

OPP: HEALTHY INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS & HEALING ARCHITECTURE

Emotional living spaces – The significance of emotional spaces for dwelling and well-being

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Purpose This research project deals with the study of Emotional Spaces. An Emotional Space is an individual phenomenon, which is not physically perceptible, but can become bodily observable. It can be characterized by different physical categories (e.g. light, atmosphere, materials), sensual categories (e.g. smells, sounds, relationships) and affective phenomena (e.g. emotions, feelings, sensations). The main objective is to investigate how the Emotional Space of a person with advanced dementia, or without the ability to communicate verbally, can be revealed and positively inserted into spatial situations in order to design a healing environment for everyday life. In this context the expected demographic changes are relevant, as this will have a profound impact on the healthcare system, housing and infrastructure requirements and social structures (European Union, 2023). According to forecasts, the number of people in need of care in Germany could rise to around 6.78 million by 2055 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2023). This, together with the low birth rate (VDEK, 2023), will increase the need for new inclusive concepts and barrier-free systems. For this reason a new concept is being sought which could be implemented in existing care approaches such as residential care, palliative care and advance directives. This project looks at architecture from a different perspective and sets its focus on dwelling as an important issue and a basic human necessity (Hahn, 2008). This applies to the physical requirements of the built environment, but also to its emotional significance. The meaning of dwelling evolves over a person's lifetime and reflects their personal dwelling history. It is shaped by so-called residential breaks (e.g. relocation or displacement). Dwelling is a process of appropriation of space. The home serves as a shelter, a place for living and acting. It allows relationships to develop, provides a stage for everyday life and offers a place of identification and self-realization (Günther-Lückow, 2017). Dwelling therefore influences the quality of life and human well-being (Hannemann, 2014; Lawton, 1990). The acceptance of a living environment, e.g. in a care facility, depends also on the existing atmosphere, associations and influences, resulting from the biography of the residents. Atmosphere is understood as a sensory perception that is shaped by the sentiment in the spatial coherence. It has an impact on the well-being and social behavior. The reduction of negative feelings and the promotion of positive emotions are important. To achieve this, the causes of stress and anxiety, as well as factors that minimize stress, must be identified and understood (Brichetti, 2019). **Method** The research project explores the relationship between emotions, space, and biography. It focuses on investigating Emotional Spaces. For this a new tool is being developed that utilizes biography, picture, and emotion analysis to detect Emotional Spaces. The next steps are the testing of these new methods to make the individual Emotional Space visible and transformable to a living environment. **Results and Discussion** As the research project is in process, results will be finalized by 2025.

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