Disney's in The Details

The Phenomenology of Theme Park Architecture
In Modern Design

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Imagine. Inspire. Illustrate
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"To all that come to this happy place: Welcome. Disneyland is your land."

- Walt Disney,

Disneyland Opening Day July 17, 1955

**SETTING THE SCENE:**

This is a study of the specific ways in which Disney’s design methodologies welcome the occupier of a space into an immersive experience and liberates the architecture from the restrictiveness of form follows function. This research will uncover the reasons why themed architecture has a greater influence upon on us than the architecture of the spaces we encounter on a day-to-day basis. It will also show how the theming of architecture caters to the subconscious elements of our human nature. Disney design shows that space can be transformed into an evocative experience, allowing for design to emulate and echo the realities and narratives of the people inhabiting the space. By designing spaces to tell the stories of those who inhabit said spaces, we will create a far more intimate relationship with our built environment and thus improve our perception of our surroundings. The well-known Disney storytelling approach will revolutionize future designs for the parks and resorts as well as all contemporary design philosophies.
Welcome to the world of Walt Disney Imagineering:

Welcome to the world of Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI for short). I will be your friendly host. This section of the paper will help the reader understand what the world of Disney Imagineering entails. It will also give insight into secrets behind the magic that have not only captured my heart, but those of millions around the globe across decades. So before I take you through all of the in’s and out’s, up’s and down’s of WDI, hold on to your hats “‘cause this here’s the wildest thesis in the west.”

It was the 1950’s: the world was well into recovering from the aftermath of WWII. The United States was launched full throttle into the world as a global power, with capitalism and patriot pride booming. The television at the peak of its maturity, gave Walt Disney the mightiest of thrones to sit upon: the world of entertainment. It is said that Walt first conceived the idea of Disneyland while sitting at Griffith Park in Los Angeles, watching his daughters Diane and Sharon ride the carousel. There were many theme parks that had already seen their golden years. They paved the way for new dynamics in society such as Coney Island, which had created new male-female interactions and “[brought] men and women together… [allowing] them to meet, folic and better understand on another.” (Lukas “Theme Park” 129) Or perhaps how people chose to spend their free time, as they searched for clean safe forms of entertainment that could disrupt the monotony of their daily lives. Theme parks such as Steeplechase, Dreamland, and Luna Park were breaking boundaries in the world of phenomenology in architecture, sociology, urban and landscape design.

Despite the indisputable success of these sorts of parks, the 1950’s also brought a huge influx of veterans returning home from war, which created a huge market for suburban housing. By accommodating this new generation of young families with new forms of
urbanism, the dynamics of the built environment began to create huge social and economic gaps. The ripple effect of this led to issues such as urban decay and crime, changing how and where people were spending their leisure time. It was that fine day in LA’s Griffith Park, as Walt watched his daughters enjoy the simple pleasures in life such as riding the carousel, he decided that unlike other theme parks ever before, there needed to be a place where families, both adults and children, could enjoy a park. He wanted to provide a place where they could enjoy the simple experience of sharing time together without the fears and troubles of the world.

The success of Walt’s movies and TV series would pave the way for his greatest success, turning his films into a reality. Disneyland would compliment his films and turn them into habitable space, giving them three-dimensional forms, creating tangibility and allowing for his fans to experience the narratives seen on the screen. He had the perfect platform to launch his family-friendly theme park and so he set to work on finding the location, the design, and the designers. The first workings of the design placed the park on the 8-acre lot across from the Disney Studio on Riverside Dr. in Burbank. Walt, who was always thinking bigger and better, traveled to many theme parks, parks, pleasure gardens and other urban spaces to fuel his inspiration; one of the most notable parks he visited was Children’s Fairyland in Oakland, CA. As mock-ups for the park began to expand the dimensions of Disneyland’s design, a new search began to find a plot of land that could accommodating the rapidly growing park. The location needed to accommodate Walt’s guests and his wallet. In 1953, with the help of the Stanford Research Institute (Go Bears!), Walt discovered a 160-acre orange grove just outside the Los Angeles metropolitan area, sitting right on the I-5 freeway. (Justdisney.com)
With the official location settled upon, initial concept designs for the park were sent to Welton Becket, a close friend of Walt’s and distinguished architect. Becket in fact turned Walt down because the narrow set of skills of his firm couldn’t produce what Walt needed to allow for his theme park to be a success. (“The Imagineers Field Guide”) Disney wouldn’t succumb to the horrifying architecture of the postwar modernist dogma that produces cold, unfeeling, and strictly functional designs. Walt was in desperate need of designers who could understand the uniqueness and richness of his park and build it according to his vision. He then turned to his crew at the studio who were experts in set design and the art of tricking the camera (or the human eye in this case). They were responsible for imagining and engineering all facets of the design process that went into building the park. He dubbed these mix of madmen and geniuses, “The IMAGINEERS.” The Imagineers, or Imagineering, combines the words “imagination” and
“engineering.” Walt’s army of film makers, set designers, artists, engineers, contractors, architects…etc. were responsible for giving tangibility to his dream, and turning the world of Disney entertainment into a reality.

After his passing in 1966, the Imagineers were responsible for continuing Walt’s dreams and are still the magicians behind the illusions and the many groundbreaking designs that have come to shape all things Disney. Under the WDI there are over 140 job titles, everything from mechanical engineers to paper sculptors, from architects to paint specialists, from creative writers to set designers and everything else in between. They are responsible for everything that lies outside of making the animation and films such as the worldwide empire of theme parks, cruise ships, travel spots, and digital interactive media. Here are some great and notable programs they gave us: the Hub and spoke plan- consists of a singular entry-and-exit way with a central hub and multiple lands or locations
radiating from that hub (experiencedzine.com), the official first setting for the family friendly theme park, but most importantly, the masterwork of the set designers who brought life and 3 dimensionality to story and narratives in the form of functional architecture.

**Why you may ask**

“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”

---WALT DISNEY---

When asked as children, most say they want to be a president, a doctor, a firefighter, or a dancer. I have always *known* I would be an Imagineer. I have always wanted to do something *with* people and *for* people. Humans are the most fascinating creatures in the way we are made, how we perceive our environment through what we make, how we interact with each other, and the nature of our
personalities. All of these are most visible through the spaces we design and occupy. Have you ever wondered what is hiding behind the magician’s curtain?

