



## Los ojos de la piel: La arquitectura y los sentidos

*Juhani Pallasmaa*

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## **Los ojos de la piel: La arquitectura y los sentidos** Juhani Pallasmaa

Publicado originariamente en inglés en 1996, Los ojos de la piel se ha convertido en un clásico de la teoría de la arquitectura. El ensayo nace de la preocupación de Juhani Pallasmaa por el creciente predominio del sentido de la vista en la reflexión en torno a la arquitectura, un fenómeno que ha silenciado el papel de las otras cualidades sensoriales y ha empobrecido nuestra concepción y experiencia del espacio construido. Además del prólogo del arquitecto Steven Holl, esta segunda edición en castellano incorpora un epílogo de Peter MacKeith acerca de la figura de Pallasmaa. A medio camino entre retrato biográfico e introducción teórica al pensamiento del arquitecto finlandés, MacKeith contextualiza la trayectoria crítica del autor en el marco del pensamiento nórdico y europeo, y resalta la profunda sensibilidad y conocimiento de su aproximación a la arquitectura.

## **Los ojos de la piel: La arquitectura y los sentidos Details**

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## From Reader Review Los ojos de la piel: La arquitectura y los sentidos for online ebook

### Kio Stark says

total nonsense but full of evocative, useful phrases

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### Andrew Fairweather says

With it's repeated condemnation of so-called "Western" sensibilities, this book is sure to tickle the fancy of many of today's readers—add a dash of Goldsmithian "Deserted Village" lamentations, and you've got yourself a hit! Essentially, Pallasmaa enframes his practical prescription for the 21st century architecture as up against a Western "visual bias" which he is able to trace back to ancient Greek philosophy all the way to Modern Western thought. Never mind that Plato in 'Phaedrus' warns of written culture as fostering a forgetfulness of the soul whose reliance on external (visual) reference is a "conceit of wisdom," or that visual metaphors are primarily used to illustrate antinomies in Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason.'

OK, forget I said anything up until now. Let's say that the WEST HAS AN OPTICAL BIAS. Does this properly account for the poverty of architecture today? I was not swayed by Pallasmaa's argument. I'd say that what marks architecture these days is an offshoot of a control society, its attempt to control the senses and passions of its citizenry. Yes, this is distinctly alienating in a visual sense. Structures, though built, seem to tear at their surroundings, destroying context, insisting on shallow recognition of presence above all else. Pallasmaa is entirely correct when he states that,

"The narcissistic eye views architecture solely as a means of self-expression, and as an intellectual-artistic game detached from essential mental and societal connections [...] disengag[ing] the body, and instead of attempting to reconstruct cultural order, it makes a reading of collective signification impossible."

Pallasmaa goes on to say this this is a result of the essentially "detaching sense of vision", and that this nihilistic attitude would be impossible to imagine in a sense of touch. I just don't understand this. I think that an architectural project which seeks to either control by atomizing its inhabitants or merely flatter the self-expression of the architect will result in an isolation of ALL the senses. Surely our visual culture also suffers as a result.

Truly, the real danger is a reification of categories. In a society of mass produced space the entire cocktail of senses are reinforced and predictable. How is the visual significantly different? The search for instantaneity and immediate impact has withered all of our senses—but more importantly, it has reified categories of thinking which serve to quell the furnaces of imagination.

A proper architectural philosophy would, in my humble opinion, never operate out of context. It would be one which would inspire a creative/redemptive relationship with the past and an optimistic sense of the future. More than anything though, it would seek to address the needs of people with a belief in the integrity of the human spirit, rather than cynically attempting to control people or try to prevent societal variables. Architecture, more than anything, is these days either an exercise in paranoia or the self gratification of the designer. Rectifying this would surely be a great first step in creating an architecture 'for all the senses.'

I believe in the good intentions of this work! But like many treatises on art it remains far too academic. Talk about detachment. The book is nevertheless well written and clear. Ironically, a book which addresses the crisis in architecture that I could recommend would be Reinhold Martin's, 'The Organizational Complex'—a book very poorly written, but insightful. For a book about the phenomenological exploration on the beauty of space, Bachelard's 'Poetics of Space' will suffice.

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### **Valdimar says**

<http://arts.berkeley.edu/wp-content/u...>

possible 5. beautiful.

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### **Nana says**

Beautifully written book! Starting from the vision hegemony dominating western culture since Classical Greece and the Cartesian abdication of the remaining senses projecting onto our ways of experiencing and understanding of the cosmos, Pallasmaa discusses the impact on space production and architecture. In his second part he goes on to describe architecture as a multisensory, rather than a simply ocular experience, and talks of the subjective ways and other senses beyond the 5 known ones it is perceived. In just very few pages Pallasmaa elaborates on issues of phenomenology difficult to be expressed.

As Steven Holl points out in the preface of the book, its significance lies not only within its influence on phenomenology but also in the fact that its author is an architect incorporating and portraying all his ideas into his built work.

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### **mahatma anto says**

ini buku keren: memulihkan penghargaan relasi arsitektur dengan tubuh. dengan segenap indera yang berdialog dengan dinding, lantai dan langit-langit...

kerap sekali kita ketemu atau kecebur dalam suatu pengalaman di dalam ruang yang memesona, menakjubkan, menggetarkan. dan ketika ruang yang hebat itu kita potret, menguaplah segenap kehebatannya. itu pengalaman saya dengan karya-karya yb. mangunwijaya yang kebanyakan hanya nikmat ketika 'DIHADIRI' atau didatangi, jangan melihatnya dari potret.

buku ini menerangi gejala di atas: bahwa arsitektur itu bukan 'graphic games' bukan gambar yang dibikin meruang, tapi adalah suatu gubahan ruang yang bisa disentuh, diraba, dijelajahi dengan segenap indera kita. rabaan adalah induk dari segala indera.

pendekatan fenomenologis seperti ini memang cocok untuk 'memahami', tapi 'bagaimana memroduksi'nya, itu masih belum ada titik terang, juga dalam buku tipis ini.

