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"Virtue, Knowledge, Advancement"

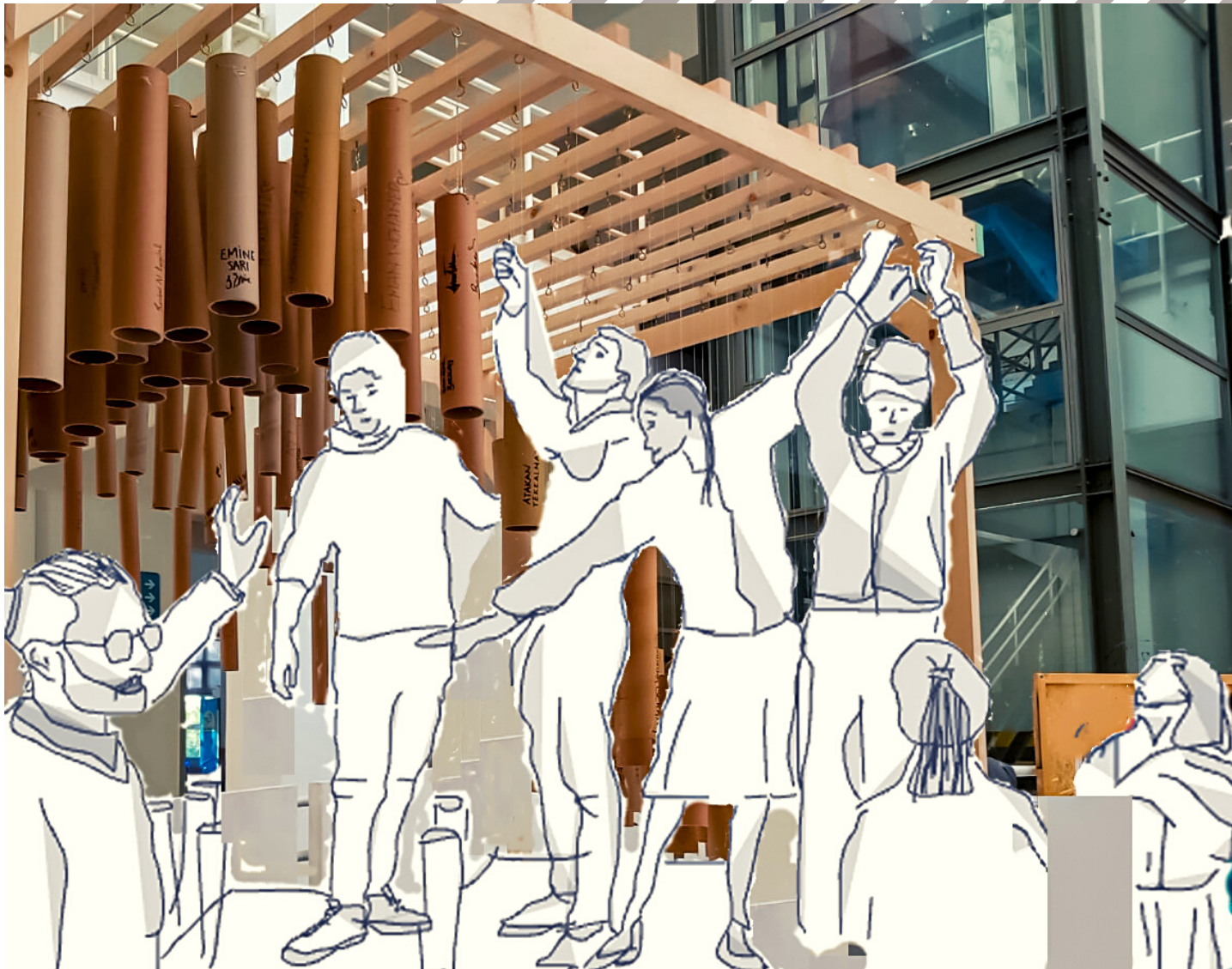


# THE ABSENT THING

5TH ISSUE OF LETRASET



THE ABSENT THING



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# NOTE BY: CHAIR OF ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT

Prof. Dr. Resmiye Alpar Atun



## **The Notion of ABSENCE in Theory & Practice**

Based on the main aim, objectives, and expected outcomes of the course, ARCH511 Interdisciplinary Workshop, we tried to focus on “absence” as a notion to be interpreted by each student or group of students. Based on their own framework, they were to develop the notion of absence in theory and practice.

