

# Introduction

## Dwelling Aesthetics: New Paradigms and Perspectives

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Why choose the theme of the aesthetics of ‘dwelling’ rather than of the lived or designed space? The verb ‘to dwell’ is often translated in English as ‘to live’. This is not surprising. The existential connection between moving through and experiencing space has been explored in depth during the 20th century. Since the mid-20th century, a new culture of dwelling has emerged in philosophy and architecture, fueled by an interest in the lived, sensitive, and phenomenological dimension of space (cf. Husserl (1913), Merleau-Ponty (1945)). Following Heidegger’s 1951 *Darmstadt lecture*, dwelling has been regarded as the fundamental form of our sensitive relationship with the world, a dimension that affects our being and existential condition. Many theorists and practitioners have focused on the aesthetic aspect of dwelling, highlighting its phenomenological and experiential aspects. Philosophers such as Gaston Bachelard, Otto Friederich Bollnow, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Steen Eiler Rasmussen, for example, have discussed the critical role of experiencing the space around us. Similarly, architects such as Steven Holl, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Juhani Pallasmaa, Alberto Pérez-Gómez, and Peter Zumthor have considered the relationship between the built space and the lived space, leading to a new phenomenological trend in architecture.

In this special issue of *Espes. The Slovak Journal of Aesthetics*, we aim to honour the culture of dwelling and explore the aesthetic question of dwelling from new perspectives. We are particularly interested in how these perspectives reflect a renewal of society as it faces the future. The central issue is that of a society renovating itself with a new ethic and way of life that involves a new way of living and, consequently, of dwelling. Our attempt is to analyse how we are learning to inhabit in the face of the epochal and theoretical changes that the post-post-human era is about to bring. Since the first lockdowns in 2020, our living interactions have increasingly retreated into small, digital,

virtual spaces, showing that humanity has an innate sense of resilience that has brought us closer to a greater understanding of what is 'outside'. Interest in the environment and the preservation of nature has increased, as people strive to rediscover outdoor wellness. At the same time, we are rediscovering the sense of the domestic hearth, the primordial dwelling, and the maternal sense of welcoming spaces that, in their 'interior', protected us during the global pandemic.

Moving away from the classical image of home (as described by Bachelard) allows us to overcome a kind of utopian nostalgia and consider the world as a place to live in. In this regard, Tonino Griffero's and Carsten Friberg's contributions offer a new vision of living that is not limited to this traditional image of home. They suggest that primordial places of living trigger a series of activities and realities that belong to everyone. The house is no longer just a place that represents our roots and the way we experience space but becomes an object that can be examined from an emotional and sensitive perspective and in the context of atmospheres. According to Griffero, "dwelling means cultivating atmospheres". The traditional image of home persists because of the idealization of the concept of dwelling. Instead, Griffero proposes a model that distinguishes between prototypical, derivative, and spurious atmospheres. Everyday experience gives rise to pathic-atmosphericological contexts that are not necessarily intentionally constructed, but that belong to the multiple modes of dwelling.

As Heidegger reminds us in his lecture *Building Dwelling Thinking*, "we must always learn to dwell". In this regard, Carsten Friberg's paper *Feeling at Home: Reflections on a Theme of Human Existence* allows for a dialogue with the consideration of the body in the Heideggerian dualism of dwelling and building, as well as Derrida's reading of it. Heidegger's influence on Derrida is crucial in understanding how dwelling is a form of bodily existentialism. The awareness of the body in space persists in human existence, where 'feeling' is a dominant aspect of living. In both Griffero's and Friberg's contributions, the use of neologisms such as 'come to my house' (Griffero) and 'feeling at home' (Friberg) move the concept of dwelling away from the traditional image of home and closer to a form of sensible existence.

The atmospheric context is an important part of the contextualization of dwelling, and Federico De Matteis' *The Climate of Spaces: On Architecture, Atmospheres and Time* and Elena Mancioppi's *Osmospheric Dwelling: Smell, Food, Gender and Atmospheres* offer some insights on this topic. De Matteis discusses the ongoing question of integrating architectural design with the atmospheric context and introduces a new design mode. Mancioppi discusses how the concept of atmosphere can intersect with other meaningful and non-consequential experiences, such as those related to smell, food, and gender, in an 'osmospheric' context. The relationship between climate and atmosphere allows us to understand climate change not only as the natural passage of the seasons but also as a design element that can create more sensitive architecture. Mancioppi emphasizes the power of the atmosphere as an evocative concept by exploring the context of flavour and introducing

the neologism ‘osmosphere’ to represent an affective aura. She argues that the issue of flavour can be traced back to two types of settings: food and smell, and that combining these two elements with implications for gender and an open air design, brings the atmospheric issue closer to the world of dwelling.

The discordant aspects of dwelling in contemporary society are closely linked to the social and political changes of our time. Civil and ethical rights are part of the evolution of the contemporary era in which we live, and in this context, Martin Charvát’s *Disrupted Dwelling: Forensic Aesthetics and the Visibility of Violence* and Aurosa Alison’s *Can an Extra-terrestrial Dwell on Earth?* focus on the profound changes driven by a new third gender context (Alison) and the concept of resilience experienced through forensic aesthetics (Charvát). The ability to live and inhabit the earth must be a necessity for everyone in an equitable and democratic way. Wars and suppressive actions raise ethical questions about dwelling that can be examined through a forensic aesthetic approach to survival. Another way to plan for good city living depends on the moral and sexual barriers that power has often put in place. The discussion of urban projects dedicated to the second and third genders highlights the direction that contemporary society is heading (Alison).

The turning point of post-human dwelling is complex and it is challenging to approach it naturally and accurately. Therefore, it is necessary to consider living in 2050 or inhabiting new ethical and social spaces. This kind of openness is rooted in the eternal principles of architectural practice. To close this special issue, Juhani Pallasmaa ‘TALKS’ with Students is a conversation between students from the University Federico II in Naples and the Politecnico di Milano and Juhani Pallasmaa. Pallasmaa answers students’ questions about the various themes addressed in this issue, including atmospheres, future visions, and phenomenological contexts. Pallasmaa, like all masters of thought, reminds us that architecture is a mirror of the world and that learning how to inhabit the world is reflected in learning how to dwell and design a new and better world.

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