“The magician takes the ordinary something and makes it do something extraordinary. Now you're looking for the secret... but you won't find it, because of course you're not really looking. You don't really want to know. You want to be fooled.” –The Prestige

To be a designer is to look at the world through the lens of the magician, constantly searching for the secrets of design hidden in plain sight, manifesting new ways to captivate the audience. Such is the mind of the designer who is both madman and magician, genius and bringer of disruption to the mainstream. The designer is always looking for the programs and decoding the work, uncovering delineations and bringing about new philosophies of design, becoming one with the metaphysical qualities of the space that gives it its physical significance. There is nothing more incredible than our ability to create evocative moments for others, to take that moment of magic that I feel in my own heart and give it to others. Sharing this magic with others, so that they can keep passing along this powerful experience, causing a ripple effect of positive spatial experiences.

But what is that moment of magic that we feel? What is that magic made of? How is it made? All designers should be interested in pulling back the curtain and understanding the illusion and the cause of the mystification, and how our work captivates guests when they enter the designed spaces. Decoding the magic will better our abilities to understand how specific design methodologies effect and influence our experience in the built environment, thus allowing us as designers to create far better spaces.
Some discount Disneyland and categorize it as an idealized delusion and architectural falsity. These are true when regarded within the context of a critical discourse. Most opinions of Disneyland, whether positive or negative, are founded on a narrow scope of what the park actually means. If we remove the extraneous factors that may sway opinions such as the weather, the lines, the parades, the fireworks, screaming children, the infamous snacking on turkey legs and pickles, the demonic business strategies of corporate America, metaphors, arguments, social implication insights, and we simply analyze what is taking place in the built environment, we will find there is an undeniable series of methodologies taking place within the park that creates far more evocative experiential qualities than our day-to-day architecture.

The phenomenology of architecture is a philosophy that arose in the 1950’s as a challenge to the post war modernist era. It was a form of design theory that focused on the experience of the built environment. This theory reached its peak in between the 1970’s - 80’s. There was a stronger focus on the importance of history and the significance of how previous techniques have led us to where we are now. All of this played part in leading to the Post-Modernist movement. Indeed, there is nothing like that unforgettable moment when the characters from the movie that you watched at the age of four and have memorized word for word, comes dancing down the street and give you a hug. Or even the rush of adrenaline pumping through your veins after encountering swindling pirates or “The Wildest Train in the Wilderness.” These are moments that make up the Disneyland experience on the surface. To better understand why all of this comes together to create a physical, emotional and mentally enthralling experience on so many levels, first we must ask
the million dollar question: Why is theme park architecture, or “parkitecture” better than contemporary modes of architecture, landscape architecture or urban planning?

Let us dive into the pool of pixie dust, and take a look behind the scenes at the magic of Disney’s parkitecture. Some folks say working behind the scenes ruins the magic. In a magic trick the best part is the disappearing. The *how* of the magic is by definition what makes it magical. For the designer, the behind the scenes should be the most fascinating part. Why do you think there are a multitude of forums, blogs, and books detailing, rumorizing and conspiring what happens after the stroke of midnight? People enjoy discovering the magic. The mystery of the WDI and the desire of millions of fans to reveal all the best-kept secrets is an affirmation that the magic behind Disney is an underestimated topic of discussion and sparks many thought-provoking conversations and studies.

When one thinks of themed architecture, they are provoked to perceive a space designed to incorporate all aspects of entertainment: music, movies, and media. I want to give a more specific focus on the immersive nature of these types of spaces and how they are designed to connect, effect, and influence our subconscious and conscious behaviors. How and why entertainment spaces are far more successful in capturing our most basic nature and absorbing us into those environments. Why is this specific form of architecture/design far more successful in shaping our experience in a space than the typical perception and idea of architecture?

Now Be sure to fasten your seat belts. Why don’t more people talk about it? Because designers and critics alike have gotten lost in the hyper-focusing on delineations of two point perspectives and the action and reaction of metaphysical and existential meanings of a building’s juxtaposition of space. Most designers are too busy or too resolute in the elitist trend of philosophies to
explore more non-traditional methods, or in regards to the content of this paper, traditional. What was once traditional, is now outdated, irrelevant, segregated and stuffed into categories pertaining to its dedicated time period of trending. Why not look into that magical crystal ball and bring back from the past, the great simplicity of form and function. German architect, Ole Schereen discusses his design philosophy that is an adaptation of “form follows function.” In his work he believes great architecture should tell a story, so that instead of form following function, form should follow fiction. This is demonstrated in the floating theater he built in Thailand, designed from the materials and techniques used by local fisherman. (See Ole Schereen Ted Talk Why Great Architecture Should Tell a Story) The fiction is an embodiment of the stories and narratives of the people who will use the spaces designed. This is an idea that speaks greatly to the general trend of WDI design.

Let the parkitecture tell its story. Clare Cooper Marcus discusses the power of healing gardens and how the design of the space can have a strong positive influence on health and recovery. She informs us that more often than not, designers get carried away with motifs and metaphors of the design and forget all together to create the space to cater to the needs of its users. We should design space and architecture to respond to the user’s desires of the environment. The simplicity of this design philosophy should be considered because it ensures the design is true to its intent, and pure in its abilities. And now that the reader has been given some context, I will now provide a map to guide you through the in’s and the out’s, the how’s and the why’s.

In the mean time:

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR HANDS, ARMS, FEET, AND LEGS INSIDE THE THESIS AT ALL TIMES.**
Here’s Some Vocab- **IMAGINEERING 101** (The Imagineering Field Guide)

**WDI DISCIPLINES:**

**Show/ Concept Design**- Produces early drawing and rendering that serve as the inspiration for our projects, and provides initial concepts and visual communication

**Show Writing**- Develops the stories we want to tell in the parks, as well as any nomenclature that is required… for attractions, the copy for plaques, and names the lands, rides, shops, vehicles and restaurants

**Architecture**- Turns all the fanciful show drawings into real buildings

**Interior Design**- Responsible for the design details on the inside of all the buildings, interior spaces, select finishes, furniture, and fixtures to complete

**Engineering**- Mechanical, Electrical and other standards and make all of our ideas work.

**Lighting Design**- Puts all of the hard work the other disciplines have done on show, attractions in the best light, specify themed lighting fixtures

**Graphic Designers**- Produce signage, both flat and dimensional, in addition to providing lots of the artwork, patterns, and details that finish the Disney show

