

What Makes a City: Urban Experience as a Performance

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For most of human history, people across the world lived mainly in small communities. Over the past few centuries – and particularly in recent decades – this has shifted dramatically.

So now, for the first time ever, we can say that most of us live in cities. But there are some questions we should ask ourselves to improve our relationship with this wcomplicated structure that is a city. What do we define as a city in the modern world? Is it a place that is constituted by physical elements or is it an idea to which we assign meaning?

The answer to these questions will define our position within the vast network of complex systems that we as modern city dwellers find ourselves. Which will also guide our future experiences with built environments, determining the quality of our relationships with urban settings.

After all, everyday life is heavily affected by manmade systems all over the world. We as people can increase our productivity and happiness simply by understanding the connection between our inner world and the external world. In doing so, we naturally achieve a higher quality of life, given that our experience of the external world starts from within, bubbling up from our inner-selves as we perceive life around us. This course of critical thinking lets us unravel the potential of strong emotional connections to the world we live in.

The arguments of the subsequent sections follow an approach that is emotionally descriptive and questioning, rather than reasonably concluding and explaining. The reader is asked to question their own approach to observing and relating to their experiences and conceive of potential new paths to follow. This path can be composed by moving back and forth between the chapters that follow a certain narrative, and the Urban Elements Atlas that takes place at the end as a collection of items that is in progress.

Chapters:

- I. What Makes a City
- II. The Original Recipe
- III. Making Sense of Cityscape
- IV. How the Modern City Created its Observers
- V. Mapping the City: Space and Place
- VI. Urban Experience as a Performance
- VII. Urban Elements Atlas