

# ***Generators of Architectural Atmosphere***

Edited by Elisabetta Canepa and Bob Condia. Manhattan, KS: New Prairie Press, 2022

## **Review**

**Prof. Robert Condia** and his colleagues at Kansas State University have produced some of the most fascinating and timely research on the relationship between people and the built environment, using philosophy, cognitive science, and cutting-edge technology to unveil new facts and theories. **Interfaces 3**, the newest in a series of volumes documenting their work, features three excellent essays on “atmosphere” as a phenomenological component of architectural experiences. Each complements the others to assemble both a compelling definition of the subject of atmosphere in buildings and an expansion of scientific knowledge about how perception and cognition work together to stimulate the emotions and feelings that all humans understand as critical to their aesthetic apprehension of spaces and forms in the environment.

**Elisabetta Canepa** opens the volume with an excellent summary of the “generators” of atmosphere that can be empirically studied by researchers in a number of different fields. **Kutay Güler** follows with a perspective on the ways that virtual reality and head mounted displays might be used more effectively to probe the characteristics of interior and exterior spaces, in search of the ephemeral essence of atmosphere noted by such prominent philosophers as Tonino Griffiero and Gernot Böhme. Finally, the neuroscientist **Sergei Gepshtein** and architect **Tiziana Proietti** present their experimental work on visual perception, locomotion, and proportion using excellent diagrams and data analysis to question the basis of our understanding of interior spaces. Their critique of isovist, virtual reality, and orienting behavior studies brings new insights into the debate about how sensory, motor, and cognitive factors may influence humans’ comprehension of the effects that buildings have on their emotions.

If none of these papers settles the issue of whether “atmospheric” qualities can be measured, each brings us closer to understanding how we might do so in the future.

Mark Alan Hewitt, FAIA

Author of *Draw in Order to See:*

*A Cognitive History of Architectural Design*  
(ORO Editions, 2020)

November 2022