Geometry at work: Re-reading the Persian bazaar

The research focuses on three issues concerning the Persian bazaar: (1) considering the bazaar as an internalised environment; (2) the way the bazaar achieves this interiority while obtaining such a large scale; and, (3) how this interiority affects the experience of the bazaar.

The main focus has been on answering questions of "what" and "how" instead of "why." Architectural elements have been analyzed cut off from their symbolic meaning and their religious attributes in order to consider them as elements with the capacity to produce purely spatial architectural effects. Despite the fact that there are strong connections between the material form of the bazaar and the climate, religion and culture of its surroundings, these issues have not been taken into account for each subject separately but instead the scope of this research has been the internalised bazaar of Isfahan, which is now taken as a reference not only to the internalised bazaar of Isfahan but also to the internalised bazaar of Iran. Due to the lack of references that offer a more in depth study of the bazaar, the personal documentation and experience of the bazaar of Isfahan, through film and photography came to be of great help.

The bazaar as interiority

No exterior

The double layered skin

Geometrical Principles

The Chahar-su

Chahar-su is the presence of four main passages of the bazaar. The Chahar-su functions as a kind of the infrastructure of the bazaar. Because of its unique location at the center of the main avenues, it has special functions that make it a kind of theatre. The Chahar-su is a kind of square organ that creates a connection between urban spaces such as buildings, blocks, and passage ways. It has a large size; fixed elements, yet its characteristic does not make it the formation of a fragmented perception of the bazaar. It forms a continuous, inter-departmental space for movement.

The arch

The Kar band/technique

The arch which is present almost everywhere in the Persian architecture holds the continuity of the geometrical language of the bazaar. It is a general term that refers to the subsequent geometrical components. The arch forms the stem, the dome forms the crown. The shape of the arch is a free form, which in the concept of the design allows the architect to be comfortable with its changing of forms. The arch is a structure that is a spacial element, one that is more related to the internal space of buildings and not to the external space. The arch is a structure that is more related to the internal space of buildings and not to the external space. The arch is a structure that is more related to the internal space of buildings and not to the external space. The arch is a structure that is more related to the internal space of buildings and not to the external space.

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