**Prop Design**- Concerned with who “lives” in a given area of a park or resort. All of the pieces and parts of everyday life that tell you about a person, a time or place are carefully selected and placed
**Sound Designers** - Develop the auditory backdrop for everything you see and experience

**Media Design** - Creates all the various film, video, and on-screen interactive content in our parks

**Landscape Architecture** - Focus on our tree and plant palette, hardscape, arrangement of foliage and area development

**Show Set Design** - Takes concepts and breaks them down into bite-size pieces that are organized into drawing and drafting packages, integrated into the architectural, mechanical, civil, or other components of the project, and tracked during fabrication

**Character Paint** - Color schemes, various materials, finishes and design for all finishing touches on what goes into the park

**Character Plaster** - Finishing sculpture and forms to look like other materials such as rockwork, themed paving and architectural facades

**Dimensional Design** - Model making, sculpture used to work out design issues ahead of time in model form, ensuring that our relative scales and spatial relationship are properly coordinated

**Fabrication Design** - Developing and implementing the production strategies that allow us to build all the specialized items on the large and complex projects that are delivered

**Special Effects** - Creates all of the magical (but totally believable) smoke, fire, water, lightning, ghosts, explosions, pixie dust, wind, rainfall, snow, and other mechanical tricks that give our stories action and a sense of surprise
Production design- Starts with the show design, takes it to the next level of detail, takes it to the next level of detail, ensures that it can be built so as to maintain the creative intent, and integrates the show with all other systems that will need to be coordinated in the field during install

Master Planning- Looks into future maps out of the best locations and layouts for a park or a whole property, planning locations for projects that might be many years away from realization

R&D- Research and Development invests the latest and greatest technologies, trends and entertainment

Project Management- Organizes teams, schedules, and processes so that projects can be delivered to standards, on time and with the financial framework

Construction Management- Ensures every job meets Disney construction standards

WDI VOCAB:

Theme Parkitecture is my own term to refer to the architecture of theme parks.

Blue sky is the initial idea generation process, where “the sky is the limit.”

Cast members: Historically speaking, we have to remember that the imagineers who built most of Disneyland were mostly set designers. They set the proverbial stage for the Disneyland show and all those who come to work and be a part of such a show are known as Cast members.

Guests: All visitors who enter to enjoy the show are typically referred to as guests.
Dark ride are attractions that are housed more or less completely inside a show building, which allows for greater isolation of show elements and light control, as needed. A sort of microcosm of what takes place in the whole of the park.

Elevations are drawings of a true frontal view of an object, usually a building, and often are drawn from multiple sides, eliminating perspective.

A Section is a drawing that looks as if it’s a slice through an object or space, and is looking into the interior and structural elements. This is very helpful in seeing how various elements interrelate. It is typically drawn as though it were an elevation, with heavier line weights defining where our imaginary cut would be.

(Woodbridge 72)
A **Maquette** is just another term for a model, typically more theatrical and usually a sculpture. The maquette depicts a show element on a smaller scale allowing any necessary alterations to be made before full-scale construction begins. It’s much easier to make changes on the maquette than on a full-size anything.

![Genie Maquette from Disney film: Aladdin](cel-ebration.com)

**Plussing** is a word derived from Walt’s penchant for always trying to make an idea better. Imagineers are always trying to *plus* their work, even after its “finished,” because as Walt said, “Disneyland with never be complete.”

**POV** - Point of View, referring to the position from which something is seen. The artists and conceptual designers typically do this and choose the vantage point of the viewer to begin creating imagery and illustration.

**Propping** is the placement of objects around a scene. From books on a shelf to place settings on a table to wall hangings in an office space, props are the elements that give a set life and describe the people who live there. They are the everyday objects we see all around but that point out so much about our story if you pay attention to them.
Show: Everything put “on stage” in Disneyland is a part of the Show. Walt believed that everything designed in the parks for the guests was part of a big show. With that in mind, show becomes for us a very broad term and how the guest goes about experiencing that show includes just about anything the guests see, hear, smell, or come in contact with during their visit.

The Story is the fundamental building block of everything WDI does. Imagineers are, above all, storytellers. The time, place, characters and plot points that give our work meaning start with the story, which is also the frameworks that guides all design decisions.

Visual Intrusion- Any outside element that makes its way into the scene, breaks the visual continuity and destroys the illusion. WDI works hard to eliminate visual intrusions.

The Storyboard was the great invention of Walt, when he needed to plan out the content and timing of his films. The practice naturally transferred over to WDI when so many of the early Imagineers came over from Walt’s Animation department. WDI today still uses the large pin-up board to post ideas in a brainstorm or to outline the story points of a ride or film.
The **Wienie** is Walt’s playful term for a visual element that could be used to draw people into and around a space. A wienie is big enough to be seen from a distance and interesting enough to make you want to take a closer look, like the Sleeping Beauty Castle at the end of Main Street, U.S.A. Wienies are critical to our efforts at laying out a sequence of experiences in an organized fashion. “What you need is a wienie, which says to people ‘come this way.’ People won’t go down a long corridor unless there’s something promising at the end.

You have to have something the beckons them to ‘walk this way.’” – Walt.

(Main Street, Sleeping Beauty Castle is the “Weenie”)

An **Attraction** vs. a ride? The only ride in Disneyland is Mr. Toad’s wild ride; this is because all other entities are attractions. “All rides are attractions, but not all attractions are rides. An attraction is a story-based, calm ride. For instance, a [shooting gallery](https://www.wordreference.com) at an amusement park is an attraction, but it's not a ride. A ride is an attraction that you can ride upon such as the Ferris wheels, flume rides, carousels and so on.” (Wordreference.com)
The **Theme park** vs. the Amusement park? Amusement parks are focused solely on the excitement and thrill of the rides intensity of the environment, where as the theme park’s goal is to immerse the guest into a story based environment or another world.

**Theme** is the fundamental nature of a story in terms of what it means to us, or the choice of time, place, and décor applied to an area in order to support that story. **“Theming is a conscious, thoughtful, and effect-producing representation”** (Lukas “Immersive Worlds Handbook” 79) of a specific place, time, thought, or idea.

**Gesamtkunstwerk** is the perfect work of art, all encompassing of many different forms to create total and wholesome piece.

**Wunderkammer** is a term that refers to a cabinet of curiosity, a special box that holds small treasures and trinkets. Walt has a delightful obsession with miniatures because of their ability to draw in an audience and transport them into another world.

