

"I cannot understand the function of the living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far as I am a body which rises toward the world."¹

- M. Merleau-Ponty -

Abstract



E m b o d i m e n t

Architecture, Body and Mind

(Inhabiting Urban Markers)

What a human being can experience and how can it make sense of that experience depends not only on one's body, but also on its interaction with the environment. It is through our embodiment that we inhabit the world and through our body that we act within it. Embodiment is not about the body per se, but about the culture. According to Merleau-Ponty, "the body is never isolated in its activity, but always already engaged in the world." Our embodiment is always mediated by our interaction with other human and/or non-human bodies.

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Embodiment is experienced through substance, quality, as well as existence associated with specific space and time. Bodies are pre-consciously aware of their existence and consciously ask questions regarding their own being and that others. Bodies also have to be aware of their own historical development and their boundaries. This can only be applied to human beings, because only human beings are capable of asking questions and being aware of things. For non-human beings their existence is only experienced by its "showing" to us.

My thesis concentrates on the connection between the human body, its activity, and of the world. It examines what effect our bodily experience has on our understanding of the world by exploring how our body is positioned in space relative to the environment around us.

This thesis is studied through a series of four specific design interventions or embodiments. When the diamond of Washington D.C. was surveyed in 1791, mile markers were placed to manifest the invisible boundary. For the sites, I am using the four Corner-Stone locations of this boundary. By using such modest monuments as locations for my sites, I am hoping to extend public awareness of the historical importance of these markers that has been lost over time. These individual markers work together in order to embody one thing - the district. By elaborating spaces around them, the public would have a chance to explore the spatial quality of the environment; as well as their relation to the cultural and historical embodiment of the city. Through this project I studied architectural embodiment through the making present of the invisible survey line of the district boundary.

Abstract

