

TIAN RONG

DIALOGUE IN THE DARK

- Design inclusive space for the visually impaired



Dialogue in the dark explores architectural strategies to enhance the social inclusion of people with visual impairment. In the latest world report on vision (WHO, 2019), at least 2.2 billion people around the world have a vision impairment. The figure in Sweden is approximately 100,000. It is quite a large group in the world. However, due to their dysfunction problems and the lack of inclusive environment, they are easy to be excluded by most of the architecture today. Even worse, they have a higher risk of being marginalized in society. There seems to be an invisible wall dividing the visually impaired and the sighted.

The thesis aims to break down the “invisible wall” and create opportunities for equal dialogue between these two groups. Mutual understanding is the key to social integration and interaction. The idea is to encourage the visually disabled to embrace the world and to raise public awareness and overcome prejudice and stereotype.

To achieve the goal, it starts with the question - what type of buildings do we need, and how could it interact with the public? By literature study, case, and historical study, it motivates to an activity

center for the visually impaired but also shared by the public. The building provides an inclusive, collaborative, and creative environment for everyone. It is a place where the visually impaired can gather around and provide peer support for each other. Besides wandering around the building brings people into an immersive multi-sensory journey, which slows us down and focus on the body itself and its relation with the external environment.

Another intention of the thesis is to explore the possibility of materializing the five basic senses and investigating how to stimulate them by architecture. Instead of a thorough study of all the senses, it mainly focuses on haptic perception and how to use architectural materials to support active and passive touch.

Hopefully, the thesis will lead to a discussion about how to emphasize the visually impaired in design and architecture and therefore contributing to an inclusive society.

Keywords : Visual impairment, social inclusion, activity center, multi-sensory design, haptic design

HEALTHCARE

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