeurism. Following Walter Benjamin (1999) and Beatriz Colomina's (1992) conceptions of the flâneur and the male gaze respectively, these situations exist amongst the crowds of The High Line, heterotopic experiences and spongy interior-exterior

thresholds in pocket parks, and the sidewalk queue at Glossier in SoHo (Figure 5). The nature of the interior, an inward-feeling private space, spills out into the sidewalks of Manhattan. This essence is reflected in watchers and spreads to create more instances of public interiority in the psyches of the voyeurs.

Figure 6
Atmospheric
Room for a Daybed,
Jonathan Olivares
and Johnston
Marklee, Interior
Biennale in Kortrijk,
Belgium, 2016
(Image by Jonathan
Olivares)

Industrial designer Jonathan Olivares and architecture firm Johnston Marklee's *Room for a Daybed* (Figure 6) installation likewise flip the architecture-first paradigm in the same way that Weinthal's Toward a New Interior flips design theory toward the body. The *Room for a Daybed* installation explores the essence of the human experience associated with the daybed. By moving beyond the object-ness of the daybed and considering human experience (contemplation and rest), they create interiority unconstrained by a normative architectural enclosure. This 2016 installation at the Biennale Interieur in Kortrijk, Belgium,

> …represents a reversal in the typical relationship between architecture and furniture. Conventionally, furniture is selected or developed in response to an existing or new building. [Here they] have done the opposite, and developed an interior as a spatial response to the single object it contains. Like the daybed, the interior is built of textile, and it seeks to define a soft architecture…Four inner walls made from suspended billowing non-woven textile, occupy much of the room's volume and create an intimate area around the daybed. The nested space is oriented at a 45-degree angle to the enclosing corrugated steel walls and has four entry points at its corners. Thick sound-dampening felt covers the floor and the ceiling is

open to the sky above. The overhead aperture hosts a single light source, a lighting balloon used on film and television sets, that casts a soft light on the curved walls and day bed below. The space is intended for contemplation and rest, and explores the wide structural, spatial, and visual limits of textile. (Olivares, 2016)

These works begin with phenomenology and object-oriented ontology to hint at the essence of interior-feeling spaces by questioning the essence of the daybed-interiority, intimate-interiority, and urban-interiority—rather than an interiority shaped by architectural enclosures. Going on to investigate the essence of the interior, let us look again at the front yard. What attributes must the front yard have to be perceived as an interior? We could argue that an exterior can feel like an interior given the right human-scaled proportions. Perhaps materials and textures delight and comfort our skin and heighten our senses. This delight gives a sense of intimacy, despite the yard being in the outdoors. We might have a certain level of fit and finish to the elements of the yard that lend itself to haptic appreciation. The yard might be comprised of a variety of nooks and crannies that allow us to look out to the street and watch passersby or hideaway with a book or curl up with a loved one. These inside-feeling spaces, along with the spatial proximity with others, generate a feeling of otherness from other yards in the area.

Form-based interiority

By placing the person at the centre of the design, we prioritise interiority and perception, rather than exteriority and objectivity. Interiority is a spatial and philosophical condition. Interiority can be psychological and subjective, or it can be form-based and derived from an enclosure. To some extent, interiority can be programme-driven.

Here, I explore form-based interiority, the most straightforward type. The interior volume is inherently objectless and traced by a contiguous surface condition. The image in Figure 7 attempts to convey this contiguous surface condition and objectless void. Let us call this composite a void-surface. The void and the surface fuse together two integrated aspects of form-based interiority. That is the part of architecture that we cannot see and the liminal zone between inward-feeling and outward-feeling places. Because we do not read the void-surface as an object, its character is reliant on traceable sensorial attributes. Using theories derived from object-oriented-ontology (OOO), the surface (a real object) acts on the

void (a sensual object), rendering the void-surface as something that humans can perceive (sensual qualities).

