

Cultural Daily

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ENCOUNTER POINTS: Being here

Maurice Amiel · Wednesday, January 4th, 2017

Being here

Having defined encounter points as those places and situations that provide us with fulfilling experiences of life in the city at all ages, I wish to explore the heightened awareness of “being here” that these experiences involve, i.e. of becoming aware, however momentarily, of being one with place and situation.

Photographing does help of course in that it records elements of the “here”, just as it makes one part of it!

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Sociofugal space facilitating the sense of being here. Original post [here](#).

Remove the trees and few will want to sit in the deep summer sun...

Remove the sitting people and few will want to pose in public without a ready made audience...

Remove the posing people and you no longer have much to feel a part of, i.e., of “being here”...

Why?

Because nothing attracts people to a place as much as the *presence of others, to engage with in sociable relations...*

Because nothing attracts people as much as a place to *sit comfortably under the shade of a tree in deep summer ...* in the middle of action, between a bike path and an ice cream joint, and a stone’s throw from a foot bridge crossing a recycled industrial canal into a recreational venue...

Because someone understood how to “*frame*” *socializing in public*, for a fulfilling “being there” experience: *at a certain meaningful place in the city and at a certain meaningful moment of its historic development.*

In the image below



place defining elements facilitate the sense of being here

Remove the vertical screens below the roof of this park multipurpose shelter and you have removed the shade providing function of the shelter

Remove the boy on his two wheeler in search of a shady place and you have further reduced the shelter's occupancy

Reduce that occupancy and you no longer have a place to feel "being here" in

Why?

Because people usually engage in activities and behavior pertinent to the clear physical expression of a setting function, *and, hypothetically removing the screens would have removed any clear sense of **limit and center** that are key to reading a setting, (as we see them respectively occupied by the picnicking family and the boy on his two wheeler).*

Because the reduced shelter's sense of place would reduce its "*different nature*" *vis a vis the open park, thereby reducing the specific "being here" experience of each of these two zones.*

Because the presence of the vertical screens, as seen in the image, acts as a visor that kills the glare and *allows a clearer view of the neighborhood at mid and long range, and a better general orientation to the urban context ...*

In both images

All these observation were facilitated by *the designers' keen understanding of the physical and social parameters of place making, in particular, by the use of an overhead plane of some kind, whether tree foliage or built roof, that fundamentally suggests a physical volume framing the experience of being there.*

Credit all photos Maurice Amiel

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