
MAKING URBAN PLACES

Lecture 2: An Urban Vocabulary

That the urban spaces which make up our cities is merely a collection of spaces left over between buildings, is an opinion which is spatially, socially and culturally bankrupt. Urban space, for the urban designer, is a public theatre for a complex mixture of social, political, economic and individual behaviour vital to all of us. Such spaces are of equal, if not greater significance, to our growth and development as the architecture which we inhabit.

Historically urban space was not merely an extension of architecture, but space created from elements of a distinctively urban character. In this lecture we set out to examine this urban vocabulary with two intentions:

1. To group the vocabulary under the perceptual headings of Kevin Lynch and relate them to common human experiences in space.
2. To reveal the dynamic rules of combination (syntax) underlying such a vocabulary which permits us to create a rich and diverse language of urban forms.

References:

Gordon Cullen : Townscape

Kevin Lynch: Image of the City

Camillo Sitte: City Planning on Artistic Principles.

Leon Krier : Urban Space.