Heidegger, Lacan, and Derrida were some foundational references from philosophy, together with Woolf from literature and others from movies and art, which were referred to by students. Within their approaches, the students considered various theories in different scales, contexts, and disciplines.

The idea that the way we theorize, practice, and structure the notion of absence might be materialized as presence indicates that we can differentiate the meanings assigned to it and support authenticity of our daily individual practices. Therefore, temporal differentiation and spatial representation of absence might also be interpreted as a matter of “phenomena.” This needed to be elaborated through various case studies that provided any sense of non-presence and/or not being.

Absence, instead of being negative, has positive references including in aesthetics, poetics, and potentiality of being. As well, several positive cases as a material representation of the meaning of absence were discussed. Close interrelations between absence and presence appeared in group discussions—as in forms of relationships, such as with dead and living. Sometimes arguments became subjective, relational, and comparative such that mutual interaction between participants supported fruitful outcomes for the semester.

# NOTE OF INSTRUCTOR

Assoc. Prof. Dr. BADIOSSADAT  
HASSANPOUR

## **Not in the place where it is expected to be**

Questioning is an art that, particularly, architects and academicians should never lose.

The endless questioning habit of toddlers, which is scarcely witnessed in higher education, can deploy citizens, politicians, architects, and scholars in procedures of problem solving rather than solution making. Indeed, the practice of questioning is needed to expand the traditional boundaries of architectural education (particularly undergraduate) from being confined to tacit and explicit knowledge about more socio-cultural realms.

What I mean here is exploration and discovery of different perspectives that can produce different logic and fresh methods of cognition and verification. The act of advancing knowledge through research to produce clear, logical, and original thought, later can be applied to written work or a design but, as RIBA reported, is less intended by architects.

The course, ARCH501 Interdisciplinary Workshop, is a graduate course offered to master students and PhD candidates in the architecture program at EMU. Each semester is conducted based on a specific themes and is a tailored teaching and learning journey. In the fall semester of 2020-2021, we (instructors) decided to offer a new format that could scaffold the art of questioning in our students by reminding them about the social and environmental obligations of architects and highlighting architecture as a cultural medium.

The expectation of this particular semester was directed toward creation of an original point of view built from collation and organization of knowledge in an interdisciplinary way. Therefore, the semester's strategy and activities were set up with several short-term assignments including reading, watching, and presenting with a primary writing assignment designed as a team project under the main theme of "the absent thing."



The initiation of this theme was derived from three works by Italian author, Italo Calvino's (1923-1985): his published lectures, his magical fantasy in *Cosmicomics* collection of short stories (1965), and his novel *Invisible Cities* (1972) along with the way he turned theory into poetics in those works. Calvino, in 1988, while defining his six memos (values and qualities) for the coming millennium, emphasized the use of language. He said, "words connect the visible track to the invisible thing, the absent thing, the thing that is desired or feared, like a fragile make-shift bridge cast across the void." (Italo Calvino, "Six Memos for the Next Millennium", 2016 [1988], pp. 91, 94.)

We wished to start our semester with these publications of Calvino because they seemed an excellent analogy to our semester journey by exploring his nested networks of connection between people, events, and all the things of the world. The paper titled "Narrative Inside Out: Louise Bourgeois' Spider as Theoretical Object", written by Mieke Ball (2000), was another material used to get closer to this artists' various works in which architecture is present in her art but never straightforward, and never alone. Mieke Ball wrote, "when two incompatible domains bounce back on each other (Example of where sculpture becomes architecture and architecture sculpture in Louise Bourgeois' works) narrative becomes a tool, not a meaning; a mediator, not a solution; a participant, not an outsider then we find the artist as a cultural philosopher."

Actually, what was supposed to be acquired, after interdisciplinary exploration of the works of other artists, were improved skills in approaching things with discretion, attention, caution, and with respect to what these things can tell us without words (as Calvino said). Therefore, we all undertook a precedent study from cited projects in the book titled, *1000 Ideas by 100 Architects*, by Sergi Duran and Mariana Eguaras. Students' works on published projects in the book were discussed in platform to communicate meanings and similarities under the main theme of the absent thing.