Figure 7
Form-based
public interiority
in Knoxville,
Tennessee (Image
by Allie Bosarge)

According to architect Bruno Zevi (1957), interior space defines architecture. Zevi says that architecture is just a sculptural object if missing an interior. Architecture is more than an object understood from different views. Architecture (or in this case, interiority) takes into consideration time, material, and experience. "The phenomenon of moving about within" (Zevi, 1957, p. 27) shapes form-based interiority. Like Heidegger's tool-analysis that exposes the core essence of a hammer based on its use, space requires a void-surface if understood as an internal condition. We cannot understand the void without the surface. We cannot understand (or use) a hammer without its constituent parts intact. This void-surface need not be pure. It can be perforated or disintegrate. It can be spongy and irregular. We do not need a building façade to generate this form-based interiority. Void-surfaces and human perception together define formal and psychological interiorities. Interiority cannot reveal itself through object-actors alone. In other words, human perception draws sensual connections between objects, materials, and space to create interior-feeling places. Through subjectivity, humans give interiority more meaning.

Atmospheric interiority

Rather than understanding the public interior as a publically accessible and vast interior space, I approach the public interior in terms of the indeterminate, fleeting nature of interactions between people and their surrounding atmospheric qualities. This is rooted in contemporary culture and is very different from the widely accepted

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definition of interiors. These provisional conditions of interiority are also described by others like cultural critic Geoff Manaugh and speculative architect Sean Lally. In *A Burglar's Guide to the City* (2016), Manaugh describes this blurred interior-exterior territory, also known as the close—a term used to legally define burglary (rather than a lesser crime such as theft). The close is a threshold that is seen as "an imaginary plane which stretches across the open space of a specific enclosure like a spider web" (Manaugh, 2016, p. 97). This architectural fiction frees us from relying on the architectural envelope to delineate interiority. Tensions between nearby planes and surfaces can instead generate the close; these tensions encourage us to complete the imaginary plane in our mind's eye. Or, in other circumstances, the close can be considered the heated zone adjacent to the sidewalk, creating an enclosure that is invisible to the naked eye. This temperate imaginary plane is a membrane between interiority and exteriority only understood through the haptic senses (Teston, 2017).

In *The Air from Other Planets: A Brief History of Architecture to Come* (2014), Lally identifies these material energies that shape our perception of architecture (or interiors) as thermodynamics, acoustics, and digital technologies. Atmospheres and energies can be used to delineate the interior threshold, like the close, and conditions of public interiority.

In terms of continuity and interiority, the continuous interior supersedes the architectural façade. This continuity can be shaped by surfaces (forms), voids, or, as in the case of Rem Koolhaas' Junkspace (2002): air conditioning. *Junkspace* tests the limits of the contemporary architectural condition and can be implemented here to test interiority. Form-based public interiorities, or void-surfaces, occupy a kind of blurred threshold between interiority and exteriority. As Koolhaas writes,

> Continuity is the essence of Junkspace; it exploits any invention that enables expansion…It is always interior, so extensive that you rarely perceive its limits…Air conditioning has launched the endless building. If architecture separates buildings, air conditioning unites them…Because it costs money…conditioned space inevitably becomes conditional space; sooner or later all conditional space turns into *Junkspace*…when we think about space, we have only looked at its containers. As if space itself is invisible, all theory for the production of space is based on an obsessive occupation with its opposite: substance and objects, i.e., architecture. (Koolhaas, 2002, p. 175)

So, if space is conditional, endless, and invisible, this opens up our conception of interiority and exteriority. If air conditioning alone can delineate interior space, why not a bridge and a shadow? Or a screen of water? These form-based, interior-feeling urban spaces can all be designed with human perception in mind (Figure 8).

Figure 8
Atmospheric public interiority at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville, Tennessee, USA (Image by author)
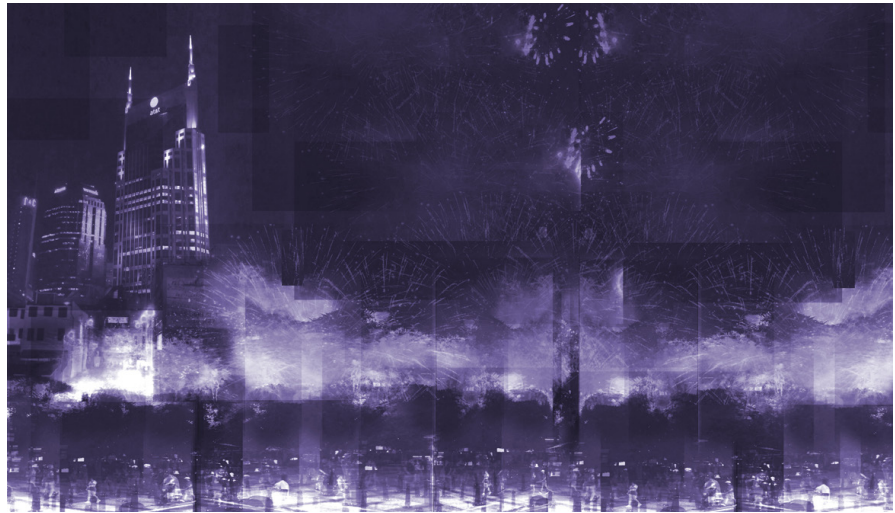
Programmatic interiority