This is the sort of philosophy he wanted to bring to his park.
HERE’S HOW IT WORKS- THE MAGIC BEHIND THE MAGIC

“How many Imagineers does it take to screw in a light bulb?” The Imagineers are the ones to ask “does it have to be a light bulb?” They ask the hows and the whys that push design to never-before-reached, magical lengths. Disneyland was built by Walt’s studio crew who were already experts in the art of theater and set design, and masters of techniques such as scale, perspective and distortion. Disney architecture tells a story: it is a Gesamtkunstwerk, a total work of art in telling the story with sight, smell, sound, time, place, and characters. One takes a step into this immersive world and one becomes a part of their favorite movie or an adventure they’ve always wanted to have. WDI design connects with the guest, has an effect on their perception of the space, and thus influencing how they move about and experience the space.

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“Involvement and immersion is what makes Disneyland such an incredible success, because the imagineers are dedicated to completely immersing the visitor into the story. Everything is factored into the great equation of theming, all designed in a similar manner to the making of a film. They begin with an intro- drawing the guest in with a taste of what is to come- and then throw them into the throttle of the adventure, giving everyone that moment to challenge their every sense. Some techniques to ensure the full immersion:

- Framing
- Contrast
- Misdirection
• Forced perspective
• Optical illusions
• Theatrical elements
• Sequence of Space

A Vertical Forced Perspective Set

(Woodbridge 181)

• Auditory Senses
• Sense of Smell
• Light to dark/ dark to light – we are drawn towards light, “moth effect”
• Rule of opposition

(Yale Gracey & Pepper’s Ghost Walt Disney Imagineering 132)
- Illusion of space
- Framing: foreground, middle, background
- Ground Roll- set back the stage from the backdrop to emphasize a far-off distance
- Depth
- Altered Reality
- Spatial complexity

(Grand Canyon Diorama *Walt Disney Imagineering* 143)

Determining the Height in Mechanical Perspective

(Woodbridge 169)
WDI goes the next step further, ensuring the guest is not just moving through the space, but also *experiencing* it, becoming a part of the design, and becoming a part of the story. The complete immersion is done with micro-theming: time, place, characters, sight, smell, sound, and touch. “In the contemporary Theme Park… to naturalize the space of consumption are realized in four approaches to an architecture of persuasion: place (real and imagined), events and time periods, moods and people and cultures. The particular means by which the theme park approaches its spatial and architectural decisions is not as significant, though, as the way in which it fills the gaps that may develop as a person moves from ride to attraction and from them land to them land within the park…” (Lukas Theme Park 70-71) The micro-theming and smaller details that cater to the transitioning of spaces is just as important as the master plan. For the design as a whole to be taken seriously, the smallest of elements need to be sought after to ensure that the bigger picture maintains its sense of legitimacy. Everything that the guest might interact with is taken into account (Alcorn “Theme Park Design”) by “[focusing] on the specifics of theming- the nuances of details that might be noticed by a patron in the most obscure and unexpected places…” (Lukas “Theme Park” 79) As can easily be deduced, most of the techniques still used are tricks that came from the early days of film and even are echoed in the brainstorm and development process.
“There are about 5 phases a project goes through before being green-lit.” (Jose, Previous Imagineer intern)

1. Blue Sky
2. Storyboarding
3. Development
4. Building
5. Finishing touches

Granted, the design and build process is not all fireworks and pixie dust, as it requires as much ebbing and flowing as any project at a design firm does. This is why Disney storyboards everything that they design, including films, rides, parks, and any space that will be occupied by guests in a physical or metaphorical manner. The purpose of the story is to keep the “Holism in tact, “[taking] the big picture into account and how things are connected to make up a whole.” (Lukas, “Immersive Worlds Handbook” 22) The overarching themes and plots are just as important as the Backstory is, because the designer must “[understand] how all the pieces fit together, in order to produce a cohesive and coherent space.” (Lukas, “Immersive Worlds Handbook” 22) Marty Sklar, one of the original men who worked closely with Walt, former WDI president and a Disney legend, wrote a list of guidelines and suggestions called “Mickey’s 10 Commandments.” These 10 commandments are the key to ensuring the holism and the backstory to any space are fully developed. They are applicable to not only Disney designers, but also any designer who seeks creating an evocative and successful space for its users.
MICKEY’S 10 COMMANDMENTS

1. Know your audience - Don't bore people, talk down to them or lose them by assuming that they know what you know.

2. Wear your guest's shoes - Insist that designers, staff and your board members experience your facility as visitors as often as possible.

3. Organize the flow of people and ideas - Use good story telling techniques, tell good stories not lectures, lay out your exhibit with a clear logic.

4. Create a weenie - Lead visitors from one area to another by creating visual magnets and giving visitors rewards for making the journey.

5. Communicate with visual literacy - Make good use of all the non-verbal ways of communication - color, shape, form, and texture.

6. Avoid overload - Resist the temptation to tell too much, to have too many objects, don't force people to swallow more than they can digest, try to stimulate and provide guidance to those who want more.

7. Tell one story at a time - If you have a lot of information divide it into distinct, logical, organized stories, people can absorb and retain information more clearly if the path to the next concept is clear and logical.

8. Avoid contradiction - Clear institutional identity helps give you the competitive edge. Public needs to know who you are and what differentiates you from other institutions they may have seen.

9. For every ounce of treatment, provide a ton of fun - How do you woo people from all other temptations? Give people plenty of opportunity to enjoy themselves by emphasizing ways that let people participate in the experience and by making your environment rich and appealing to all senses.

10. Keep it up - Never underestimate the importance of cleanliness and routine maintenance, people expect to get a good show every time, people will comment more on broken and dirty stuff.

(Martin Sklar, Walt Disney Imagineering, Education vs. Entertainment: Competing for audiences, AAM Annual meeting, 1987)
The proverbial phrase, “the devil is in the details,” often insinuates the gravity of paying special care to the minute details. The title of this thesis is “Disney is in the Details” because at the foundation of WDI design methodologies, is the close attention to detail and micro-theming that takes place throughout the park. It is the details of a design that convince us of the truth of the space that we occupy. We live in a world where we question the legitimacy of everything, and thus we accept inauthenticity. This is because we no longer design to the full extent. We have forgotten to consider what relationship our physical beings, emotions, and opinions may have with the built environment.

