MAINSTREAM ARCHITECTURE: 
AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT, 
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE.

A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Moratuwa 
As a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of 
Master of Science in Architecture

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July 1999
ABSTRACT

In broad perspective architecture can be defined as an art, which evokes pure aesthetic emotions in human beings.

A successful art is believed to be more concerned on the qualitative attributes of architecture rather than on quantitative attributes.

In order to adhere to the qualitative vocabulary of architecture; it is essential to cultivate awareness between the reality and our feelings, where the former derives what is essential in our life style.

An architectural product may be considered as one that has significant meaning when it can excite the intellect of a person and make him contemplative.

The continuing evolution of architecture, has gone through various phases through time; each defining its own mainstream architecture, which changed, or rather developed further towards what is recognised as mainstream architecture today.

The orchestration of progression can be regarded as the mainstream attribute of an architectural product, and it is through this phenomenon that a building is able to communicate and evoke meaningful emotions in man.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks are due to the following.

Archt. Vidura Sri Nammuni, Senior Lecturer, and individual tutor, for his inspiring discussions, encouraging words, and above all, for having confidence that this dissertation will be a success.

Dr. Ranjith Perera, Senior Lecturer and co-ordination of dissertations for giving me valuable comments and guidance.

Archt. Vigitha Basnayake, Senior Lecturer, for his advice and guidance towards this study.

The Academic staff of the Department of Architecture who supported me right throughout this study.

Archt. Ravin Gunerathne, for his free opinions and his willingness to help at any time.

Further I wish to forward my gratitude to the staff of Kandalama Hotel, Lighthouse Hotel and Le Kandiyan Hotel, Principal of S.O.S and head priest of Pokunuwita chapel for their support towards making the case study possible.

My parents who have given me their relentless support, and who have been sources of strength to me, right throughout this course.

My batch-mates for helping me in numerous ways.

My friends Asela, Nath, Udayanga and Jagath for the help and support given.

For Kelume and Kamini generous help provided throughout this endeavor.

To all those who helped me in numerous whys to make this study a success.
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INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

0.1 THE STUDY

Art is a subtle medium where various emotions and impulses of man finds a mode of expression. In experiencing, man is able to capture these expressions thus creating communication that evokes a contemplative state of mind, which in turn creates an inner transformation.

Furthermore, a work of architecture is a comprehensive spatial entity created by a variety of inter related spaces. There exists an orchestration of progression, an articulation of spaces in this entity, creating a rhythmic movement.

The movement suggests a direction, a path, a striving to step along this path and the destination. The form or 3-D image encapsulates this spatial movement and heightens the expression.

The experience of the work of architecture is initiated with an emotional attachment and also the seeds of detachment. This bond generates communication, pushing man from emotion to intellect, a more detached state that makes him think and look within.

Searching through the history, it is noted that the above requirements were evenly considered. But in the modern day context, rapid industrialisation has led to a focus on a more materialistic and engineering ethic. This in turn has led to a devaluation of the aesthetic content in architecture.

NEED FOR THE STUDY.

This phenomenon has led to a prevalence of architecture that does not enter in to any dialogued with the user or beholder. They are simply, haphazard use of materials as ornamentation to the building.

Most of them are designed to be seen from out side, not to be experienced. It can be clearly seen that most of the architects are concerned about the outer appearance of buildings. They do not pay much attention to their inner spaces. There are notable exceptions to this, although few in number. Some architects have successfully overcome these challenges and created meaningful architecture that nourishes the body as well as the mind. Those who experience them feel and accept that such works have the power to move the intellect of man to a state that is contemplative.
This has led to the question whether such products are architecture and if they are, whether architecture has different grades.

INTENTION OF THE STUDY

The main intention this study is to address this question and to establish the validity of the concept of Mainstream architecture. It will commence the argument by answering the question ‘What makes main Stream Architecture’?

The articulation of progression is intended to be used as a measure when experiencing and sensing a built entity. Hence, the selected examples will seek to manoeuvre in order to identify such attributes.

It is an effort to convince architectural practice and ourselves, that is an achievable task. To achieve this the study intends to list some essential qualities, which should be included in an architectural product, to qualify to be ‘Main Stream’.

METHOD OF WORK

To achieve the above, this study will initially concentrate on identifying various explanations on the concept, and illustrate there positions by using the historical and modern architectural examples.

In the first chapter, it is intended to examine the process of evolution of the concept of Main stream Architecture in order to understand the background and its changing trends, thus providing a better understanding of the present state.

The second chapter will deal with the contemporary definition of M.S.A., namely the orchestration of spatial progression, in one attempt to gain a deeper understanding of it’s attributes, and meanings.

The 3rd chapter will be an examination based on various case studies in the contemporary Sri Lankan architectural context, with a view of understanding the degree of success, when applied in to various buildings in various situations and contexts.
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study concentrates mainly on the qualitative aspects, which leads to Main Stream Architecture rather than the physical elements of architecture.

Thus the study will discuss, mainstream Architecture as spatial experience and concentrate more on the creation process of it.

The depth of experiencing architecture depends mainly on one's readiness, temperament, and the capacity to understand the symbolic expressions of such work, and different levels that may excite the experiencer.

The other aspect to be considered here is that the peak or the Main space of the spatial movement referred to here, is essentially a subjective phenomenon. The space in which one feels the climax of progression may differ for another, depending on his mind-set at the time of experiencing.

The experience that one gets in experiencing architecture is something to be felt and understood rather than explained. The wordings themselves may, therefore, carry limitations with them.