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Auditory sketching as a tool in architectural design education

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Architectural spaces are perceived through embodied experiences that are made up of both visual and non-visual stimuli. However, the conventional means that a designer uses to depict non-visual stimuli such as aural phenomena contain a visual bias. We have introduced a new aural drawing system called, "Auditory Sketching" as a way for design students to visualize the auditory fields that structure one's perception of architectural space. The Auditory Sketching procedure requires that the design student first mediate aural perceptions linguistically through meticulous observation during which they are encouraged to define aural qualities within the space such as notes, tones, clusters, bands, and pitches that would be difficult to capture using a graphic system of notation. Using this written language as a guide for graphic expression, they explore different ways of expressing these time and space notations with ink pens; creating an auditory system of 'tones' by building up marks in different ways: hatching, layering up, scribbling, etc. The eventual translation of aural perception into graphic patterns is crucial because designers need to visualize the sound in order to consider it a significant medium of architecture that they can define and shape.