

Call for Master Thesis at the Chair of Integrated Product Design (IPD)

AN AWE-INSPIRING, SUBLIME WORKSPACE

Design Principles for Office Designs, Derived from Field Research in Sacred Architecture

Summary

For this Master thesis, you will first conduct field research in the form of a “walking tour” through pre-selected examples of sacred architecture in the Munich neighborhood. After exploring the city on your own and identifying appropriate spaces that provide a sublime and awe-inspiring atmosphere (e.g., churches, museums, libraries), you will create a tour for a group of approximately 10 participants, to experience these places under your guidance. You will measure participants’ emotional responses to these spaces through questionnaires and physiology-measurement tools (specifically EDA). Based on the results, you will then develop hypotheses for awe-inspiring spatial characteristics and underpin them with scientific studies (Negami & Ellard, 2024) and philosophical literature (Botton, 2007, 2013; Burke, 2014). Finally, you will transfer the insights into actionable design patterns to be applied in office spaces. One particular (feasible) pattern shall be implemented in real-scale and tested in a real office environment. As a result, you will develop not only an evidence-based understanding of spatial design patterns that instigate awe but also design a real-sized, testable workspace intervention to test your hypothesis. If the outcome of your thesis allows, we will jointly publish the results in an academic design journal or conference proceedings.

Keywords: Sacred Architecture, Field Study, Walking Tour, Workspace, Interior Design, Awe, Technology-supported Design Research

Prerequisites

In order to conduct this thesis at our chair, you need to bring an interest in architecture and interior design, hands-on visualization and modelmaking skills, a solid understanding of scientific design research (can be acquired through participation in the IPD Research Seminar, if needed), and some first experiences with or willingness to learn how to use technology-supported research tools. For this topic, we consider students from the following programs: Architecture and Human Factors Engineering (students from other programs upon request).

Provided Resources

We will provide you with access to our creative space lab and the required technologies for your design research. A small budget will be allocated to realizing the design intervention. The actual thesis will be rather self-directed (maximum of 3 personal meetings throughout the thesis progress plus on-demand consultations when needed).

How to Apply

If you are interested in conducting this thesis at our chair, please send an email to thesis.ipd@ed.tum.de with reference line **“Master Thesis: An Awe-inspiring, Sublime Workspace”**. Please state in your email your preferred starting date, your motivation for the topic, and attach your resume and some portfolio samples.

Key References

- Botton, A. de. (2007). *The Architecture of Happiness*. Penguin Books.
Botton, A. de. (2013). *Religion for Atheists: A non-believer's guide to the uses of religion*. Penguin Books.
Burke, E. (2014). *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful: With an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste; and Several Other Additions*. Cambridge University Press.
Negami, H., & Ellard, C. (2024). From the Sublime to the Vertiginous: The Psychology of Awe-chitecture. In *People and Spaces* (pp. 39–48). Routledge.