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### **Carolayne says**

Bastante recomendável mesmo para aqueles que não têm um contacto direto com as Artes (embora seja impossível encontrar alguém que não esteja familiarizado com os seus diversos ramos!).

## Carlos Clorth says

In such a small amount of pages there's so much from ocularcentrism and the loss of senses to Pallasmaa's take on architecture.

It embraces an interesting philosophy way beyond my expectations.

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## Helen says

One of the most startlingly perceptive books I've ever read. The haptic world as experienced within the completely overlooked, misunderstood (and utterly relevant) boundaries of peripheral vision. Pallasmaa writes so articulately, the expression 'masterpiece' is, for once, entirely deserved. One that leaves my jaw wide open every time I go back to it, which is often, because the beauty and skilfulness in his observations and philosophy staggers me. Pallasmaa seems to find exactly the right balance -- he tends to sway towards a nostalgia, a hankering after the way things once were, but he never loses his grip on the 'now', providing the solutions to counter the mind-numbing, dumbing-down of the senses that today's plethora of mediocre architecture inflicts upon us -- built for the masses and enjoyed by none. The Eyes of the Skin is the antidote to that unexplainable malaise, brought about by time spent in shopping centres, hotels, leisure centres, airports, hospitals, etc. etc. It's positively brimming with optimism for new ways of experiencing and defining our civic buildings, and the built world as a whole.

This would make an interesting reading companion to John Berger's 'Ways of Seeing'.

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## Hind says

Beautiful fusion of architecture and philosophy

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## Clif Brittain says

"Please don't lick the art." Sign at the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts.

There is no such sign on the IDS building or Crystal Court inside. Some art you want to consume, other art makes you want to run the other direction. This book helps you understand why.

This book explores a lot of stuff we take for granted. Or more usually, ignore. In contemporary society, vision is our primary sense. It is also probably our most impersonal sense. You are reading this with your eyes. Before we were literate, I would have been telling you this. We spend a lot of time looking at pages, absorbing information on a two-dimensional scale.

Many contemporary buildings are designed from the point of view of how they will look on a printed page, not how they will feel when you walk in. Cities are designed as a two-dimensional grid, with efficiency of transport, not pleasure in being transported, as the goal. With few exceptions, natural beauty is obliterated as an obstacle.

Vision is instant. Television has displaced print as our primary information and entertainment media. I am constantly amazed at the speed of the images on the screen. I'll bet 100 images a minute is not unusual in television production. Our other senses are not so kaleidoscopic. Touch, smell, and taste are slow and sensuous.

The book is full of such insights (reminders?). Our relationship to architecture is so important and yet so mindless. This book helps bring us back to appreciation of our constructed environment.

Why only four stars? I found the book pretty disjointed. I was constantly re-reading to see if I missed something. The author constantly quoted from other authors. I found it very distracting. I have no doubt that I will re-read this book many times, if only to see if I can't make more sense of it.

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## **Mon says**

Everyone loves this book. Well, at least all the architects I know. But then my only 'friends' seem to all be designers, so not that much diversity of opinion there. Not that I don't try, but people tend to not respond well to 3am 'Maxwell just crashed at 17% The end is nigh!!!' texts.

I guess I should address my Goodreader friends as well. We're friends right?

Ok, so there isn't much I can say that hasn't been said or better yet, practiced by the likes of Zumthor and Holl. But, as if I actually need to convince you to read this, it's like saying 'No don't bother with Ulysses, it's pretty dismissible compared to, I don't know, every single work of literature out there or something.' The Eyes of the Skin is also incredibly short. Really - look at it, it actually fits in my bag. Pallasmaa: 1; Koolhaas: 0

I'm quite reserve about the computer bit (in fact, most of his writings on technology). There seems to be a misunderstanding of computer imaging as a purely evil Cartesian flattening of our souls, but digital representation can also be considered in non-visual terms or serves as a transformation of bodily boundary. As for the distance between the object/subject in a virtual dimension - well, I would like to cite Grosz in saying the body and its environment are mutually defining blah blah.

Wow, I sound pretty cynical here, maybe because I've met the guy and his speech was rather redundant. Anyway, great book, highly recommended for quotes and references with that essay you've been putting off for weeks.

Also highly recommended for optometrists. Glasses are so overpriced.

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## **Tara Brabazon says**

A beautiful book and inspirational. Pallasmaa is a remarkable writer and each sentence is evocative and can be the springboard for further analysis and thought.

The short book investigates how the senses are activated in and through architecture and the built environment. Logging the ocularcentric nature of most architecture theory, Pallasmaa evokes sound (and silence), but also scent and texture in a profoundly moving and effective way.

Most significantly, there is attention to memory, passion and imagination and how they are summoned, triggered and enhanced through architecture. But the quality of the writing alone is inspiration for readers and writers.

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### **Afra Anan Saba says**

This is my first architectural read which purely deals with philosophy. And I am pretty sure I will re-read this book soon.

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### **keivan says**

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### **Andrew says**

Pallasmaa's writing is unquestionably fascinating, thought-provoking, and poetically beautiful. He writes with care and passion about our built environment, and it sticks enough that you wind up contemplating the ramifications of his ideas as wander through the spaces of your day-to-day life.

And at the same time, a book like *The Eyes of the Skin* proves how intellectually limp so much phenomenology is. Pallasmaa's writing is gorgeous, provocative, contemplative, and completely lacking in rigor. This doesn't make it valueless, as many positivists would have it, though. Rather, it means that it's something that should jab and prod, like a good creative essay.

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