Examples of public interiority can be found in the way contemporary built works are programmed. In other cases, they are revealed in informal settings, when individuals re-appropriate space for new uses, unanticipated in design planning. Olivares' 2011 Graham Foundation project, *Outdoor Offices*, takes interior-related programming and situates it within the exterior realm. It exemplifies interiority through obscured views, acoustic regulation, and shading devices. Studying the greater context of programmatically-driven public interiority, what activities regularly occur only in the interior? If these uses move to the exterior, does the exterior realm automatically become a condition of public interiority, or does it need ingredients from psychological, atmospheric, and form-based interiorities to fulfil this definition? *Outdoor Offices* is an example of design-driven formal and programmatic interiority.

Re-appropriated urban space exhibits the purest cases of these programmatically-driven public interiorities. These unsanctioned interiors occur when park benches become offices, or when window ledges transform into markets (Figure 9). Using the structuralist philosophical viewpoint, there is a system of cultural norms that guide our private and public activities. Because programmatic interiority is best understood through structuralist philosophy, and not phenomenology or object-oriented-ontology (OOO), it is perhaps a weaker strain of public interiority. Programmatic

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interiority is best perceived when layered upon by more perceptual versions of public interiority.

Within programmatic interiority, we have activities that we typically perform in the interior environment. Borrowing from Ed Hall's proxemics diagram (1969) to define this system, imagine three concentric rings signifying interior-related activities. These rings decrease in their level of privacy as they move away from the core. The first ring is very private and contains activities like sleeping, using the bathroom, and sex. The second ring contains activities that we frequently do indoors, but are socially acceptable to do outside—cooking, eating, conducting business, studying, watching TV, reading, or playing. The final ring contains activities that we often do outdoors, but are possible to do inside—gardening, playing sports, riding a bike, or grilling food.

Figure 9
Programmatic public interiority at Cișmigiu Park, in Bucharest, Romania (Image by author)

Street vendors perforate these concentric rings of programmatic interiority by selling goods and conducting business outside. It is when these layers of interior activities become inverted that we have a heightened awareness of the everyday, a sort of everyday spectacle. Carrying out these routine activities in the exterior realm makes us more conscious of the activities and our perceptions of them. We reflect on the relationship of this activity to the greater whole (our surroundings, time, season). Programme typologies, influenced by seasonality and porous thresholds, can augment instances of public interiority in dense urban conditions. The urban built environment, psychological, and atmospheric conditions also support these user-constructed instances of this public interiority.

Conclusion

People flow through the square's edges at different speeds and locations. The patterns of these currents regulate interiority. When the fountain is on, a family plays. The little world that they create in play forms a spongy, effervescent territory between them and the outside world. In the evening, the fountain is off, and the children are home. The space where the fountain exists as an open area is no different from the other open areas.

A bench facilitates an intimate conversation between two people. As Elaine Scarry wrote in *The Body in Pain* (1988),

> [the bench] essentially takes over the work of the body, thereby freeing the embodied person of discomfort and thus enabling him to enter a larger realm of self-extension. The [bench], mimes the spine, takes over its work, freeing the person of the constant distress of moving through many small body postures, empties his mind of absorption with the pain in his back, enabling him instead to…listen to the conversation of a friend. (p. 144)

At another moment, the bench serves as a stage for a street musician. These interiors of circumstance are grey-zones, independent from architectural interiors. Public space provides settings for multiple interpretations of space and place. Here interiority is a conditional relationship that, as architectural historian Christine McCarthy says, does not "depend on a restrictive architectural definition. Interiority is instead mobile and promiscuous" (McCarthy, 2005, p. 112).

Acknowledgement

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