

Image Management in the Design of the Environment

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Abstract

This study is an exploration in the interrelationships between applied art and applied science in design methodology. Usually information gathering in a design process can become a purely scientific endeavor for some specialized personnel without having much to do with the outcome as a design. As designers, aren't we supposed to find out about what people prefer? Aren't we supposed to discover the environmental potentials? Aren't we supposed to have a clear idea about what we propose for the future of a community? How do we go about all this? There are two concepts, Visioning and Image that can help us to come up with what people like and aspire to and then we can translate that information into a design language. How deeply can people participate in the design of their environment? How can we collect a shared vision from a community to set up a platform for our design? What skills should a designer rely upon in the interpretation of the information from the environment into a design form? These are some of the critical issues in the design of the environment. Image management as a general term in this methodology deals with providing the pertinent information to form a clear vision and image of the environment from the past to the present and on to a proposed future.

Keywords: Architecture, Intelligence, Visioning, Image, Archetype, Design methodology

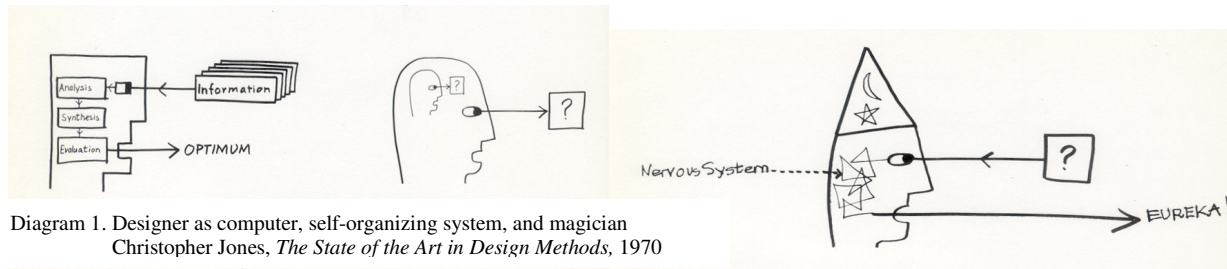
1. A Design Methodology

In an attempt to make public the private thinking of designers, so that people can contribute to the information and insight, it is crucial to externalize the process of design. Another reason for this public process is to produce a design based on an image reflected from the collective vision. Effective “languages” of design will emerge when the relationship between the above

Where is the life
that we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom
that we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge
that we have lost in information?

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)

aspects are examined. In design methods three aspects are essential. These points of view include rationality, control over the design process, and creativity. (Jones 1970) From the rational viewpoint the designer is a glass box inside which can be discerned a completely explicable rational process. From the control viewpoint the designer is a self organizing system capable of finding shortcuts across unknown territory. But from the creative viewpoint the designer is a black box out of which comes a mysterious creative leap!



The concern over the interrelationships of apprehension, representation, and realization in design of an environment dates back to Andrea Pozzo's *Prospettiva de' Pittori ed Architetti* published in Rome in 1723 AD. The definition of apprehension in Webster Dictionary reads: Power of grasping new ideas; intellect. Apprehension is a living and constantly changing power, influenced by the philosophical, religious, and scientific attitudes of various periods. (Wolfflin 1915) This definition deals with the information to an image, a living image which is shaped by all the intellectual elements that form a culture. Representation is the means by which spatial concepts are reduced to tangible images. These images are deeply influenced by the methods of representation. Also the limitation of stock images and the range of vocabulary of the conceptual models are major restrictions for a designer.

The process of designing the environment travels through different phases from intelligence to design and finally evaluation in a never ending system. The process involves intelligence or analytical effort aimed at identifying and understanding problems, the design and the representation of alternative solutions, the evaluation of these and the choice of one of them as the most desirable. (Lang 1974) There are two critical areas in this process. First, the pivotal point, the intelligence phase plays in the decision making process. Second, the translation or interpretation of the findings, the information from the context or environment, into a design form. The intelligence phase consists of different segments.

To provide all the information needed for the intelligence segments we have to have a clear view of the present state and the proposed state. Two concepts help us in this determination "the visioning" and "the image". The visioning deals with the environmental issues at the planning level; on the other hand the image is concerned mainly with the design issues.

