EXPLORING PERFORMALISM: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF ARCHITECTURE'S PERFORMATIVE DIMENSION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

In architecture, performalism is a conceptual belief that a building's form should be based on its purpose or function. This concept is often contrasted with the more traditional view that form should follow function. As a result, this paper examines the concept of performalism and its importance to architectural discourse. Using a mixed method approach, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of architecture's performative dimension and examines architecture's potential to shape and create meaningful experiences. This analysis explores performalism in contemporary architectural discourse using essays and architectural projects that connects theory and practice related to architecture's performative dimensions. This performative dimension is explored through relevant literature and examples comparing performative theory with performative practice. In addition, a critical assessment of the concepts potential to inform architectural practice is provided by assessing their theoretical implications and relevance to current discourse and practice.

INTRODUCTION

Due to recent developments in technology, cultural theory and the emergence of sustainability as a defining socio-economic issue, there is an increasing interest in performance as an architectural design paradigm (Kolarevic, 2005). In 2006, Performance Architecture emerged as a new direction within the architectural profession. Performative architecture is considered the "shift in architectural theory and practice from what the building is to what it does" (Albayrak & Tunçer, 2016). As a consequence, it defines an architectural object, not by its appearance, but rather by its ability to affect, transform, and by how it performs. The concept of performalism proposes creative ways of designing architecture driven by performance, rather than aesthetics. It explores the possibilities of using performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of architecture, and suggests ways in which architects can use performance-driven design to create better spaces. By examining the interaction between physical and virtual environments, the concept of performalism aims to present a bold and innovative vision for the future of architecture.

To investigate performalism in contemporary architectural discourse, it is imperative to interrogate performative architecture. "For architects, performance provides a wider frame for the conception of the architectural form because it incorporates and lingers in-between the functionalist and image-based approaches to form making and conception" (Neuman, 2011, p. 4). Performalism proposes that computer-based architecture transforms architectural discourse notions from function to performance in search of a new logic in the conception of form and a new relationship between the different parties in the triangle Form–Function–Subject. This new logic of form encourages a holistic approach that incorporates multiple parameters, such as the environment, materials, and technology, to create a new type of architecture that is based on a set of performative capabilities. The aim is to create adaptive, responsive, and contextualized architecture. This approach enables architects to design buildings that are in harmony with their surroundings and are also more responsive to the changing needs of their users. This, in turn, leads to more sustainable and resilient buildings that have a lower impact on the environment. Through its focus on performance, Performalism aims to create an environment that is responsive, adaptable, and performative. It emphasizes the importance of user experience and the need to create engaging and meaningful spaces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the literature review, performalism is central to architectural discourse. Performalism emphasizes the integration of performance factors into architectural design, considering aesthetics, functional and environmental considerations. This literature review includes twenty most relevant works addressing the concept of performalism. These works are mapped in Figure 1, showing the relationship among the studied literature with direct citations in blue lines and indirect citations in grey lines. Among these, the four most significant works including Grobman, Figliola, Caetano, and Hensei is highlighted in yellow, to represent the focus of this paper. Grobman's (2013) work explicitly addresses the relationship between form and performance. In contrast, Figliola's (2021) exploration of informed architecture highlights data-driven approaches to inform design decisions and improve performance. Caetano's (2020) overview of computational design approaches and Hensei's (2019) exploration of systems thinking both touch upon methods that enable architects to achieve performative designs that respond to various contextual factors. Overall, these works contribute to the performalism discourse by highlighting the importance of performance in architecture. They also provide insights into the tools and approaches that facilitate such considerations. The studies also offer insight into the implications of such approaches to the design process and the potential for the emergence of new forms of architecture. Moreover, they provide opportunities for further research in the field of performalism.

