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Architecture Beyond Experience

Michael Benedikt

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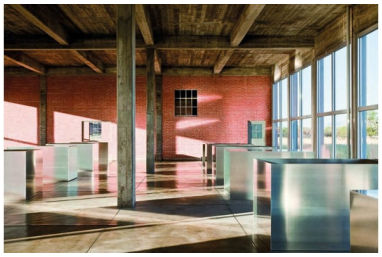
- Encourages designers to turn from 'creating experience(s)' for their clients to cultivating the character of, and relationships between, Rooms, People, and Things, treated as beings in their own right
- Covers recent trends namely: Speculative Realism and/or Object Oriented Ontology
- The book will appeal to readers of religious philosophy, art history and theory, social phenomenology, and Judaism through the lens of Martin Buber
- Also appeals to readers concerned about social-media-ised, digital streaming culture, around which there is a growing, critical literature

Architecture Beyond Experience
is an interdisciplinary work in the service of one goal: the bringing about of a more relational, 'posthuman' and yet humanist strain in architecture. It argues against the values that currently guide much architectural production (and the larger economy's too), which is the making, marketing, and staging of ever more arresting experiences. The result, in architecture, is experientialism: the belief that what gives a building value, aside from fulfilling its shelter functions, is how its views and spaces make us personally feel as we move around it.

This thought provoking essay argues it's time to find a deeper basis for making and judging architecture, a basis which is not personal-experience-multiplied, but which is dialogical and relational from the start. In this context, the word relationaldescribes an architecture that guides people in search of encounter with (or avoidance of) each other and that manifests and demonstrates those same desires in its own forms, components, and materials. Buildings are beings. When studying architecture, they teach as well as protect; they tell us who we were and who we want to be; they exemplify, they deserve respect, invite investment, and reward affection. These are social-relational values, values that both underlie and go beyond experiential ones (sometimes called 'phenomenological'). Such relational values have been suppressed, in part because architects have joined the Experience Economy, hardly noticing they have done so. ***Architecture Beyond Experience*** provides the argument and the concepts to ultimately re-centre a profession.

Michael Benedikt is the Director of the Center for American Architecture and Design (CAAD) at the University of Texas at Austin, where he holds the Hal Box Chair in Urbanism, is an ACSA Distinguished Professor of Architecture, teaches design studio and architectural theory, and directs the school's Interdisciplinary Studies master's degree program. He is a graduate of Yale University and of The University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.







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