

ART AND ARCHITECTURE; CASE OF KATHAKALI

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Abstract - Here in this paper, a study on art form kathakali is done. And through the various modes of interaction between the performer and the audience, the interaction in architecture shall be related. Thus for designing a space, visual interaction are discussed. Architecture is about designing spaces and the goal is to get the user connected to that particular space. For that the interaction plays a huge role in it. Architecture holds the potential to set the stage for chance encounters and social interactions, thus nurturing community building and influencing the fabric of our social culture. Various interaction in architecture is overlooked and also shows how kathakali is related to architecture in different ways.

Key Words: Kathakali, visual interaction, social interaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Art and Architecture are always connected with each other. Architecture is not only just about construction of new buildings. It is also an artwork.

The requirement of the building varies and changes through certain time periods. But the very requirement of new buildings are, it needed to be sustainable, energy efficient, also to serve as multipurpose. But not only that, the role of user is also important. Architecture also need to focus on the user experience, focusing on usability and creating attractive environment.

Here comes the term interaction. Interaction can be defined as an action that provide effect on both sides. And Interaction can be of user to user, user to space, space to nature and also user to nature.

Kathakali is a traditional Artform and now also practiced in various places, especially in Kerala. This art form basically serves the aim of storytelling. But here they do not use direct languages to narrate. Instead of that, they use various facial expressions and hand gestures to express the emotions and incidents of the story. Thus, making it as universal artwork. Any person around the world can read the expressions and gestures if given a note of it. So the interaction among the user takes place here. Kathakali not only uses these emotions but also in their costume and makeup various interactive methods are used.

Architecture on the other hand also include various interactive methods used while designing spaces. Their objective is for the user to get connected with the spaces and nature.

Here an art form kathakali is taken and various interactive methods are studied in the art form. Also relating these types of interaction in Architecture. Thus by doing so concludes about the idea that the art and architecture serves the same purpose. Both aims to connect to the people through different strategies.

2. KATHAKALI

Kathakali is the most well-known dance theatre from southern part of India, Kerala. Kathakali literally means "Story-Play." It is known for its heavy makeup and costumes. Its magnificent costumes have become a well-known symbol for Kerala.

The themes are religious in nature. They usually deal with the Mahabarat, the Ramayana, and the Puranas, which are ancient scripts.

Kathakali performance is a significant social gathering. They usually begin about twilight and last all night. Men are usually the only ones that perform Kathakali. Female characters are also prominent in the story but usually men will portray it.

COSTUME

The most distinguishing feature of Kathakali is its costume. The outfits are incredibly enormous and heavy, and the makeup is very detailed.

There are various types of costumes. Sathwika (the hero), Kathi (the villain), Minukku (females), and Thatti are the characters. These basic sections are further segmented in a fashion that Malayali (Keralite) audiences are familiar with. The characteristic makeup and outfit of each character makes them readily recognizable.

The makeup's components are all readily available in the area. Rice flour is used for the white, while Vermilion is used for the red Soot is used to create the black. Colours aren't just for adornment; they're also used to express characters and intent.

STAGE

On the stage, there is a large lamp known as Kalivilakku Coconut oil is used to light the lamp, which produces a yellow flame. The longer of the two wicks faces the stage, while the other faces the crowd.

The actors would approach the lamp to allow the audience to observe their facial reactions.

3. Interaction in architecture

Interaction is defined as action between two or more objects and have an effect on both.

Interaction can be of Physical, Visual and Audible.

Here, in kathakali we see these kind of interaction for its performance to be done. Interaction in architecture provides the user connected to the building as well as between user and user itself.

The factors that decide these are visibility, accessibility and audibility.

4. Visual Interaction

Here, instead of using text, various elements are used to represent. Graphics, images and icons are used for it. In architecture, one can understand the period of its construction by seeing the construction pattern of it. Each style of architecture has its own construction patterns. Thus, as a viewer these are visual elements used in construction.

In visual interaction there are certain factors:

These are arrangement, scale, orientation and distance.

Arrangement:

The spatial organization represent the interaction between form and space. There are various arrangement methods used in Architecture. These are linear organization, radial organization, Grid and cluster organization.

Scale:

This visual factor can be defined as user relation with the space. How the person view the form at certain distance from it.

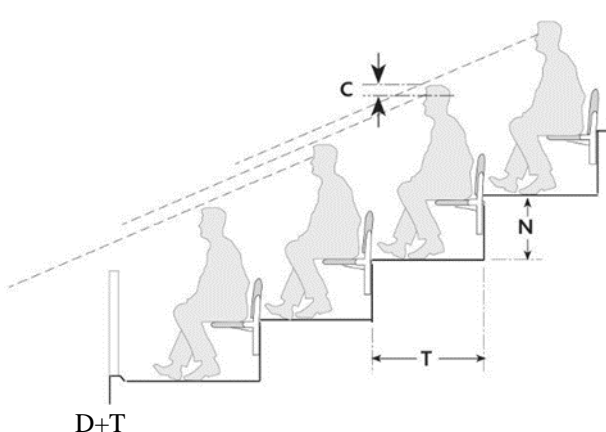
These factors are taken into consideration while designing to provide interaction among user and spaces.