2. Visioning, a Consensus on Values

The visioning is in the realm of analysis and contains the following subjects:

1. Problem recognition
2. Identification of groups involved
3. Determination of the needs, desires and value system

Visioning deals with answering to the following questions: Where are we? Where are we going? Where do we want to go? How can we get there? Visioning uses participation as the source of ideas. Visioning is a process that engages an entire community in integrating its best hindsight and foresight in aligned actions. In methodological terms, it blends traditional strategic planning with the best practices emerging from visioning, large scale collaboration, and graphic facilitation. This blend complements the heavily analytical approaches of traditional planning with processes that engage participants in an overall integration of their intuitive, emotional, intellectual, and physical understandings of their environment.

In a typical visioning exercise a facilitator asks participants to close their eyes and imagine they are walking through their neighborhood as it should be fifteen years into the future. What do they see? What do the buildings look like? Where do people gather? How do they make decisions? What are they eating? Where are they working? How are they traveling? What is happening on the street? Where is the centre of the neighborhood? How does green space and water fit into the picture? What do you see when you walk around after dark? People record their visions in written or pictorial form; in diagrams, sketches, models, photographic montages, and in written briefs. Sometimes a professional illustrator helps turn mental images into drawings of the city that people can extend and modify. On occasions visioning techniques are used to arrive at a number of alternative futures for the city. Residents are then asked to vote for their favorite choice. (Sibbet 2003)

Sometimes visioning can lead to poor results because people can't want what they don't know. After World War II, Londoners were simply asked what kind of housing they wanted. The results, based on their responses, were dreadful both from the point of view of the residents, as well as the architects and planners. Because people "can't want what they don't know" governments need to present a range of options, each with a list of pros and cons. Once this has been done satisfactorily, people can then be asked, "What do you want?"

Visioning is based on the environmental potentials. The important achievement is to find out the "collective or shared vision". The visioning through its various phases guides the community through a

collaborative and creative process that leads to a shared community vision and common values. Vision and values statements provide focus, purpose, and direction to the process so that participants collectively achieve a shared vision of the future. A shared community vision provides an overarching goal for the community - a statement of what the ideal future looks like. Values are the fundamental principles and beliefs that guide a community-driven planning process. Next, a small group formulates the vision and values statements based on the outcomes of the visioning session(s). The vision statement should be strong and powerful and represent the ideal future outlined during the visioning process. The values statement should emphasize a positive climate and supportive behaviors that contribute to the achievement of the vision.