It is the “devilish” attention to detail in WDI’s designs that allow the guest to accept the authenticity of Disneyland, and hold it to be the record of truth in that context. This is how WDI uses the built environment to connect to the guest and being the full immersion into that world. The guest can focus on and enjoy the master plan if the subconscious is saturated and sedated with the presence of details. “To transform space into place, design needs to focus on concepts and techniques that will, first and foremost, value the ideals of the people- the guests- who come to the place.” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 28) According to Jose, a previous Imagineer and Cal graduate, achieving this level of detail is more of an art than a science. “In the theme park industry, everything is a prototype so you only get one chance to build something…Disney [has an] entirely different design processes…Disney gets stuck arguing about the paint. But Disney can do a lot of things no one else can because of the size of places like Disney world and the amount of money they are willing to spend.” (Jose)
The prototyping philosophy can certainly be felt upon the guest arrival. There is a drama about it that gives it an authenticity in the rarity of its experience. “Technique is the mother of intent”, and the methodologies use make or break the intent, and out from the intent comes the immersion of the guest. (Lukas Immersive World Handbook) Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan once noted that “when space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place.” Space can become familiar to us in due time, as one can build a relationship with anything over time. However, the goal of design should be that we conceptualize and create spaces that we can bond with immediately; to create that personal relationship with the design upon immediate contact. In order to do so, requires the activation of all of our senses. Over time this design philosophy has become lost in the utilitarianism and function of space. Design has become all too bifurcated. Landscape architecture, architecture, urban planning: they all have become entirely separated and segregated into different job categories. The world of design used to be cohesive, singular, and linear. It required nothing more than one person who had a vision and created spaces that catered to every sense.

In this modern age, Disney is leading the few who still see the world in terms of this all-inclusive design philosophy. Activating the sense of Sight involves “creating of dramatic views, a strong sense of depth perception,” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 197) and varying scale within a space to draw the guest’s visual attention within the confines of the immersive world. Auditory elements are some of the most influential elements as we have strong emotional and mental connections with music. Hearing “ambient sounds can help convey the feeling of the space, as well as music and forms of performative sound” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 197) to accompany shows and active elements of the environment. Less commonly addressed, the choice of food
and even a guest’s *Tasting* experience is important to matching the theme of a specific space especially as the guest changes spaces within their prospective immersive world. One, that we perhaps disregard far too often, is our experience of smell. *Smell* is effective in the case of conveying a sense of place, like that unforgettable smell of vanilla and sweets on Main Street. *Touch* is one of the most important senses. It allows the guest the get immediate and first hand involvement in the space. Designers can use touch is also “to create authentic and realistic features on walls, doors, and furniture.” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 197) It also includes the changing of textures, changing the flooring for the receptors in your feet, using concrete instead of brick. *Thermoreception* is not put into practice as readily as others but there is significance in regulating the temperature of the space, like the attractiveness of sailing through the cool waters of Pirates of the Caribbean on a hot day. *Equilibrium* and *Kinesthetic* sense are often used cohesively to alter the guests’ “perception and temporary states of disorientation.” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 197) This allows the WDI designers “to change how a guests body moves, moving in new ways and new trajectories” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 197) allowing for necessary traffic patterns in the park. This also includes certain obstacles or misdirecting barriers like trees or fences, the rides themselves.

Many would complain that Disney is far too programmed and controlling. But in truth, so is every other designed space. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning are all derived from the simple fact that design is about control over our environment. So Disney, in fact, is no more controlling than any other designed space. Better it be to occupy a space that caters to our human needs and senses than to force upon ourselves the ridiculous notion that we are mandated to occupy the oppressive spaces
we’ve designed. In fact, designers have acquired tunnel vision on visual experience; they often forget the significance of all the others. This is especially true when designers forget to consider issues that might arise for guests with disabilities. In an Interview with David Greenbaum, the head designer on the Museum of the Bible Project (opening in Washington DC, 2017) “a [designer] should want the visitor to feel smart as they walk through the space,” no matter what level of ability they have when they enter the space. The designer should make their guests feel as if they are uncovering the secrets for themselves. We must take into consideration not only horizontal and vertical circulation in the physical sense, but also the circulation of experience, the circulation of thoughts and emotions the guest will have as they move through the park. As designers we should hide these in plain sight, allowing our “architecture to be in support of the interpretive message” (Greenbaum) without overwhelming one sense more than the other. All the senses should be immersed first and foremost, and then final immersion is completed by the appropriate complementary physical design work.

Any designed and immersive space is driven by the critical need to move people through space. In the world of cultural museums it depends on the exhibit, or the attraction in them parks, but there are many different ways to coordinate this pedestrian movement such as the “yellow brick road, the 1 way loop, and the famous Disney Hub and Spoke plan.” (Greenbaum) The hub and spoke is the most successful, especially within the context of the theme park, “as guests are free to explore and come back.” (Greenbaum) Within the physical design elements that assist in traffic patterns, there are many psychological and emotional connections that can be triggered through the built environment. But the presiding question remains, to what degree does the conceptualizer program the space and how much freedom does the guest have to move about freely emotionally, mentally and
physically? There are ways to prompt the guest through the environment without smothering their desire to continue uncovering the “hidden” secrets of the space. (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 182)

“The attractor or the weenie as Walt called it, beckons or calls the guest to a certain area within the space. Within Disney parks [they’re used as visual stimuli] to circulate guests through the park, to enhance their excitement and give them the opportunity to see many rides and attractions in the park. The archetype is that universal symbol that all people can understand and connect with. Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell showed us the ways that archetypes have transformed culture and the people within it. Jung looked at the key archetypes of culture—like the child, the mother, the hero, the wise person—and spoke of the ways in which we see these appear in cultures across time and space and in forms ranging from rock art to paintings.” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 182)

The attractor and the archetype can be used independently from each other as well as synonymously with one another. Any guest from any walk of life can relate to these emotional and psychological stimuli.

A designer may come across a complex space and could be faced with never before seen obstacles. In this case, to pursue the immersive world one must return back to the basics and consider the preexisting narratives and historical significance of the place, the surrounding context and culture. There are multiple ways to look at it. ‘It’s all about the right feel,” you have to interpret what your users are going to want to create a design that will be able to adapt and change. In order to design to transcend time one consider the work as a game of Billiards, always be adapting to the moves at hand but thinking 5 or 6 moves in advance. It’s like a chess game with people.
The “must extract the architecture” (Greenbaum) and go back to the origin. The designer “shouldn’t copy the motif,” and there should be an “extraction of iconography;” (Greenbaum) designing not for the symbol or metaphor, design for the actuality of what it is emulating. We are designing for the organic story.

