

Final Statement
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The Space Between Workshop
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Society teaches us to focus on objects and things; when we look at a city, we see the buildings and structures; when we visit a museum, we focus on the objects of art. What many of us fail to realize is the importance of the space between, around, and within those objects. As designers, it is our responsibility to recognize the potential of the space between and to design and utilize that space to improve human experience.

As architects, we design places. More specifically, we design the inhabitable space within the structure and must orchestrate the experience of being in that space. We can examine the series of spaces leading people through a place. Chinese houses, for example, represent a precise organization of entrances and a progression from public to private areas. We must design the structure with the spatial experience in mind. How do we want people to feel inside the space? How can the built form and structure create and augment the desired experience? Human bodies occupy space, and architects must keep the human scale in mind and consider the relationship of those bodies in space.

The space between exists within the visual art world as well. For example, the contemporary American artist Fred Sandback worked with string and wire, exploring the relationship between “vacancy and volume.”¹ His minimalist string installations often consisted of simple cubes outlined in string, enclosing empty space and asserting “a certain place or volume in its full materiality without occupying and obscuring it.”¹ Sandback reveals the power of a simple line as a means of dividing space in time and makes the viewer aware of the space within and around. In this way, Sandback reveals the power of simplicity and space.

The space between objects is critical in other aspects of our lives as well. The pauses and rests between notes of music can carry the emotions of the listener; the formations of bodies in space is an intrinsic and essential part of dancing; air gaps affect the texture of bread and other foods. The notion of space is an abstract concept, yet it is one that affects our lives and is something that we experience every day. The space between objects can often be far more intense and interesting than the objects themselves. These interstitial spaces- the pieces of sky seen between tree branches, the tiny alleys between buildings- can be truly beautiful and intriguing. As the amount of open land decreases, we will be forced to build and design within these spaces. The space left behind between buildings and objects must be recognized and used to the best of our ability. We must design with the ideas of space and experience in mind, producing objects that occupy, enclose, and create this notion of space.

¹ (http://www.diacenter.org/exhibits_b/sandback/essay.html#two)