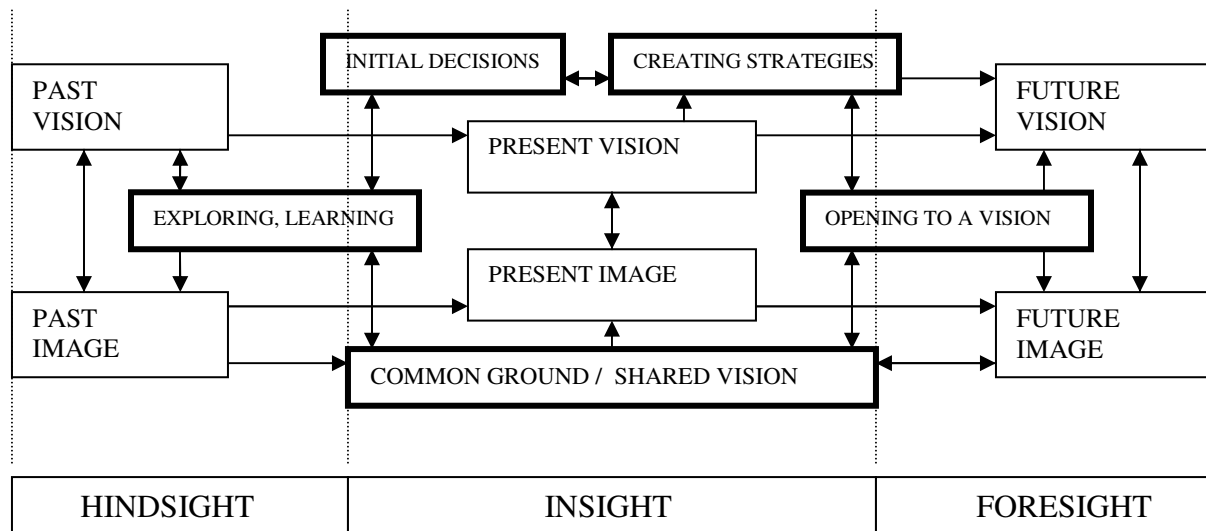


Diagram 2. Visioning-Image relationship, Cyrus Sabri 2005

Therefore to reach a clear vision statement derived from a collective vision we need the pertinent information from the environment and its inhabitants. In this process if all the information needed is explicitly available a sharp image of the existing state is created and based on this an image, equally sharp, of the proposed state, the future state, shall be produced. But if a part of the information is implicit then we will have an unclear and blurred image of what, where, and how the future state shall be. The availability of information in a society to design a path towards progress is one of the indicators of “developing” or “developed” societies. Defining a distinctive image for an environment stems from a successful visioning process.

3. Images, as Products of Imagination

In managing the information gathered from the users, there is a crucial aspect. This information needs to be “translated” into the language of design with a graphic base. This is the point where a high percentage of the information is translated into design data in a successful design

O to realize space!
 The plenteousness of all,
 that there are no bounds,
 To emerge and be of the sky,
 of the sun and moon
 and flying clouds
 as one with them.
 Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

or the information is not comprehended as a design data in a failed attempt. The traditional translation of the information to design breaks down as a means of communication. A new meaning for this representation may include spatial concepts which are reduced to tangible images. In designing, propose a future condition, as Einstein stated “Imagination is more important than knowledge”. This distinction and separation between imagination and knowledge in a traditional approach is at the heart of this study.

In the psychology of Carl Jung, archetypes are the images, patterns, and symbols that rise out of the *collective unconscious* and appear in dreams, mythology, and fairy tales. In other words an archetype is an original model after which other similar things are patterned. Any image can be considered archetypal. Archetypal points to *value*. Therefore a wide, rich, and deep realm that resonates with soul is introduced.

The archetypal patterns or *archai* appear in the arts, religion, dreams, and social customs of all peoples. For Jung, they are anthropological and cultural, and also spiritual in that they transcend the empirical world of time and place. Henry Corbin (1971-1973) presented that *mundus archetypalis* is also the *mundus imaginalis*. The *mundus imaginalis* offers an ontological mode of locating the archetypes of the psyche, as the fundamental structures of the imagination that are transcendent to the world of senses in their value if not their appearance. Henry Casey(1974) in his path-breaking essay “Toward an Archetypal Imagination” states that an image is not what one sees but the way in which one sees. An image is given by the imagining perspective and can only be perceived by an act of imagining. Here the importance of the process to create an image is stressed. Images can claim reality, authority, objectivity, and certainty. In this third recognition, the mind is in the imagination rather than the imagination in the mind.

Imagination is the movement of the universal mind within. Imagination creates the inner picture that allows a participation in the act of creation. Also, imagination allows you the luxury of thinking from the end. You create the means and surmount limitations in connection with the desires. Through continued reliance on your imagination, your assumptions materialize into reality. (Dyer 2004)

If archetypal images are the fundamentals of fantasy, they are the means by which the world is imagined, and therefore they are the modes by which all knowledge, all experiences whatsoever become possible. Although an archetypal image presents itself as impacted with meaning, this is not given simply as revelation. It must be made through “image work” and “dream work” (Hillman 1979). The modes of this work may be concrete and physical as in art, movement, play, and occupational therapies; but more importantly this work is done by “sticking to the image”.

Image work requires both aesthetic culture and a background in myths and symbols for appreciation of the universalities of images. This work also requires a series of tactical moves (Hillman and Berry 1977), frequently linguistic and phonetic (Sardello 1978), and etymological (Lockhart 1978), and also grammatical and syntactical experimentation (Ritsema 1976). Other tactical moves concerning emotion, texture, repetitions, reversals, and restatements have been described by Berry (1974). Boer and Peter Kuglar (1977) have correlated archetypal images with the theory of perception of J.J. Gibson, asserting that archetypal images are afforded directly by the environment (and are not subjective), so that “archetypal psychology is mythical realism.”

The image is not a single frame view but it has a continuous, harmonious and unbroken flow of impressions from every viewpoint. The design that this image produces is the articulation of space so as to produce in the participator a definite space experience in relation to previous and anticipated space experiences.

