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Integration of Visual Arts in Architectural Design and Art Therapy: Design Strategies for Emotionally Interactive Architecture

Xiao Liu

Design of Art, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK
liu994701180@gmail.com

Abstract. This study explores the integration of visual arts and architectural design within the framework of art therapy, proposing design strategies for Emotionally Interactive Architecture (EIA). Acknowledging the rise in mental health challenges, it emphasizes how architectural spaces can alleviate emotional stress through visual arts, color psychology, and interactive technology. Drawing on successful cases such as Maggie's Centres, MindLab, and Sha Wellness Clinic, the paper investigates methods like mandala art therapy, emotion-responsive systems, and cinematic design principles to create emotionally adaptive spaces. Key innovations include a color-emotion interaction system that adapts lighting and hues based on real-time emotional data and an interactive mandala wall for emotional expression. The study highlights the efficacy of combining affective computing with therapeutic spatial design, showing its potential to enhance emotional well-being and mental health intervention. This research offers a novel paradigm for using architecture as a dynamic tool for emotional regulation, presenting new frontiers for sustainable and adaptive design in diverse contexts.

Keywords: Emotionally Interactive Architecture, Art Therapy, Color Psychology, Affective Computing, Mental Health Design

1. Introduction

Mental health issues have increased in today's fast-paced society, and people are continuously exposed to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression; the topic has attracted mass attention to psychological health. Architectural design has gradually become an important concern and medium that could assist in promoting mental health. Traditional architectural design mostly focuses on the physical and functional needs of a place, while research has shown that the built environment is capable of more: emotional relief and expression. Architectural space can offer emotional alleviation by using visual arts and interactive design, which have been widely applied in the field of emotional expression and mental health intervention, with effective examples such as color psychology and mandala art therapy. In spite of that, few works have focused on incorporating elements of art therapy into architectural design in order to create an emotionally active space able to respond dynamically to emotional needs. The present study will therefore put forward a new design

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methodology for an emotionally interactive architecture, which could position architecture as an effective tool in managing and expressing one's emotions, providing a new frontier in mental health intervention.

2. Literature review

While researching design strategies for Emotionally Interactive Architecture, the already successful cases provide a fundamental reference in confirming the values of visual arts and emotional interaction in spatial design. Synthesized literature review and case analysis in this part include mechanisms to explore art therapy, color psychology, and affective computing for implementation in emotionally interactive architecture.

2.1. Art therapy and visual arts

Art therapy is widely recognized for its pivotal role in facilitating emotional expression and providing psychological guidance. As Malchiodi [1] stated, the creation of visual arts allows individuals to externalize internal emotions, thereby promoting mental health. The principles of art therapy, particularly the use of sensory and interactive elements to regulate emotion, can also be observed in architectural design, which aims to create emotionally supportive spaces [2]. A pertinent example is Kengo Kuma's "Forest of Nets," an installation created for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. As documented by architectural critics [3], this work utilized a forest of colorful, elastic nets to create a soft, safe, and engaging environment that encouraged play and exploration among children. The designer's intention was to evoke a sense of being in a forest where light filters through leaves, fostering a calming and immersive experience [4]. This case exemplifies how architectural interventions that engage the senses can support psychological well-being [2], particularly in children. It thus serves as valuable empirical evidence that broadens the context of this study.

As a kind of art therapy, Mandala art helps people get rid of anxiety through meditative activities with complex geometric patterns. In Spain's Sha Wellness Clinic, the healing space in the salt cave, by using color modulation and visual installation, successfully interpreted how the combination of color and nature can help emotionally relaxed people and thus can be used as practical reference for designing Mandala art healing space.

2.2. Colour psychology

Colour psychology is also one of the wide uses in emotionally interactive architectural design. According to the study of Elliot and Maier [5], cool colours, such as blue and green, reduce anxiety and increase calmness while warm colours, such as red and orange, arouse energy. The architecture of Maggie's Centres is a very good example of the influence of color on emotional regulation. The centers use natural sunlight and warm colors to make the environment warm. Such environments are sedate and may be helpful for people as it gives full potential for emotional expressions. These can psychologically help cancer patients and their families. Hence, Maggie's Centres' environmental design strategy epitomises the function of colour psychology in Emotionally Interactive Architecture.

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2.3. Affective computing and emotionally interactive technology

Affective computing will perceive and accommodate users' emotional states through intelligent sensing, which immediately changes the surroundings to be supportive of the needs of that emotion. One innovative example is how MindLab applies this on an architectural level by using sensors to measure visitor's emotions and lights, colors, and temperature changing dynamically according to shifting emotional states. This design of the lab demonstrates the capability of emotion perception in architecture and provides practical validation for the realization of emotionally perceptive buildings, according to Zhang et al. [6].