Grobman, Figliola, Caetano, and Hensei align with the themes and ideas comprehending the concept of "Performalism" by emphasizing the integration of performance factors, the utilization of digital and computational tools, and the adoption of holistic design approaches. Together, these works contribute to the discourse surrounding performative design in architecture, providing valuable insights and advancements in the field. These works further the architectural discourse surrounding performalism by demonstrating how it can be used to create innovative and meaningful designs that integrate performance factors, utilize digital and computational tools, and adopt holistic design approaches. Performative design in architecture is an ever-evolving field, and these works provide an important stepping stone for the field to continue to grow and develop. As the discourse continues to evolve, these works will remain essential to our understanding of the possibilities and opportunities of this approach. As a

consequence, these works serve as both background for this paper and as a means to emphasize the concept of performalism discussed in it.
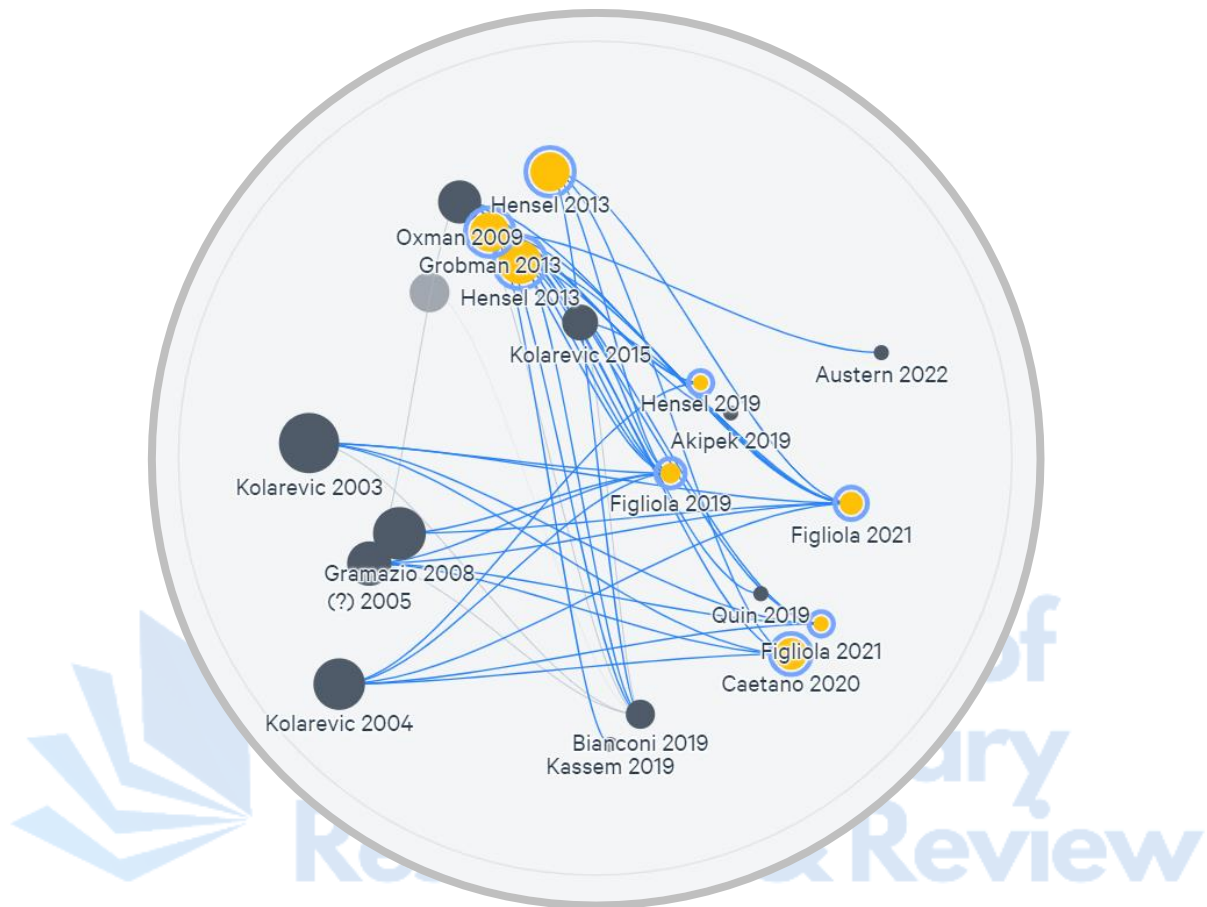

