Chapter 1
"Tectonics" as a Spatial Perception Tool in the Design Process

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ABSTRACT

Design process has its own structure which is affected by many aspects. Moreover, there are many tools that contribute in this multidimensional process. Within the framework of this chapter, the tectonics is suggested as a directive tool through the design process. Istanbul Technical University Interior Design students' second year studio, where tectonics was used as a spatial perception tool, was examined. The main title of the studio was festival space design, where festivals were discussed as a performance scene for urban interiors. The main idea of suggested method is to consider environmental aspects in different scales and project those findings to tectonics. The main purpose of this project is to create a new perspective to interior design studio approach. The subject of the project was shaped within the framework of testing that interior architecture is not independent from architectural elements contextually and phenomenologically and that environmental decisions and architectural tectonics can be used as a data to put forth the new ideas for interior design methodology.

INTRODUCTION

The design process is an intricate structure that is influenced by many different inputs. Some of these inputs can change the functioning of the design process. Accordingly, the end product of the design can be affected within the framework of cause and effect relationship. One of these inputs is spatial percep-

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tion. It is not coincidental that the processual relations between the perceptual process of the individual and the design process of the designer are similar. While the perception process includes understanding, comprehension, storing information, and reusing the information by processing it, the design process includes understanding data, evaluating data, and developing suggestions. Both the perception process and the design process point to a multi-layered and complex process rather than a linear one. On the other hand, the design is a process in which has a relationship with the environment and try to understand it. While the design process uses current experiences and existent information on one hand, it has the potential to reveal new situations by using "trials" and "probabilities with unknown outcomes" on the other. At this point, following questions has to be addressed; how the design is perceived both during the process and at the end how the space is designed and perceived has an effect that can change the design process. This concept, which is also significant in the education process, is substantially important in order to comprehend the solid-void relationship and to analyze the data of the space. Envisaging the physical presence of space and perceiving this affect the design and design processes. A good evaluation of the data of the space provides more effective and creative solutions in interior design. In addition to the physical existence of space, this perception created by design continues to exist as a cognitive process beyond physical. In interior architecture, these design parameters are located in a very fine line. The formation of the designed space by examining these data well would allow a design that reads the space well and strengthens spatial perception rather than a decorative understanding. At this point, evaluating the offerings of the place well will move the interior architecture away from the 'decorative' approach and helps to create designs that connect and function with the place. In interior architecture, the designed space brings more than just the selection of the 'visible' elements of the space. It is also worth noting that the interior architecture stands at a very different point from the way it is perceived by the general majority. Although interior architects and interior architecture have been striving for years, there are still problematic and misunderstood identity problems. In the 1930s and 1940s, many actions were carried out, such as the opening of educational programs that distinguish interior architecture from decoration (Havenhand, 2004) This identity problem of interior architecture also continues with its comparison with architecture. The stereotyped distinction between architecture and interior architecture has continued as women vs male, structure vs decoration, and as outer vs inner. However, interior architecture should not be perceived as such, interior architecture stands far beyond these classifications (Havenhand, 2004). Yet interior architecture is part of a whole and stands in a very different position than the decorative understanding mentioned. It is very important to break this perception through both educational and design processes. In order for the spatial perception to progress in this direction, the methods applied in education gain importance. Only in this way, with an integrated approach to education, interior architecture can be placed at a point different than "decoration". In order to achieve this, it is important to establish spatial perception in education within the framework of tools that can provide opportunities for deeper discussions rather than 'superficial' approaches. At this point, it is useful to mention the tools that can be used to create spatial perception.

Spatial perception is a whole and contains variety of data that are visible and invisible. Just like the design itself, a lot of different data can be used in the formation of this spatial perception. Another data that should be evaluated in the formation of this spatial perception is architectural tectonics. Architectural tectonics can be used as a tool to create a spatial perception for interior architecture design as well as to generate data for architectural design. Interior architecture can provide a qualified theoretical ground for discussions. Architectural tectonics cannot merely be explained as a finalized and visible situation, but it is in integrity with the design and what we see (Weıner, 1996). By qualifying it as a part of the design