ABSTRACT

The aim of this research, which is ongoing, is to investigate the interaction of light and colour with colours of food in restaurant or similar locations devoted to food consumption environment and eventual fallouts.

1. INTRODUCTION

The research focuses on providing the design information needed to make possible perceptual situations that can better interact with both the physiologic and psychological balance of human beings, through the identification of colour ranges appropriate to the exigencies of users and operators in food consumption environments. Additionally it aims to respond and give consistency to a colour planning extended to the problems that characterize this kind of surrounding.

The general scientific methodology, which is applied for this design research, is the one of a phenomenological and holistic approach.

The research is carried out through case analysis and workshops and is in progress within the broader frame of the international research named LCS-Light, Space and Colour, which is carried out by a number of Universities in different countries.

There is a general understanding of the connection existing between light and colour, from a physical, visual and emotional point of view. Light and colour interact with each other and create visually one unit, a three-dimensional picture, which is experienced as a space. The space performance is the basis for our understanding of the physical environment.

The colour and visual impact of design products and services are the fundamentals on which we are building our personal and individual world. The spatial appearance effect on humans happens both bodily and visually, and create feelings of wellbeing or, on the contrary, the very reverse.

Besides the codified use of colours in food consumption environments since a long time in use, lets think for instance at the well-known colours of the fast-food chain McDonald’s, a number of studies on food and colour have been conducted, the same may be noted in the domain as regards coloured light interaction with prolonged sojourn, and further we have the testimonials of emotional usage of colour in this kind of contexts made by artists such as, for example, Vincent Van Gogh’s descriptive letters and artwork known as s.
2. CASE STUDIES AND APPLICATIONS

The first workshop in program has been performed in the Design Campus of Pukeberg, of the University of Kalmar now Linnaeus University, in Sweden, during the autumn of the academic year 2009-2010.

It consisted in a full-scale experimental laboratory testing the connections between light, colour and space. The work was to be made in six different teams, five of which composed by students of the University of Kalmar and one by the students of the guest University Polytechnic of Milan, Italy.

A box made of plywood panels and measuring $2.5 \times 2.5 \times 2.5$ m, provided with one entrance door of standard dimensions, was assigned to each team. The six boxes were set up inside a big space located on the first floor of an old disused glass factory.

Each team of students, directed by teachers belonging to both the Universities, designed its own box, thus being free to experiment both with colour and light. Also, available on place, there were a number of lighting experts with a range of miscellaneous light equipment. The only compulsory limit was the one that it was not consented to cut the walls of the box.

The final resulting designs were very differentiated in both use of material, colour and light.

The five Swedish teams realized colour and light themes taking inspiration that ranged from the representation of good and evil, seen as warmth or love and coldness or hatred or even more indifference, through interior designs thought as natural or artificial enclosures, to interesting three-dimensional illusory spaces created with the interactions between mirrors, geometries, colours and light. In particular, the Italian team took inspiration from the British artist Jim Lambie, whose art works are referring to the Optical Art and who uses vibrant vinyl tape to cover entire environments, as a consequence totally changing the perceptual essence of the original location and producing a dematerialization of the contours delimiting the spaces wherein he intervenes. He participated in the exhibition *Color Chart: Reinventing Color, 1950 to Today*, at the MOMA of New York in 2008.

The Italian team, also employing the theoretical principles of Attilio Marcoli and Bruno Munari, used coloured stripes of paper applied with glue on all the walls of the box in a pervasive geometrical pattern (Figure 1), in order to create a negation of space. Further, through the texture an ever-changing colour impression was given that was interacting with each change of light. Actually they tested a play of coloured LED lights on this background.

| Table 1. The box realized by the Italian team. |

In fact the collaboration between artists, architects and designers is frequent. Recently a new restaurant has been opened in the Guggenheim Museum of New York, which is called
The Wright, which replaces the previous cafeteria and whose curved lines are derived from Wright’s underlying geometries. The interior project is by the architect Andre Kikoski with the collaboration of the British artist Liam Gillick. The project visually creates a relationship with the museum where it is placed and features a wall of coloured bars that gives an Optical Art impression that is near to the works of Jim Lambie.

Liam Gillick is a representative of the artistic movement Relational Art, a term introduced by the critic Nicolas Bourriaud and in 2009, he represented Germany in the Giardini Pavilions of the Venice Biennial.

3. DISCUSSION

The projects, realized during the workshop and shown to an European delegation, constitute a hypothesis of perceptive elements usage that are consistent with the adequacy finalities of the environment, towards the intrinsic needs of the individual’s prolonged sojourn in a specific place. The approach was innovative, explorative, experimental and the empirical studies carried out for the investigation and defining of essential factors as their features and connections to the complex performance.

The strengths of this first step of a study to be conduct in the research, the first workshop, are that, in this way, being in fact projects of abstract environments, thus bearing a variety of colours, finishes, textures and lighting conditions, they represent an ideal start from fresh grounds devoid of already existent premises.

The weaknesses may be that interviews on the spot were done only on oral basis this due to external factors as the public was large and the time for the visit very short, the written protocols of statistically collecting and verifying of the emotional states felt by the visitors, were to be carried out in a second time not coincident with the visit.

While the material referring to the workshop is freely available, the material regarding the conclusions of the preliminary phases of the general frame of the research LCS - Light, Colour and Space, is, until now, in form of private communication.

4. CONCLUSION

As said previously, in the introduction, the general scientific methodology applied to this research on progress, focused on supplying design information, for instance colour ranges and colour planning, suitable to the requirements of users and operators in food consumption environments, is of a phenomenological and holistic approach and the first step was successfully brought about.

REFERENCES


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