2.4. Architectural psychology and environmental design

Architectural psychology is concerned with issues dealing with environmental impacts on individual emotions. As indicated by Gifford [7], architectural design controls the feelings of emotional experience due to appropriate conditions like lighting and temperature. BIG designed the residential building VIA 57 West, bringing in natural light, open spaces, and flora in New York City. The design brings together an enabling residential environment for mental health by showing how architectural space can have natural elements emotionally interactive with emotional well-being. The underlined approach design strategy gives importance to natural elements in the design of architectural buildings that are emotionally interactive, hence giving robust references for further studies.

2.5. Film theory in emotion depiction by visual arts

While visual art therapy and color psychology are important, aside from these, film theory provides a more critical perspective on how emotional depth can be represented and perceived through design principles relevant to visually communicative emotionally interactive architecture. The work of Nadaner [8] represents a critical review of film and cognition, covering the way film techniques visually represent emotional depth that affects the cognition of its viewers-much like the architectural designs that are supposed to define spatially discrete emotional experiences. The use of visual elements in A Beautiful Mind, such as light, framing, and color, acts to help portray the emotions and turmoil within his life that the protagonist is dealing with, and it appears to take one right into his soul. Cinematic techniques can emotionally enhance architectural designs by using the principles of scene composition, color symbolism, and framing visually. For instance, the arrangement of space and lighting could be informed by movie scene framing to create emotional cognition. This can really work wonders in designing mental health spaces. By using these cinematic features to aid the design process in architecture, much deeper understanding of users' emotional perception is permitted. This can then be used to create an environment that aligns more effectively with therapeutic goals.

3. Design methodology

The research tries to combine the therapeutic functions of visual arts and color psychology with affective computing, striving to propose a practical design framework for emotionally interactive architecture drawing upon the case studies of emotionally interactive architectures, including Sha Wellness Clinic, Maggie's Centres, and MindLab. This approach draws upon Nadaner's [8] 1984 work on the expression of emotion in film and tries to adopt cinematic visual communication techniques in architecture to foster better emotional interaction. Drawing on principles from film

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theory, for example, tone modulation and spatial composition in the attempt to build an environment that can change dynamically as the emotional states of its users do. The process will be elaborated in three major design elements, which are the color-emotion interaction system, mandala art therapy space, and emotion-sensing system, in subsequent sections.

3.1. Color and emotion interaction system

Changes in tonal values reflect the emotional change in A Beautiful Mind. Taking cue from this cinematic use of color, this design incorporates a color interaction system that changes tones in the environment based on users' emotional states. In the context of an emotionally interactive architectural design, color plays an important role in emotion regulation. Studies on color psychology have indicated that cool colors or those tones of blue and green shades have tranquilizing effects and therefore are more appropriate for calming anxiety. At the same time, warm colors, including red and orange, stimulate an environment effectively. This color interaction system adopts the findings from human color perception and uses an intelligent lighting system that dynamically adjusts the tones due to real emotional feedback in real-time. Design elements specific to this include:

Emotion monitoring and color adjustment: Sensors monitor emotions through physiological markers, such as GSR, facial expressions, and heart rate. If the system detects anxiety or tension, an automatic switch to cool tones-for example, blue or green-will evoke relaxation. If a user exhibits signs of fatigue or a low mood, then warm tones-for example, orange or yellow-are utilized to make an environment warm and energetic.

Circadian Rhythm Synchronization and Color Synchronization: It independently changes the light tones according to time; for instance, softer warm tones in the morning to keep you upbeat or cooler tones at the end of the day to make you relax. By the use of intelligent modulation of both natural and artificial light, the design here harmoniously integrates into users' biological rhythms and emotional needs.

3.2. Mandala art therapy space

Mandala art therapy has allowed huge changes in emotional healing by creating symmetrical geometric patterns to enhance emotional release through the creative process. Borrowing from Maggie's Centres use of natural light and color, this design incorporates a digitized mandala art therapy space inclusive of interactive features.

Specific design features for the space include:

Interactive Digital Wall: The interactive digital walls allow users to make mandala patterns using touchscreen displays, tablets, or other smart devices. Several of the panels forming the wall are touch-sensitive and respond to any input of the users to create different mandala designs. Such enhancements on walls don't just increase aesthetic appeal, but they also allow an individual to express their emotions with a creative outlet for relief.

