

In Praise of Light:

The Predominant Force for Experiencing Atmosphere

Yovanka Ortega

Andrew Smith

keywords

natural light — atmosphere — emotions — mood — body
— interior spaces — generators of atmosphere — energy

abstract

Light is the most experiential building material because of its ability to generate atmosphere. In this paper, the authors analyze light from an architectural, phenomenological, and biological perspective. These different perspectives allow for a holistic interpretation of light and its effect on human emotions. According to physics, light is electromagnetic radiation the human eye can recognize. This energy interacts with our bodies, stimulating sensorimotor, emotive, and cognitive reactions to features in the built environment. Specifically, this paper explores the intertwining between light, atmosphere, mood, and body to better understand human beings' connection to natural elements in interior spaces. The investigation ends with a definition, articulated for designers and architectural scholars of spatial atmosphere, to explain how they might enhance the emotive qualities of space using natural light.