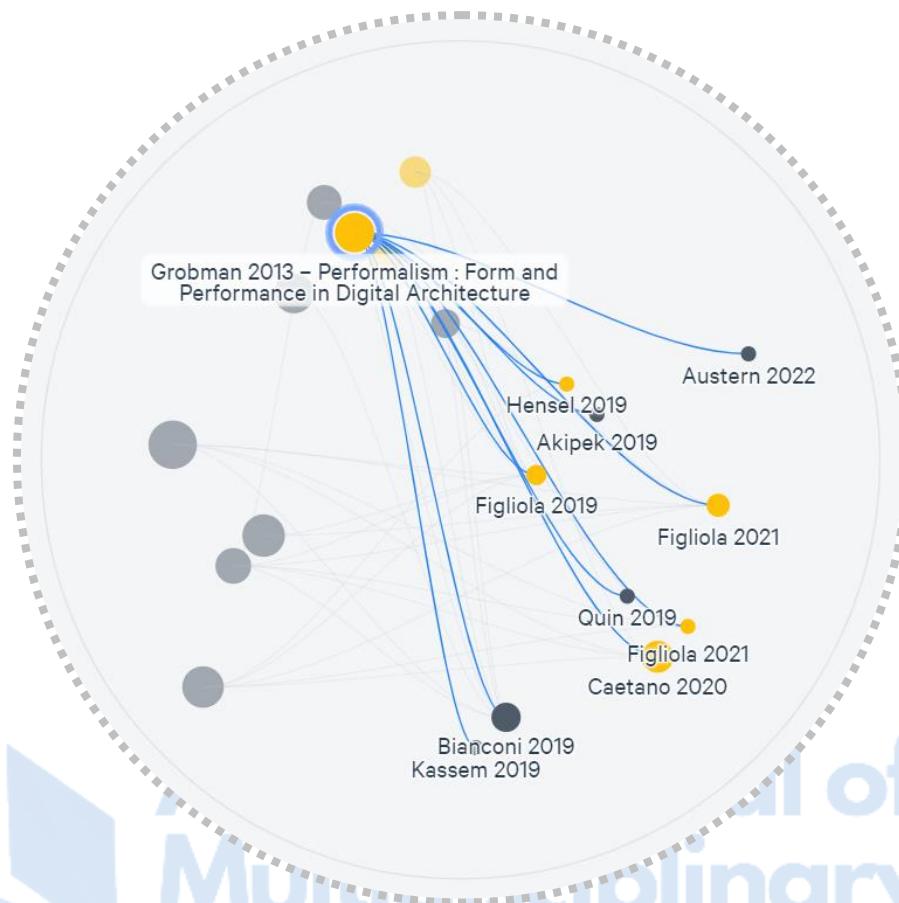
Figure 1 Mapping Literature Review

Figure 2 Mapping Literature Review in relation to Performalism by Yasha Grobman and Eran Neuman

METHODOLOGY

A thorough review of relevant literature on performative architecture and its theoretical foundations was conducted. This included reviewing scholarly articles, books, and academic papers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. As a result, of this literature review, it is understood that the book "Performalism" by Yasha Grobman and Eran Neuman exploring the concept of performative design is highly relevant to this exploration. Figure2, represents the relationship between this book and the studied literature, which is used to structure this paper. Aa systematic approach was followed to analyze the book "Performalism" and its contents. As a result, the methodology involved several steps including a literature review, discussions comparing performative theory and performative practice, evaluation for the book's relevance with performativity and synthesis of findings. The book "Performalism" was

analyzed in detail, focusing on the essays section and the architectural projects section. The aim was to identify the key themes, concepts, and arguments presented in each section. Based on this a comparative analysis of the essays section and the architectural projects section was carried out to compare performative theory and performative practice. This involved analyzing the content, structure, and contributions of each section to understand their individual strengths and weaknesses. A critical evaluation of the book was conducted, considering the insights gained from the literature review and the discussions from the book. This evaluation focused on the accessibility, coherence, and informative value of the book, as well as its contribution to the field of performative architecture. This is followed by synthesis of findings, which included findings from the literature review. The discussions and evaluation were synthesized to present a comprehensive overview of the book "Performalism". This included highlighting the key themes, contributions, and limitations of the book which is used to summarize the main findings of this paper.