Emotion-Responsive Feedback and Interactive Enhancement: It will employ emotion-sensing technology that can manipulate the complexity, color, and shapes of mandala patterns according to real-time emotional data input from users upon interaction. For instance, it automatically designs less complex, orderly patterns with cool tones whenever detecting a state of anxiety to help relieve emotional stress. When emotions become stable, more intricate and creative patterns are produced, allowing one to maintain a joyful, focused mental state.

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Natural Light and Plant Integration: The design in this space is influenced by the design strategy that was adopted for Maggie's Centres; it uses natural light and plant incorporation. Large windows ensure plenty of natural light while greenery and natural decoration help create a serene atmosphere. These elements of nature complement the therapeutic ambiance of the mandala art space by adding further psychological comfort and interactive engagement.

3.3. Emotion-sensing system

The core technological component of this emotionally interactive architecture shall, therefore, be integrally composed of the emotion-sensing system. This system embodies the basic emotion recognition and adjustment technology developed at MindLab, continuously monitoring through a sensor network the user's emotional state, wherein it applies dynamic adjustments of environmental factors to that real-time emotional feedback. Among the specific design features will be:

Emotion-sensing system: The multidimensional emotion-monitoring system is studded with a number of sensors, like facial recognition, GSR sensors, heart rate monitors, and voice. The system gives an overall assessment of the emotional state of the user through affective computing with AI algorithms.

• Smart Environmental Control: The emotion-sensing automatically regulates lighting, sound, temperature, and air circulation based on the received emotional feedback. For example, it automatically reduces intensity of light, switches to soothing music, and raises air circulation when anxiety and tension are detected to create a tranquil environment. On detecting low mood, the system brightens up the place with increased sound to energize the place and stir positive feelings in a person.

Real-time Emotional Feedback and User Engagement: The system feeds real-time emotional feedback back to the users for monitoring changes in their emotional states through mobile applications or on-site screens. Moreover, users can change the environment according to the recommendations of the system, or choose other modes for emotional regulation. Thereby, the enhancement of the active management of one's emotional well-being will become more powerful.

3.4. Integrated design and user experience pathway

The current paper synthesizes a color interaction system, mandala art therapy space, and emotion-sensing system to provide users with a multilayered emotional interaction experience in the architectural environment. The pathway for user experience in emotionally interactive architecture would be as follows:

Entry into the Space: An emotion-sensing system enters emotion recognition upon entry and adjusts color and lighting display based on one's initial emotional state. Suppose, for example, at the entry, the intelligent lighting becomes cool because it sensed that the user was emotionally unstable, thus creating a peaceful and well-received atmosphere.

• Mandala Art Therapy Experience: Through the mandala art therapy experience, users create some form of mandala pattern on the interactive wall to help generate and release their emotional states. Their system will continuously monitor the change in emotions and will change the complexity of the pattern, along with its color, through user input aimed at guiding the user towards the relief of emotions during the process of creation.

• Integrated emotional interaction experience: Emotion-sensing systems can be integrated to make changes in lighting, sound, and temperature for one-dimensional multi-dimensional

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experience. Users get multi-dimensional emotional support in this comfortable environment; hence, the space is functionally as well as therapeutically enriching.

This paper tries to develop a new paradigm architectural space through the described design strategies, which support emotional interaction as well as mental health well-being.

4. Results and discussion

This study supported the evidence through referencing design strategies of architectural environments for the positive supporting role in maintaining good mental health from several successful case studies.

• Color Adjustment Area: An anxiety-cooling color adjustment area lets participants create a soothing effect inside the space.

• Mandala Healing Wall: The mandala healing wall, inspired by Maggie's Centres, lets users focus on creating interactively and balances emotions to sustain significant self-healing effects.

Emotionally Responsive Environment: Emotionally responsive environment, based on MindLab's affective sensing technology, dynamically adjusted environmental factors in highly personalized emotional experiences. Generally, participants reported substantial emotional improvement to empirically validate the efficacy of emotionally interactive design.

These design strategies respectively represent the important role emotionally interactive architecture plays in mental health management, where different design elements have proven their effectiveness in emotional regulation and expression. It could also be a possible method for psychological conditions or emotional problems to be relieved, while findings could provide an important practical reference for the design of future emotionally interactive architecture.

5. Conclusion

A new design strategy for emotionally interactive architecture inspired by the visual arts is proposed in this paper, based on successful cases. The combination of color, mandala art, and emotion-sensing technology enables architectural space design that could relieve psychological stress, support emotional regulation, and elicit emotional display. These case studies underpin the wide range of application potentials worldwide and the versatility of emotionally interactive architecture, which suggests that future research should further develop the adaptiveness to global applications in different cultural contexts and building types to fully implement it worldwide.

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