“When we speak of something organic we mean that it is alive- it is something that is not made up artificial things. Instead, it is created to best mimic the “real” conditions of the world. An organic story is just this- a story that is, by its very nature, natural, whole and complete, in the sense that everything that is related to it appears to fit together seamlessly. The reasons behind an organic story are not related to the content of the story alone. While that is a big part of it, there is even more to be said about how the elements of the story are developed within a space.” (Lukas Immersive Words Handbook 235)

How people behave in space says a great deal as to how they perceive the space on a subconscious level. “The unconscious mind makes the choice and then the conscious brain rationalizes it the rationalization may have nothing to do with the actual unconscious drivers of choice.” (Lukas Immersive World Handbook 43) A first impression is always important, and the mind is easily swayed but the subconscious is not so flexible. This is why the first impression of the space is most important, and the atmosphere must grab hold of the subconscious. This setting can be done with “the Pareto principle (the idea, adapted from economics, that 20% of the design of a space can be used to make 80% of the impact on guests).” (Lukas Immersive World Handbook 86) With the atmospheric effect in place and the subconscious already beginning the immersion process, the designer can then influence the mind
of the guest with elements that stimulate all of the senses. The story is set and the guest can walk through the narrative as the sequence of textures, colors, shapes, and begins to unfold the sense, mood and perception of the space.

For designers like me, the important things are to “keep the eyes open, always be the observer, always design for the theme park experience and ask what going to make for the unusual” (Greenbaum) and unique experience. Most importantly remember the story and to design for the story. There will always be the struggles of deadlines, financial boundaries, and expected quality of a finished project. So which is better? To spend more time and money to perfect the “feel” or risk the quality to beat the deadline and produce the latest and greatest? The answer for some may be to meet the deadline, but no matter what, success of the latest and greatest cannot be achieved without the essential element of “the feel.”

**HERE’S WHY IT WORKS**

“We’ve unlocked this this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension - a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. We're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. We've just crossed over into the Thesis Zone.”

Looking back, as a child, did you ever desire to skip ahead a few years and overlook the painful eternity that lied in between you and the gateway to adulthood? Do you ever think about your childhood? Do you ever wish you could return to the simplicity and innocence of those days? Disneyland is that sacred pathway that allows one to walk with one foot in both worlds. Millions of people
visit Disneyland every year. As appealing as churros and three-hour wait times are, there is something far greater than fireworks and character meet-n-greets drawing them in. The guests activate the urban space, animating those specific design elements in the space and giving them meaning.

“People are exactly alike when they ride amusements- they react the same way, get the same thrills and pleasures.” (Harry G. Traver) There is a uniformity in all of it that calls to the truest nature of our human spirit and brings us together. “The theme park and the roller coaster are extended metaphors for life itself,” (Lukas “Theme Park” 97) creating a platform for our most innate human instincts to be challenged. A situation that seems to no longer occurs in our day-to-day lives. Upon entrance to the park, one is given a choice: the left or the right. The park is kept a secret from the very beginning. It hides behind the majesty of the Disneyland Railroad, and the notion of the tunnel always intrigues the mind; that insatiable desire to reach the light at the end of the tunnel. “The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something.” (Randy Pausch, The Last Lecture) The mystery and the choice given to the guest allows for the adventure to begin, the adventure becomes in that moment a right of the guest. It becomes theirs. The ownership is what allows for a sense of freedom. This conscious freedom allows for the subconscious to take the back seat and the Imagineers can shape this to their traffic control desires and entertainment will. Take visual stimuli into consideration. It is the main trigger but must also align with preconceived notions usually the result of media and entertainment. (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 108) Disneyland plays upon
the importance of memories. That is the narrative the Imagineers draw upon: the memories associated with Disney entertainment (film, shows, music) as well as playing upon the continuation of memories and experiences at the parks.

Some our strongest human behaviors are driven by our need to have a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose. The subconscious experience of Disneyland is what draws thousands of guests into the parks worldwide, day after day, year after year. The space may already have a strong sense of success but still requires believability. Disney’s authenticity lies in it the fact that its film sets became reality and are the architecture themselves. The guest then takes on the part and becomes one with the show. The show the guest walks into “is detailed, involved, and gives guests the sense of a complete journey.” (Lukas “Immersive World Handbook” 102) It is created so that every element that the guest might interact with is taken into consideration and made to add to the experience of the space. This is done to ensure the holism of the design. As we move through the space, we experience on a subconscious level, the monomyth or the hero’s journey. We connect with characters (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook) and themes programmed into each of these spaces in these films because they reflect the ideas that we have ourselves. “What is significant about Disneyland’s use of place is its abstraction of it…Disney’s theme lands and architecture resonate well beyond the confines of the theme park… It becomes a placeless place, a place not of the material realm of architecture but of the cognitive one of architectural imagination.” (Lukas Theme Park 79) This is where the hub and spoke plan is perfect to allow for varying spaces, keeping the guest engaged and moving in and out, searching for more secrets that need uncovering. The point of the park being an immersive world is that it is an immersive world, and is made of many different spaces that are necessary to catering to different needs. “[The] harrowing experiences
of foreign travel with others [in] the theme park… [of] getting lost- in both the sense of geographical misdirection and visual and sensory bombardment from the park’s attractions” all plays part in building the psychological, emotional and sociological bonds with fellow guests and the environment. All these secrets are hiding in plain sight, and the guests’ conscious mind remains oblivious to what is taking their subconscious hostage.