DISCUSSIONS

As understood from the literature review, this paper focus on the book performalism in exploring the concept of performative design. This book is structured into two parts: the first part comprises essays that explore the theoretical dimension of performative architecture, while the second part showcases architectural projects that embody the performative dimension. The book's essays section is highly theoretical, and the authors attempt to define and contextualize performative architecture. They explore the various dimensions of performative architecture and its relationship to other architectural concepts such as parametricism and digital architecture. The essays also seek to provide a philosophical foundation for performative architecture and its relationship to other disciplines such as art and engineering. These essays are written by distinguished scholars such as Mark Burry, Kostas Terzidis, and Daniel Davis, among others. The second part comprises a collection of architectural projects that embody the performative dimension. These projects range from small-scale installations to large-scale buildings including works by Eisenman Architects, Greg Lynn, Preston Scott Cohen Inc., Kol/Mac Architecture, Gehry Partners, LLP, Franken Architekten, etc. These projects explore various aspects of performative architecture such as structure, surface, and materiality. This

discussion is based on comparing both these parts and provides a detailed insight into performative theory and performative practice. This comparison is later used to provide an evaluation for the book's relevance with performativity and its value to the architect community. The results of this discussions are then used to draw conclusions about the book's relevance for contemporary architects and its ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Performative theory

The theory and essays section present a comprehensive exploration of performative architecture theory and practice. It includes a series of essays by leading academics and practitioners, each providing an individual perspective on the role of performance in architectural design. This section is further divided into three parts, each exploring a different aspect of performative architecture. The first part, titled "Theoretical Frameworks," provides a conceptual framework for understanding performative architecture, including essays on the historical and philosophical roots of performative architecture, as well as its relationship to other disciplines such as art, engineering, and science. In contrast, the second part, titled "Design Strategies," focuses on the practical application of performative architecture in the design process. This includes essays on parametric design, digital fabrication, simulation and analysis tools. Aside from these topics, this part discusses how performative design can be integrated with other aspects of architecture, such as sustainability and social responsibility. The third and final part of this essay section, titled "Case Studies," provides a series of in-depth case studies of performative architectural projects from around the world. These case studies demonstrate the diverse range of approaches to performative design, including projects that prioritize energy efficiency, material efficiency, and human comfort.

Performative practice

On the other hand, the architectural projects section features a diverse collection of projects that demonstrate the range of possibilities within the Performalist movement. This section showcases projects organized under four categories: Public, Housing, Office and Commercial, and Culture, highlighting the global nature of architecture's performative approach. The Public category features projects that prioritize the needs of the community they serve. These projects range from community centers to libraries and museums, and each showcases an innovative

approach to design that prioritizes functionality and performance. For example, the Library of Birmingham in England is a striking example of a performalist project. Its dynamic form is a testament to the importance of public space. On the other hand, the Housing category of architectural projects featured in "Performalism" showcases a range of innovative approaches to creating living spaces. From apartment buildings to single-family homes, the projects in this category prioritize the needs of the occupants and the environment. For instance, the Endless City project in China offers a modular design that can adapt to future changes in its inhabitants' needs.

This is further supported by the Office and Commercial category, which includes projects that prioritize businesses and employees' needs. In this category, we see projects that are focused on sustainability and flexibility, such as the Dutch bank ING offices in Amsterdam. This project features a flexible design that accommodates bank needs. It also features a focus on sustainability through natural materials and green walls. The last section addresses examples from the culture category of architectural projects showcased in "Performalism", which includes projects that prioritize the needs of cultural institutions. From concert halls to art museums, the projects in this category concern the space's performance and ability to exhibit the arts. For example, the Kaap Skil Museum in the Netherlands showcases a performative approach to design. The space's performance is enhanced by its use of natural materials and dynamic form. In addition to these examples, the other examples highlight the implications of performalism over design, informed reality, digital materiality and its influence on cultural performance, delivery system performance, and contemporary architecture practice.