Philosophy "provides a fundamental perspective in terms of which pieces of the work of the social scientist can be put together in a coherent unity" (Natanson, 1973, p. 31). Therefore, a study in the key tenets of Martin Heidegger's phenomenology and Derrida's deconstruction and hermeneutics were also carried out.

Parallel to routine discussions and presentations around introduced or alluded to theories and philosophies, the primary term project for the semester was proffered under very wide research areas. In order to provide freedom to students to pursue their professional interest areas, they were encouraged to construct their topic by thinking across the boundaries of Urban Design, Architectural Design, Interior Space Design, Landscape Design, and Industrial Design as well as other humanities and science-related fields such as economics, sociology, psychology, environmental sciences. The group term projects were reviewed several times during the semester and reviews took place in the online platform of Microsoft Teams.

In the end, what I would like to highlight is that I believed that "the absent thing," as the theme for the semester, could become more than a word and idea. The suggestiveness of its emblems was a strong reason to encourage participation in a challenging endeavor. Students of this semester developed dense poetical, philosophical, and scientific words, which each fill a gap in research. ...eventually they found their absent thing!

# MESSAGE TO THE READERS

ASSIST. PROF. DR. NAZIFE OZAY

**Nazife Ozay** received her Ph.D. in Architectural Design Theory and History at Eastern Mediterranean University. Her research interests include the Housing Studies, Traditional Settlements and Architecture, Architectural and Interior Design Styles, and Cultural Issues in Architecture. Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazife Ozay has several research projects and scientific papers. She has published a number of articles concerning the architecture of Cyprus. She is currently teaching design and theory courses at the Department of Architecture of Eastern Mediterranean University. Since 2012, Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazife Ozay is the leader of the MS in Architecture Program in the Department of Architecture at EMU.

The Department of Architecture's Master in Architecture (with Thesis) program offers a learning environment with a contemporary approach to education for young people of diverse cultural backgrounds. The aim is to provide opportunities for future architects to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to cope with rapid global

changes and to react rationally, as well as creatively, to contemporary issues in architecture, its problems, and challenges. All of this occurs within an interdisciplinary approach to education and through its distinguished academic infrastructure. The graduates are expected to contribute to the improvement of quality of life as dynamic individuals with a high sense of responsibility and leadership, capable of assuming central roles in teamwork—a global reality of our day.

Master students are required to take seven courses (21 credit hours) plus a seminar course and submit a Master's Thesis to complete the MS Program in Architecture. In the program, five of the courses are electives, which advisors strongly urge candidates to take according to their research topic/field from the Department of Architecture graduate courses. By the third semester, each student should be registered to the compulsory seminar course. Moreover, by the end of the third semester and throughout each consecutive semester, students also should register for ARCH 500 (Master Thesis).

The program is designed to provide thorough training in the theory and practice of architecture and other architecture-related disciplines. It offers an opportunity to concentrate on architecture to an advanced level of sophistication, focusing on a particular specialist approach. This program has a strong interest in the methods of



inquiry, development, and testing of knowledge and the building and application of theory as it pertains to the built environment. It allows students to specialize in areas in which they wish to obtain particular abilities. Accordingly, this program provides education in a way that enables students to prepare an original thesis in the related field of study. There are four main fields in this program: Architectural Design Theory and History, Building Physics and Construction Technology, Architectural and Urban Conservation, and Urbanism. Since 1995, many valuable thesis studies have been carried out in these fields. Those who want to become academicians are expected to graduate from a master's program with thesis in order to enroll in the doctoral program.



# THE DISTANCE OF THE MOON BY ITALO CALVINO

PEDRAM RAZAVI  
EBRAHIMI

Pedram Razavi Ebrahimi is an Iranian Architect who manages residential and commercial projects in the United States and has more than fifteen years of experience in the AEC industry, conducting research on the most relevant and applicable architectural technologies. He was awarded his bachelor's degree in Architectural engineering from Kerman University in 2009. His academic journey brought him to North Cyprus, and where he received his first Master of Science in architecture from EMU in 2013. He was awarded his a second Master of Architecture from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York. After eight years of work in the United States, he rejoined with the EMU architecture family to pursue his Ph.D.







### **ITALO CALVINO:**

Italo Giovanni Calvino Mameli was born in October 1923 in Santiago de Las Vegas. He was an Italian journalist, poet, and writer. Calvino rose to fame with his short stories. His most famous short story collection is called *Cosmicomics*, which are praised to this day by critics. Literature critics categorize Calvino's writing style in three main movements, Oulipo, Neorealism, and Postmodernism. Calvino narrates a poetic fantasy tale about the creation and evolution of the universe in *Cosmicomics*. The main objective of his short stories is to reexamine human emotions and actions through unfamiliar narratives and situations.

