

TEMPORAL AGENTS AND THE POWER OF PLAY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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1 ABSTRACT

Researchers have long touted the many developmental benefits of physical play for children. More recently, evidence has been accumulating of the importance of play for people of all ages. Some of the documented personal and community benefits of play include improved fitness, greater social cohesion, stress relief, greater creativity and productivity in the workplace and improved interpersonal relations. In order to bring the benefits of play to a greater number of people and communities, designers must begin to explore opportunities for introducing unexpected and limited-duration 'play interventions' in settings where people are otherwise going about their daily routines. Though artists have been at the forefront of this movement, landscape architects are well positioned to understand, allow for, and encourage such interventions in the built urban environment. Designers, artists and community and civic organizations have offered important examples of these principals in action that are worth understanding and emulating. Through precedent studies and reviews of behavioral research, the significance of time-limited and unexpected events and interventions within the urban built environment are presented not only as a topic of design consideration for landscape architects and students of landscape architecture, but also as an urgent contemporary planning issue with greater ramifications for the physical and psychological health of the community.

1.1 Keywords

play, temporal, participatory, interventions, environments