Angle of vision:

Figure 1: Angle of vision representation

To calculate value of 'C'

$$C = \frac{D(N+R)}{D+T} - R$$



Where,

D- The horizontal distance from the eye to the point of focus

N- The riser height

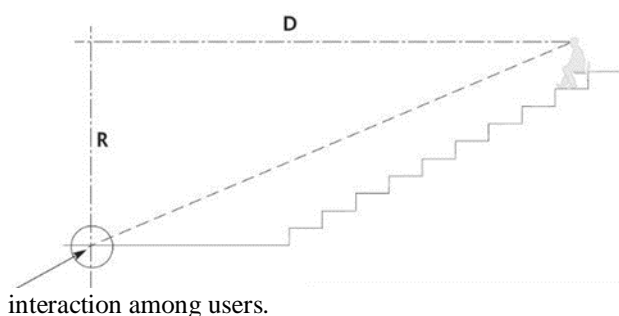
R- The vertical height to the point of focus

T- The seating row depth

Figure 2: vertical height in angle of vision

Interactive Spaces:

Here, Spaces are created in order to act as a platform for



interaction among users.

5. KATHAKALI AND INTERACTION

Here, how one traditional art form is linked with architecture can be observed.

The primary aim of kathakali is story telling. To narrate story to the viewers through various expression and style. Thus, the sitting space of the audience is one the main concern. Here the audience need to see the facial expression and gestures shown by hand. So the distance between them matters. They should be seated to have a clear and visible view from the stage. This is applied in the architecture in terms of visual interaction. The angle of vision which has been shown in figure 1 comes into play here. The space should be designed as such, the user shall have a vision of that particular form or element of architecture which we design for interaction.

In kathakali, the performer uses various facial expressions as well as hand gestures to convey the story. There are various number of hand gestures, each of them depicts

Figure 3: Different hand gestures

Different emotions and meanings.

In architecture, this can be related with the elements used to

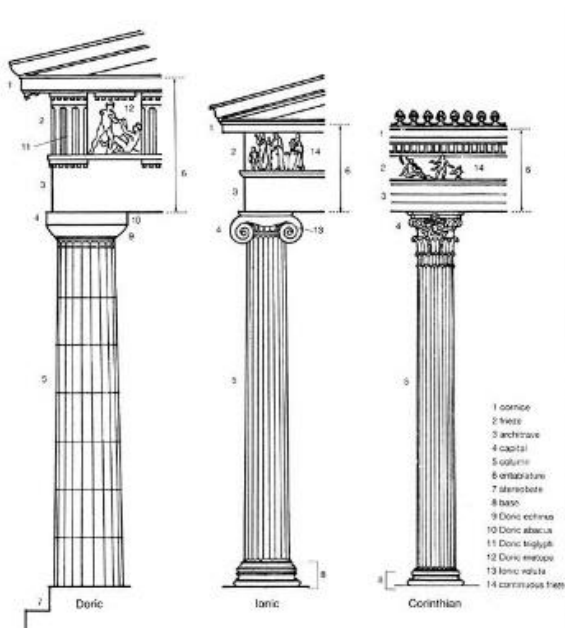


represent the style of architecture.

So many symbols and signage are used in historical buildings to mark their identity. This represent the style as well as period of construction in architecture. The user thus get a feedback just by viewing it.

Figure 4: Types of column capitals

The next factor is about the costume of Kathakali. The colors used in costumes and make ups are not just merely decorations



but for portraying the character. For example, red on the feet is used to symbolize evil character and evil intent.

The materials that comprise the makeup is all locally available. The white is made from rice flour, the red is made from Vermilion (a red earth such as cinnabar). The black is made from soot.

In architecture this relates with the use of raw materials for construction. Especially in vernacular buildings the use of locally available materials are noted. For example, mud for wall, coconut leaves for roofing etc. The color for the building are also taken note. The visual comfort of the user must be maintained and the overall form of the building should be linked while painting the building. Colors also represent certain meaning or emotions to the building.

Figure 5: Vernacular housing

The next factor tells us about the lighting. In Kathakali there



will be lamp which is placed at the front of the stage. The performer would come near to this lamp and show their facial expressions as well as gestures. So that the viewers can get more focus on it. Coming to architecture, daylighting is very important while designing certain spaces. This art form inferred us about the positioning of the windows and opening spaces so that more natural light will enter to the spaces that we need to give focus to. The positioning of artificial illuminance are also taken note. Where the light should be focused and the user should look at will be depended on it.

CONCLUSIONS

Architecture is not just a construction of building, a space to live, but it also include various emotions and meaning to it. The culture of the society or a particular area will be reflected in the architecture. Here we have taken a traditional art form and studied the ways of interaction of it with the audience. This is much related to architecture also. The spaces which we design should have connection with the user or with the nature. Thus, interaction is important to live comfortably in these spaces. Here we can conclude that kathakali as well as architecture has same goal of interaction with people or among space and nature. Thus shows that Art and Architecture are always connected.

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