### **A CELEBRATION OF AUTHENTICITY:**

The *Distance of the Moon* introduced us to fantasy: an utter desire of human experience tempted to move beyond the reality of existence and its restrictions—a misty path beyond realism and illusion. A dancing mind beyond the bright moonlight becomes a curious creature in itself; so much so that it can drive lust, loss, and love. The silky touch of the skillful mind showed us a mirror beyond the mist. The collection is an authentic epiphany that you crave to look into and see yourself in the stories.

Readers desire to experience the authenticity of the poet and the poem. It awakens unsatisfied hunger to read another line, another word, and envision a poignant closure. It is a heartfelt lesson for each and every soul that limited itself to the restrictions of reality. The remedy, the sole key to freedom of the mind, is to be truthful to oneself by being authentic, blatantly grasping what you desire, and acting upon it without any hesitation. The only corollary of hesitation is the loss of authenticity, a loss of lust, love, and life, and a meaningless pragmatism. You may be safe and sound, but all you wish for and crave is on the moon herself.

### **MOON IS A MATERIALIZED DESIRE, OBSOLETE!**

The moon is a symbol of the human being's desire. It materialized in front of the bare eyes of sailors who could not believe what they saw. This desire, hunger, and ambition to have more led to their inevitable demise. This is the hurtful truth of the human condition. It is not a coincidence that the moon goes far, far away; it is the consequence of their actions.

It does not matter what you have. It does not matter about your avaricious life. It does not matter how rich or poor you are. True richness is the authenticity of the mind—the braveness of a wishful mind is to accept a world beyond our world, to be a fantasist to dance with your dreams, and to be shamelessly seduced by your desire and forgetting everything else. Italo Calvino masterfully taught us this lesson.

## **TO BE CARESSED: THE CENTER OF HUMAN TRAGEDY**

When you are caressed and have the loving gaze of someone, do you realize the dream beyond the gaze? Do you appreciate the warmth of the feathers dancing around you in the eye of the beholder? Do you sense the thirst for your return gaze? Is there any prerequisite to gaze back and love in return? Are we individuals defined by our own desire or are we tangled in each other's minds for eternity? This is the human tragedy: to be loved and to be forgotten, to be caressed and to be unsatisfied, and to be remembered and to be alone.

## **ONE MUST LOSE ANY DESIRE FOR AUTHENTICITY TO SLIDE INTO REALITY**

To attain what reality bestows upon you, it is inevitable to say farewell to dreams and desires. An authentic mind has had a hard time of spawning pleasure beyond reality's reach. It all comes back to a simple contrast between what is possible through our minds and what is possible through our realities.

This is the true meaning of the human condition—a paradoxical duality that generates our daily dilemmas, restricting us from a realm of inspiration and tumbling us into reality. What we experience is not what our minds experience. The meaning that we all crave in our lives is the creation of our mind, not the reality of our experience.

## **AN ATTEMPT TO TALK ABOUT AN ABSOLUTE CONCEPT**

In many regards, mindfulness, desire, and daydreaming are the only possibilities to reach beyond reality. Desires are without any limit and are not pledged to any possibility of existent. It can be beyond rational mind's comprehension. It is something for an aspiring mind to appreciate. It is a distinctive gaze beyond the mist of reality, looking to find the truth regardless of whatever is in front of it. When we encounter such an absolute concept, it is inevitable to remove the familiarity of the context. It has been done for the reader's pleasure. It helps the reader to feel the idea and the concept more closely. It is a deliberate choice that vividly shows the importance of this abstract concept, asserting a desire without any possibility of fulfillment. It is a full representation of desire for what we cannot have. A brief look through a revelation of mind, beyond reality and logic, it becomes dreadfully important to recognize why Italo Calvino comes up with such poignant closure for his characters. It is inquisitive to see how each and every one end up in the final chapter—how dreams are shattered, possibilities are revoked, and each and every one of the characters loses something in the process to be able to fall back into their ordinary life. The rest is upon us, the readers, to understand the value of life without any meaning, desire, or possibility of attaining what one dreams. Maybe the pursuit of a dream is more joyful than the dream itself.

