Space 2| Space and its Surroundings. Spatial Definition through Boundaries

To Martin Heidegger space is not just determined by body participation. It is also defined from a distance as the enclosed realm that fills its boundaries. A boundary is not that at which something stops but […] that from which something begins its presencing. [Heidegger, Bauen, Wohnen, Denken, 155]

The notion that space is defined by its boundaries and their manifestations has accompanied us throughout this book. Based on their forms, point-elements, linear, and planar elements define the character and dynamics of a space. Each of these space-forming elements defines a certain kind of border, which in turn characterizes the element’s relation to its surroundings.

In their installation Blur, Diller and Scottidio wanted to create space while minimizing its definition through an artificial cloud of water vapor. Still, they had to give form to the required matter. Their choice of the oval form for the steel mesh walkways combines the dynamics of centering and expansion. The vertical borders were reduced to a minimum.

Space 2| Filtering (through Point-Elements)

Homogeneous point-elements mark the edge of a plane without preventing a connection to its surroundings. The position and height of the elements create a spatial field and their form indicates where the field belongs and how it connects to its surroundings.

In a Pompeian house round columns arranged close together enclose a rectangular atrium. The simple geometrical figure of the courtyard and the height of the columns define a clearly recognizable exterior space within the building. The rounded shafts of the columns underscore their filtering function and the circulation of air.

In “Stangenwald” [Pole Forest] on Killesberg, Stuttgart, by the artist Hans Dieter Schaal stone columns grow out of intersection points in a geometric grid and filter the defined area within the vast grounds of the park.

The positioning of homogeneous point-elements defines a plane between their base points. The vertical extention of the point-elements into columns produces a spatial field. Conversely, the definition of the plane is a prerequisite for the definition of a space. The placement of vertical elements along the border spatially emphasizes this basic figure.

Using cardboard pillars along the periphery of an ellipse, Shigeru Ban forms a permeable spatial filter for worshipers on the entrance side of his church in Kobe. Along the back wall the spaces in between have been almost eliminated, forming a concave wall of densely positioned pillars that provides the necessary stability for a sanctuary. Thus the longitudinal axis of the ellipse divides the space-bordering elements into mediating and separating halves.

“Millennium View” by Günter Zamp-Kelp is an installation built as a stairway structure above an abandoned rock quarry as part of the EXPO 2000 in Steinbergen near Hannover. Rectangular glass frames create a directional space perpendicular to the direction of the ascent, opening out onto the landscape on two sides. Panes of glass positioned at irregular intervals create spaces of varying densification with some views directed straight ahead and some filtered from the side.

A series of roughly 1,000 torii guides the visitor of the Fushimi Inari-Taisha shrine. These frames, positioned at irregular intervals, create a long row leading up the mountain and make perceptible the distance through divisions with compressed and extended rhythms. Worshipers sense a connection with the surrounding woods, yet are also focused on the path and their goal in the distance.