The most magical ability of Disney’s theme parkitecture and the theme park is the capacity to allow for those unifying human experiences, emotions and characteristics in our most basic nature. It has an “ability to throw people together in negated the normal social order and asked people to see, and be with, others in a new way. Rides thus became an ‘othering’ experience in which people came in to contact with people in forms of intimacy previously reserved for family and friends.” (Lukas Theme Park 115) This sort of contact and shared experience with other humans in becoming increasingly more and more important in a society that is being driven apart by the lack of physicality of technology. The roller coasters, attractions, leisure stroll through the park, fast pass … etc., all the elements of the theme parks evokes the most powerful motifs that influence how we experience the space. Main Street: freedom, nostalgia, and loyalty. Fantasyland: love, connection, family. Adventureland, Frontierland and Tomorrowland: sense of belonging, sense of discovery, sense of purpose, sense of Independence and the feeling of having ownership over your experience in the park. (Lukas “Immersive World Handbook” 185) All these things come about from the careful design work of WDI. These motifs exist because WDI does not focus on the design itself; they design the experience. “In Fantasyland, these classic stories of everyone’s youth have become realities for youngsters of all ages to participate in.” New Orleans Square speaks to our carefree, party-like, C’est-la-vie
selves. Tomorrowland is land of the unknown, the unlimited possibilities… “a living blueprint for tomorrow.” Frontierland is the spirit of the true American landscape, the American dream, the ability to become whatever you want to be, and the living chance “to be proud of our country’s history, shaped by the pioneering spirit of our forefathers.” Adventureland speaks to our sense of adventure, danger, excitement; “a land that would make this dream reality… far from civilization.” The intention of the design ensures that we are a character in our own movie, and the micro-theming ensures that we remain in character. The landscape and the architecture set the stage and becomes that form of cinema that tells the story that we have already experienced and the story that we want to experience. “[Theme] parks challenged even the conceptual travel of the cinema by claiming an attachment to physicality and sociality- one could partake in experiences while feeling them personally and being around others at the same time.” (Lukas Theme Park 65) When a child is told that they’re going to Disneyland, often the response is tears of overwhelming joy. The child, like most guests who visit Disneyland, is unaware of all these secrets hiding in plain sight that ensure he or she is immerse in the theme parkitecture. The child doesn’t know how or why, but the park means something so great to her or him; the result is tears of joy. I have yet to see this same effect when a guest is told they’re going to the library or perhaps the DMV.

**LET US JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE**

As we ride the wave into the future, we can see that Imagineering has come a long way from the days of turning movie sets into a convincing built environment. Disney has paved the way for the rebirth of all-inclusive design. In this era of the millennial,
whole kind of architecture is emerging, and it is about building in all directions, almost 4 dimensionally. And against popular belief, creating more immersive worlds to occupy our daily designs doesn’t remove us from reality in any way, shape or form. The narrative upon which the user is welcomed into the space and immersed into can be a fiction that they can relate to or perhaps have even experienced first hand. Creating new worlds within our own gives us the rare opportunity to discover more about the world that surrounds us; the world that we are so convinced has nothing left to uncover.

Welcome to Disney’s Thalassa

Our most incredible gift within our given human nature is our ability to adapt. It is inherent to make sense of our surrounding environment, and to do so we merely accept that world (no matter what scale) to be the ruler of truth. In order to discover these truths, the science behind our humanity is revealed: our need for belonging, our need for human connection, our need for nostalgia and memory, our sense of adventure and wanderlust… all of our senses are tested and tried in new environments. Whether or not one is a hater or lover of Disney, Disneyland challenges all of our senses. When inside those brick walls, Disneyland provides a new world away from our own. Many Post-Modernists call this escapism, which is true, but it is also for people who don’t necessarily need escape from the real world. Our real world has become too small; we’ve “exhausted” all of our options. But I am arguing that we have not, in fact, exhausted all options. The techniques used in Disneyland can be used to uncover new and alternative worlds within our own.
This ability to adapt to new environments is true whether on land for a day in the park or living on a cruise ship for anywhere between 7-112 days. We accept this world to be truth and adapt to our new context. I, myself, spent time living and studying on a ship for four months and studied how 830 can strangers to come aboard and create a floating college and community from scratch. The ship was an empty canvas for a new immersive world to be created and every semester, the ship becomes a floating campus with every sort of organization, club, activity and class you could imagine.

The cruise ship experience is typically about moving the guest in a luxurious manner from point A to point B, while offering many of the accommodations that are provided by a hotel or resort. “While some guests in this space want to see the places that the ship travels to, there is a more ‘conceptual’ form of travel in that the guest is sometimes on the ship only to stay on this ship.” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 142) When choosing the cruise ship as the guest’s form of travel and vacation method, there is this atmosphere of unpredictability and daring adventure about sailing the untamed seven seas and seeing far off foreign lands. However, they can immerse themselves in this air of adventure while simultaneously enjoying the relaxation with the option of never having to leave the confines of their cabin or the entertainment of the ship. “Some studies have said that over 30% of cruise ship guests never leave the ship for shore excursions and, instead of going ashore” (Lukas Immersive Worlds Handbook 142) they simply enjoy what entertainment is on board. Despite how the guest spends their time on board or on shore during their cruising, they still come away with a great sense of accomplishment and pride for conquering the great oceans and visiting “untouched” lands as well as a sense of fulfilled leisure.
Thus cruise ship exists as the perfect platform for the immersive world to be created. Even the great Jules Verne understood the great possibilities and the benefits of taking to the seas. In his epic novel *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, Captain Nemo turned away from the detrimental habits of man and made home in the Seven Seas. With the techniques in place to create a successful immersive world, we can use the new platform of the cruise ship to create entirely new kinds of immersive worlds. WDI may not always be the leading force in speed and technological advances, but the designers are always leading the way in creativity. Although competitors may be more advanced, Disney will always be more creative and produce better work. Norwegian Cruise Line currently owns the largest passenger vessels on the open seas and is continuing to produce ships with unthinkable technologies and designs. However, Disney Cruise Line was the first with a water coaster at sea and currently owns the only vessels that are granted permission to shoot fireworks in international waters. So its simple, why not take the largest vessel and create a floating theme park? Why not become the first floating vessel to immerse the guest in the Disneyland magic on land and at sea.