# PERCEPTION OF ABSENCE: EXPLORING DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS THROUGH PERCEPTION THEORIES

A. S. Yakubu  
B. N. Gözde  
C. P. Leki.

## **Gözde Bodamyalı Nizam**

Ms. Nizam graduated from Eastern Mediterranean University, Department of Interior Architecture in 2010. She was accepted to do a Master of Arts at Domus Academy-Milan, and graduated from the Interior and Living Design program in 2011 with a double diploma. She graduated from EMU's Architecture Department with the second rank in the faculty between 2011 and 2014 while working as a full time assistant in EMU. In 2018, she graduated from Istanbul Technical University in its Urban Design Master Program. She has been working as an interior architect and architect in different firms and Bakırküre Architects for 3 years. She is now a part time instructor in Işık and Bahçeşehir University and a Ph.D. candidate.



## **Leki Clementina Pronen**

Ms. Pronen completed her bachelor's degree program in architecture from Rivers State University-Nigeria. Further academic training took her to Scotland where she graduated with her first master's degree in construction management from the prestigious Glasgow Caledonian University and back to Nigeria for a second master's degree in architecture from Rivers State University. She worked as an architect for Wiltech Consult Limited in Nigeria and has been on various government projects. She also worked at Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny, as an architect in the Physical Planning Department. Her intellectual pursuits led her to Eastern Mediterranean University where she is currently a full time Ph.D. student in the Department of Architecture.



## **Yakubu Sabo Abdullahi**

Mr. Abdullahi obtained his bachelor's degree from Eastern Mediterranean University in the years 2014 to 2018. During his undergraduate program, he worked with the EMU International Office as a student assistant and also held numerous leadership positions in the Nigerian Students Society of EMU and North Cyprus in general. After his undergraduate term, he worked in a North Cyprus-based construction company, ENS Group of Companies, as an architect and project manager. He also worked as a travel and education consultant while pursuing his master's degree at Cyprus International University from 2018 to 2020. Moreover, he worked as a freelance architect, partaking in a couple of residential design projects in Nigeria. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate and a research assistant in EMU's Department of Architecture.



## **Abstract**

Absence is a state or condition in which something expected, wanted, or looked for is not present or does not exist. Presenting the “absent thing” from perception point of view, this study is an analysis of different perception theories with a critical understanding of different ways which individual experiences of absence can be interpreted. The perception of absence poses a paradox. It involves imagination and memory. We only see current objects and scenes in the prevalent theories of perception. This indicates that we never truly notice absences; alternatively, on the basis of what we observe, we come to conclude that something is missing. In this paper we claim that we can actually see and perceive absences with the help of our background experiences and memories. Moreover, this study investigates the perception of “absence” through a survey that includes selected art works of Louis Bourgeois.

Keywords: Absence, Experience, Perception, Emotions, Visual Perception, Emotional Perception.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

When talking about absence, the first thing that comes to mind is the question; What is the absent thing? What is the nature of the absence experience? The absence that we feel, we experience, we relate with, we see, and we perceive, is the “absent thing”. Therefore “Absence can be defined as a state in which something expected, wanted, or looked for is not present or does not exist” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). The concept of absence can be emptiness, silence, void, desire, death, or uncertainty. However, the perception of absence poses a paradox. Individual experience is characterized by how a person perceives things (Marks 1982; Gibson 1966; Dretske 2000). Thus, perception can be said to be unique to individuals' experiences. Perception is defined as the mechanism from one's ultimate world observation and requires more sensory input processing. Perception and sensation, since they are part of one continuous operation, are difficult to distinguish or separate from each other. There are various theories of perception: the gestalt theory, self-perception theory, and cognitive appraisal theory. The theories discussed in this study focus on perception theories from a philosophical point of view.

### **1.1. Research Aim and Questions**

The research aims and objectives are to explore and analyze different perception experiences on the “absent thing”, and to explore people's way of evaluating perception with reference to their environment, professional knowledge, and background. The study also aims to understand the following research questions; What is the perceived absence? How does the absence experience differ for people with common professional background? What are the consequences of absence and what kind of emotions do people feel when they think of absence?