The image is a multidisciplinary entity, in the realm of synthesis, and consists of:

1. Determination of design goals and objectives
2. Determination of activity patterns and psychological requirements to achieve these objectives
3. Determination of a comprehensive three dimensional impression of the environment in regards to the above aspects

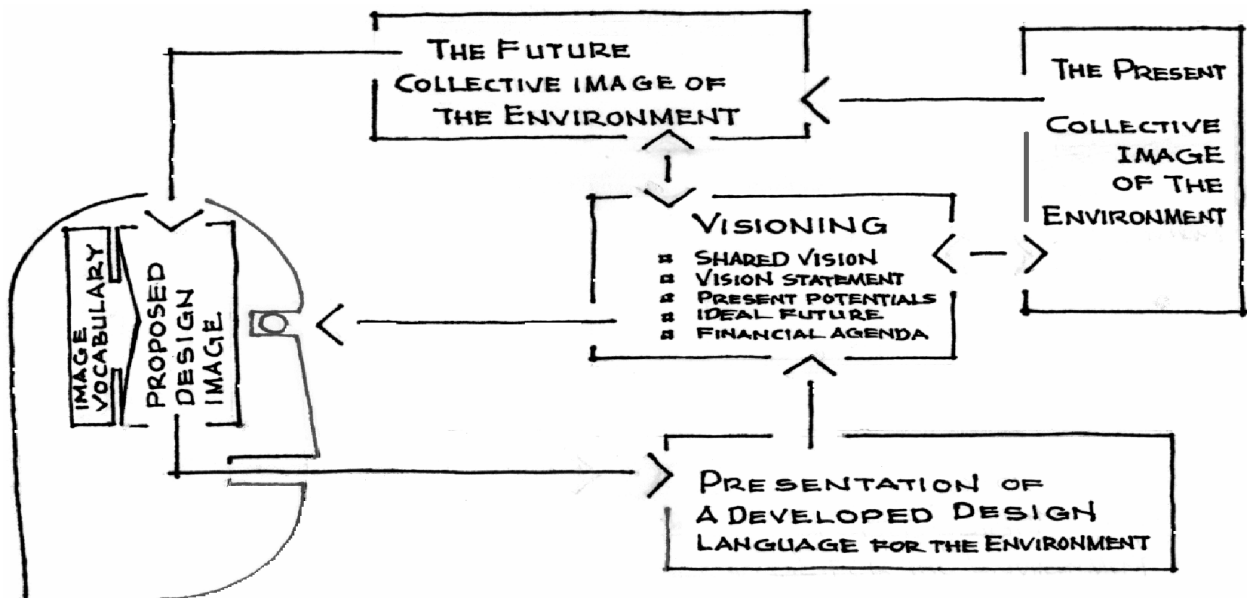


Diagram 3. Designer as Image-maker, Cyrus Sabri 2005

3. 1 Language, Pattern, and Vocabulary

To understand the physical aspects of an environment it is crucial to clearly identify the language of such environment. To achieve the vocabulary of this specific language the process of interpretation plays a key role. It is useful to think of a combination of explicit information from the environment that forms a single idea as a “pattern”. These patterns are made of data and wisdom in the existing environmental design solutions. If the pattern is in the form of an image it can be used in the ideation, idea generation, segment of any design process for an environment. Design in architecture gives structure to patterns. The physical manifestation of this power is a consequence of the desire for the invisible to be made visible.

4. Conclusion

We just explored the interrelationship between images, as products of imagination, and knowledge in a design methodology. In the intelligence phase of a design process and the translation of information into design,

two concepts play crucial roles. Visioning, deals with some explicit information from the environment and its inhabitants. It determines a shared vision and a vision statement related to the past, present, and future of the environment. Images, on the other hand, are a continuous flow of impressions born of a shared vision. Archetypal images lead us to a better understanding of the environment and the manifestation of the ideas. A designer should be equipped with a wealth of image vocabulary to be able to produce a rich image for a particular environment. Finally a design language derived from patterns, bundles of wisdom and information, is developed for an environment.

I rest not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds,
to open the immortal Eyes of Man,
Inwards into the Worlds of Thought;
Into eternity, ever expanding
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The Human Imagination

William Blake (1757 – 1827)

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