Evaluation

The book presents a valuable insight into performative design practices, as well as performalism as an ideology. The essays section offers a comprehensive exploration of the theory and practice of performative architecture. This is an invaluable resource for academics, students, and practitioners seeking to deepen their knowledge and understanding of this dynamic field of architecture and design. But it can be challenging for a non-academic reader to understand them due to the abstract nature of the essays outlined in this book. On the other hand, the architectural projects section, is more accessible to the non-academic reader, supported by visual representations. This section prioritizes functionality and performance,

highlighting the importance of design that serves the needs of its occupants and the environment. However, it also lacks a coherent narrative, since the projects are not presented in any particular order. This could be challenging to discern the connection between the projects presented in the book. As a result, Performalism is an informative book that provides deep insights into the theory and practice of performative architecture. It seeks to explore the concept of performative architecture. As a result, both sections contribute to understanding how the theoretical foundations are elaborated using various architectural projects that embody the performative dimension. The book is an essential read for architects, architecture students, and scholars interested in exploring architecture's performative dimension. In addition, the book provides readers with an opportunity to gain insight into the practice and theory of performative architecture, making it a valuable resource for all those looking to deepen their knowledge of the field.

Findings

Building upon the works of Grobman (2013), Figliola (2021), Caetano (2020), Hensei (2019), and other notable scholars, this paper offers a comprehensive exploration of form, performance, and computational design approaches in architecture and urban design. With a keen focus on the evolution of design thinking and the integration of systems thinking in the field, Performalism (concept) provides valuable insights and analysis at the intersection of architecture and performance. From the theoretical foundations to practical applications, this paper explores informed architectures from a variety of perspectives, sharing expertise that will undoubtedly shape its development. Additionally, the book Performalism is a significant contribution to the study of performative architecture. Through its two sections, the book provides a comprehensive exploration of the theory and practice of performative architecture. The essays section offers valuable insights into the historical, philosophical, and practical aspects of performative design. The essays by distinguished scholars delve into the theoretical frameworks, design strategies, and case studies of performative architecture, providing a solid foundation for understanding the complexities of this architectural approach. On the other hand, the architectural projects section showcases a diverse array of projects that exemplify the possibilities within Performalism. From public spaces to housing, office, and cultural institutions, the projects prioritize functionality, performance, and the needs of the occupants and the environment. The inclusion of visual representations enhances the accessibility of this

section for non-academic readers, allowing them to understand and appreciate the design concepts and outcomes.

While the book offers valuable insights, it does have some limitations. The highly theoretical nature of the essays may make them challenging for non-academic readers to grasp. Additionally, the lack of a coherent narrative in the architectural project section may hinder readers' ability to discern the connections between the presented projects. As a result, Performalism serves as an essential resource for architects, architecture students, and scholars interested in exploring the performative dimension of architecture. It offers a deep understanding of the theory and practice of performative architecture and provides readers with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and appreciation of this dynamic field.

In conclusion, this paper explores the theoretical foundations of performance by emphasizing the embodiment of the performative dimension. Through a comprehensive analysis, it provides insights into how the performative aspect influences various disciplines, and especially architectural discourse. By delving into performative nature, this explains how performative acts are embedded in architectural discourse. By doing so, its readers are provided with a deeper understanding of how performativity is incorporated into space and building design. It sheds light on how performative acts contribute to understanding social, cultural, and political phenomena associated with design. This enables readers to grasp the complexity and significance of performative dimensions. With its distinct perspective, it deepens our understanding of performance's theoretical underpinnings and transformative potential. It offers insights and strategies to create meaningful performative experiences in the built environment. It offers readers a way to examine how performative acts can shape and redefine our spaces.

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