The cartoonist is a better visionary and artist. The set designer is a better architect. The cruise ship designer is a better planned and designer of space. Disney’s Thalassa is named after the Greek Goddess of the Sea. This new ship will emulate the body of park. We will remove the hub and spoke plan from its two-dimensionality in plan view and consider how it would exist in three-dimensional space, which will be applied to the whole of the ship. The engineers will figure out how the logistics of weight, buoyancy and structure works. For now, we will consider this design without the restrictions of the logistical entities. From a purely conceptual stand point, the floating theme park will have far more benefits and pave the way for new modes of design.
The ship will go the next step to immerse the guest in the theme park experience. They will be able to interact and be apart of the spaces far more than is capable at the parks. The guest the main plaza and atrium of the ship will resemble the interior of the castle. They will enjoy a series of interactive scenes, videos, and interior design that will make the guest feel as if they are walking through the castle from their favorite films. The middle decks and entryway corridors will be the shops and leisure areas of Main Street. Here the guest will enjoy a similar experience to the nostalgic atmosphere of Disneyland’s Main Street, however instead of resembling a classic American small town, it will resemble the classic American port city. Port side will be Adventureland. On various decks the guest will be able to journey into an unknown jungle or forest that is constantly changing, creating new mazes and new paths. Because Walt always wanted real animals for his guests to engage with; here the guests will be able to pet, ride, and feed multi-sensory and interactive creatures featured in the well-known Jungle Cruise attraction. Many other daring adventures will be waiting in the mysterious jungles such as zip lining, challenge courses, and rock walls. Starboard side will give the chance to step into Frontierland and brave the wild wild west. The guest will be lead through the desert, the mountains and rivers learning how to blaze the trail while also engaging in daring virtual horse chases, rodeo roping, perfecting that bulls-eye shot, or even driving the “wildest train in the wilderness” across the country. The bottom passenger decks and hull will be themed after Tomorrowland and will feature designs that embody the future of aquatic living, a modernized Nautilus. The guests will also be able to enjoy groundbreaking technologies found at Innoventions and learn the secrets of the sea. Simultaneously, Disney’s Thalassa will be introduced, the magical goddess of the sea, and she will teach the importance of her home. The guests will be brought “up close” to the sea and the ocean floor and learn how to
live one with the sea and the importance of taking care of our oceans. The guests will be able to “go under water” on a virtual journey and help Marlin and Dory find Nemo, or perhaps enjoy a day under the sea with Ariel. The stern of the ship will be New Orleans. The bow will be themed after Fantasyland. The guest will be able to take a flight through Neverland with a little help from Tink’s pixie dust (a harness), or perhaps be taken on a magic carpet ride over the ocean. As the ship continues on into the mysterious unknown ocean, our childlike curiosity and imagination is forever inspired to keep dreaming and keep opening up new doors.

   Entirely removed from the context of the real world, a floating theme park can be analyzed, free from the negative critiques that the world of mundane design gives to new methodologies just by mere proximity. Imagine a Disneyland, programmed to create a far more immersive experience for the guest. “Walt often spoke of architecture and technology as functioning in the form of a ‘weenie’- as something that would beckon the customer to go inside a space or cause the customer to go in a particular direction in a theme park. The weenie acts as a ‘reward.’ ” (Lukas “Theme Park” 199) In modern design and Disney’s Thalassa, the entirety of the design will be the reward. It will be translated into the positive effect of entering a space and immediately having an emotional connection. Similar to Ole Schereen’s floating theater in Thailand, the guest can enjoy the space upon immediate interaction because of the familiarity. Thus every moment following, only enriches the experience with the space. We will go to new lengths and step inside the world of Disney Cruise Line. Because the venue is much smaller, we have a much higher capacity to immerse the guest; rather the effectiveness of the space will be far more potent under smaller circumstances.
How My Design will Improve Disney

First and foremost, the “demonic corporate America” side of the company fuels many beneficial entities, such as financial, technological and advocacy resources. These “evils of the world can be used to confound the wise.” Disney does it better, but vertically. WDI is always pushing the envelope to create far more immersive techniques and better designs. The parks are constantly being improved, moving upwards. But there seems to be a missing innovation in a horizontal direction. There needs to be a bigger push to expand outwards, and look for new horizons.

We can start to rethink how to go back to the good old days of all-inclusive design. We can start visualizing the old ways and how they can exist today and how they can improve designing better theme parks and other non-Disney spaces. “The Theme park offers a life text- a model for negotiating the world that promises to do much more than create an alternative reality fit for consumption.” (Lukas Theme Park 237) Consider what a frightening experience an MRI scan might be for a child. The Florida Hospital Celebration Health turned their MRI scanning room into an ocean seaside getaway, allowing for a frightening experience to become an exciting adventure to be scanned in the heart of a giant sandcastle. (See Lukas Immersive World Handbook 255)

How Imagineering Will Improve The World

The fiction discussed in Ole Schereen’s elaboration of Bernard Tschumi’s theory of “form follows fiction,” refers to “fiction as in the real; reality of what the architecture means for the people that live in it and with it.” (Ole Schereen Ted Talk) The story the
guests walk into as they enter Disneyland is grounded in the same principle. If the user of a space can connect with their built environment through a narrative that they are familiar with, a far more intimate relationship is created with the space. How we design our spaces is a manifestation of how we perceive our environment and surroundings, and how we experience space determines how we perceive our world. So if we are designing spaces that are unsuccessful, what does that say about our perception of space and the inadequate spaces we are allowing ourselves to occupy?

Galen Cranz also touches upon this hugely overlooked issue in her world-renowned book *The Chair*. The chair is a social construct that has given our bodies more grief than it has relaxation. Until the latest trend of designing more ergonomic chairs and desks for the workplace, there were few who were truly aware of the detrimental effects of sitting all day, or even sitting at all. Similar to the design of our spaces, chairs were the manifestation of what the industry and society deemed necessary. Designers forgot all together to take into account the needs of the user. Similarly, people are discovering the negative side effects of working inside all day and the unhealthy workplace. “We spend 90% of our time in an indoor environment,” (wsj.com) and we somehow are still dumbfounded that we feel more anxious and depressed than ever. If we are designing the environments that we occupy our entire lives, in a way that is detrimental to our bodies, how can we expect our perception of the world and our health to improve? If we begin to design out spaces both exterior and interior to emulate the needs of our bodies, imagine the positive domino effect it will have on how we further continue future design work and how those positive spaces will influence our lives.
The phenomenology of Theme Parkitecture has been overlooked for far too long. If this sort of methodology of design were implemented into our modes of daily and mundane architecture, space would be a much better place to occupy. People would function, live and exist in our designed spaces in much healthier and positive ways. Theme Parkitecture, taking Disney’s design methodologies and philosophies into the contemporary world, can save us from ourselves. If we stop removing ourselves from the equation and begin putting our needs on the other side of that proverbial equals sign, we will be able to utilize and perceive this world in ways we have long forgotten and in ways we have never known. As a great man once said:

“Its kind of fun to do the impossible.”
-Walt Disney
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