

The first stage of my investigation started casually while I was having a coffee with a friend. During those days I was struggling with my work because this task was very far from my previous methods of approach to a project. What really helped me to change and expand my point of view was the excerpt we had to read for this first unit: "Species of Spaces" by Georges Perec (1974).

Before experimenting with a more graphic method I remembered how Georges Perec analysed and described his Paris meticulously, capturing those spaces and questioning himself about the function and the different hidden motivations behind a building. The way Perec guides the reader to stop and observe a site in a non-conventional way was inspiring to my practice. Perec encourages "[...] try to describe the street, what it's made of, what it's used for. The people in the street. The cars. What sort of cars? [...] The shops. What do they sell in the shops? There are no food shops. Oh yes, there's a baker's. Ask yourself where the locals do their shopping. The cafés. How many cafés are there? One, two, three, four. Why did you choose this one? [...] Make an effort to exhaust the subject, even if that seems grotesque, or pointless, or stupid." (Perec, 1974, p.50)

The enthusiasm of the reports really fascinated me and it was automatically applied to my method. As Perec does in his analysis, I started taking notes about what I felt, what I saw and what I could ask myself about my physical site.

As a foreigner, I didn't know that the place I chose was a five-star hotel. The particular shapes of the external building caught my attention at first: a red pill-shaped lift specifically. After notetaking, my second approach was sketching the lift from different perspectives, so it was easier to imagine the several meanings behind the design.

During this process I decided to use also the photographing method. I took some pictures of the external building and they showed me how the bright colour of the lift and its round shapes distinguishes the building among the others. Moreover I decided to become a temporary guest of the hotel to have a look inside. This firsthand experience allowed me to observe and study the interior design that was fundamental to my work. In addition to that I noticed how important was the sign to communicate the concept of my project. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown in their book *Learning from Las Vegas* talk about "architecture as symbol" (Venturi, p.7, 1972) and they stated that "The sign is more important than the architecture." (Venturi, p.13, 1972) I think that this concept reflected the theme of my project as it influenced my way of creating a texture and making associations between the shapes that reminded me to the hotel form.

To sum up I personally liked the experience I got from these methods and I think that I managed to learn how to go beyond the classic research methods that I have been taught previously and to just enjoy the process of making something without thinking too much about the outcome.

Reference list

Perec, Georges. *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. Penguin Books, 1974.

Venturi, Robert, et al. *Learning from Las Vegas; by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour*. Cambridge M.I.T. Press, 1972.