

## Making atmospheres

*Tacit knowledge and artistic research in architecture.*

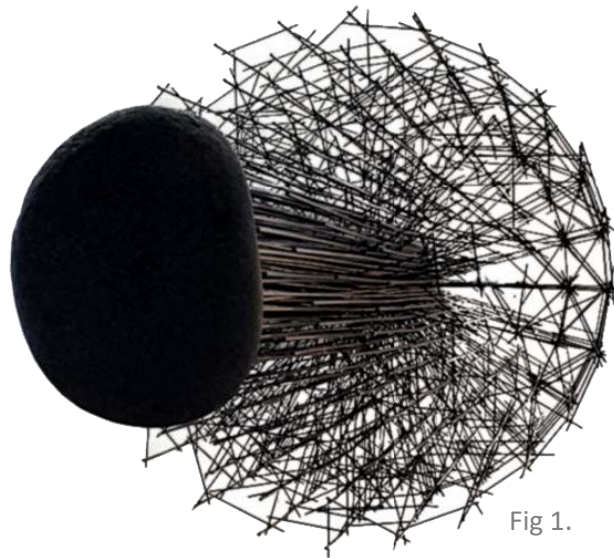


Fig 1.

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### | *nature of presentation* |

A physical presentation coupled with small exhibition (digital or physical) that showcases some of the initial explorations discussed in the presentation.

### | *biography* |

Dirk Bahmann is an architect and artist, who lectures and runs the s'Fanakalo makerspace at the School of Architecture and Planning. He is a PhD candidate, in his first year, at the WSoA. His research interest focus on the relationship between making, thinking and the ineffable qualities of sacral atmospheres.

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### | *keywords* |

Making, sacral atmospheres, sculptural artifacts, Object Oriented Ontology, embodiment

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| abstract |

This research investigates the ineffable atmospheric qualities found in sacral spaces. Sacral Architecture could be understood as specialised atmospheric vessels, that throughout history, have developed and created highly charged, evocative and effective spatial atmospheres. An atmosphere is defined as an affective psycho-spatial climate that permeates the perceptual, sensory, and emotive feeling of a space. (Bressani and Sprecher, 2019) (Bressani and Sprecher, 2019).

The affective qualities of these experiences are useful for architects to understand, and to work with, for they are viscerally felt and can have a lasting, existential, and psychological influence on its audiences.

Irrespective of how affective these spatial experiences may seem; by their nature they are nebulous, tacit, and ineffable.

They resist the mediums (text and drawing) through which architectural discourse typically circulates and are therefore difficult to describe. The nature and nuance of these qualities are rarely engaged with or effectively communicated in architectural discourse, pedagogy, and practice, forcing architects to pass over them in silence (Wittgenstein, 2001) This research pursues other more tangible approaches to know and engage with these qualities. It seeks to articulate specific spatial qualities and combinations thereof that are employed to effectively establish these powerful evocative sensations. It aims to make these qualities perceptible so that the auratic and its qualities can be distinctly discussed, articulated, evaluated, represented, and analysed.

This paper discusses a creative speculative praxis of using embodied Making, sculptural artefacts, and sculptural installations as practical tools to enter into a dialogue with, to gesture and render the qualities, character, architectural language, and effects of these spatial experiences more apparent.

These are seen as apt mediums due to their non-verbal, non-linear, and non-rational evocative ability. Furthermore, these processes maintain crucial body, space and material relations since they exploit the qualities of materials, light, and spatial qualities in conjunction to the bodies' sense perceptions and spatial relationships to the artifact. The intention with these sculptures is to think with, through and in dialogue with them so to translate, express, and gesture the atmosphere and its qualities. These relationships utilize an extended body schema with its ability to project and extend itself into objects that allows one to effectively "feel" space and materials.

To develop this methodology the research focuses on the atmospheres of French gothic architecture, due to the immense efforts that have been undertaken in the service of the atmospheric realm. In addition, they operate simultaneously and comfortably in religious and secular (tourist) contexts, allowing a focus on the spatial affects alone without its ritual and religious entanglements. The resultant body of sculptural installations are intended to become a gestural re-presencing of these qualities.

A theoretical understanding of this practice is underpinned the philosophy of Object Orientated Ontology (OOO) as a useful framework to understand the ineffable qualities of things, as well as the nature of that understanding. Its flat ontology allows for 'Making', the auratic, spatial experience and feelings to be seen on an equal footing with a mutual deformative influence.

In conclusion, this project attempts to make sense of the non-rational epistemology that is embedded in sacral architecture, to find better ways to engage and communicate with it, so that architects can have a better understanding of the nuanced language of atmospheres in practice, academia, and pedagogy.



Fig 2.

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| references |

Bressani, M. and Sprecher, A. (2019) 'Atmospheres', *JAE Journal of Architectural Education*, 73(1). Available at: <https://www.jaeonline.org/articles/editorial/atmospheres#/page1/> (Accessed: 30 May 2022).

Wittgenstein, L. (2001) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London and new York: Routledge.

| figures |

Figure 1. Bahmann, D. 2020. Wire, stone, and paint . Example of sculptural practice that attempts to read and re-presence qualities of light in gothic architecture. Image: Author

Figure 2. Mabuda, N. 2021. Gypsum. Student project articulating a reading of exterior form of the Notre dame Du Haut at Ronchamp. Image: Mabuda, N.