### **1.2. Methodology**

This study is a qualitative research based on open and closed ended questionnaire conducted with Master and PhD. students in Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture in Eastern Mediterranean University. It includes content analysis with critical discourse analysis which is an approach based on principles of qualitative data collection and analysis. It allows to collect numeric data as well as narrative data. The list of themes provided a qualitative data, depending on the number and themes, they merged to allow for a quantitative presentation which provides a complementary methodology (ranking, numbering, calculation of percentages). The outcome is empirical base research findings written with mythic and poetic description. The data obtained from survey have been analyzed, grouped significantly, and evaluated conceptually.

### **1.3. Limitation of Study**

The study solely focused on finding the perception of absent thing from a specified number of respondents, which are the 25 students of ARCH501 graduate course of Eastern Mediterranean University. The theories that were adopted for the research are perception, emotion, and cognitive appraisal theories which guided the questionnaire.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Perception Theory**

Perception is the process which people are aware of objects and events in the external world. The study of perception is to study the world, as the world is generally full of ideas, images or perceptions. It enables people to navigate the world and relate to their experiences. Also, people study perception as a means of solving specific issues which arises from intellectual inquisitiveness about themselves and the world. It is vital to identify what kind of perceptual demands can reasonably be placed on human senses without compromising safety and sanity (Russell & Ward, 1982).

There are five stages of perception, namely: stimulation, organization, interpretation-evaluation, memory, and recall. Stimulation is basically the activation of a particular stimulus. Different senses of humans are triggered by stimulus. They include the sense of touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste. For example, one only understands or gets the taste of a delicious meal when the food is in the mouth. There is an absolute assess to a variety of stimuli throughout the day, from the sound of alarm, to eating, to moving things around etc. Thus, stimulation involves selective exposure and selective attention. Selective attention occurs when someone is expecting to fulfill needs, while selective exposure occurs when someone exposes information that confirms an existing belief. The second stage is organization; in order to perceive something in a normal way, an individual must possess the capacity to identify and recognize things. The human brain recognizes familiar ideas and links them with previous experiences. Organized by rules, individuals are able to perceive objects that are physically close together. This is described as perception organized by rules. Sometimes the mind perceives things in a particular manner and other times they perceive things differently. The familiarity that is presented in someone's mind as a result of perceiving things in the same manner is referred to as schema. A script can be said to be a form of schema that is based on action, procedure, or event. It is a process of how people behaved and they organized it with their own action which organized by a pattern (Rookes & Willson, 2000; Devito, 2009). The third stage of perception is the interpretation-evaluation; when the human body recognizes features and events, it applies self-experiences and biases. The individual's experience is evaluated and related to his/her past, values, and beliefs. As such, evaluating individuals depending on one's own script the way individual behaves and perform the action appropriate or inappropriate. Moreover, the interpretation of information gives it meaning. The fourth stage is the memory; when the human body stores moments and events in the brain, they form part of human memory. The body not only stores specific stimuli someone experienced but also individual's feelings about them. The memory is a storage of both perception and interpretation-evaluation, which are kept according to scripts and schemas. The last stage of perception is the recall; memories stored at a particular time, enables an individual to recall what was perceived. Moments in an individual's life is usually recalled in order to evaluate them. When this is done, it brings a perceived event into a person's mind in order to retrieve details. Recall information severely contradicts one's schema because it forces individual to think or even rethink (Devito, 2009).

#### **2.1.1 Visual Perception Theory**

Billions of neurons and trillions of synapses burst into action as we open our eyes and view our surroundings. Although visual perception is a dynamic phenomenon, it is partly understood. It is well recognized that in the processing of visual input, color, contrast, motions, depths, shapes, and textures plays a significant role. This design mechanism is extremely complicated (Szeliski, 2010). In light-waves, visual perception starts with the eye acquiring incoming visual input, and this complex visual data is obtained by cone and rod receptors located in the retina. Approximately six million color-sensitive cone sensors comprise the retina and are mainly found in the fovea. Visual input that travels across the optic nerve to the brain from the retina proceeds through multiple pathways across different regions of the brain. Throughout normal vision, received visual information and internal indications reflecting perceptions, pattern recognition and so on are interpreted in the brain on a continuous basis.



## 2.1.2 Gestalt Theory

The first remarkable theory of perception to be explored is the Gestalt theory, which signifies an interesting paradox. Gestalt principles are perception laws, which explain how people group similar components or objects, how they understand patterns, and how individuals interpret or perceive objects and simplify those complex images. The work of three German men is closely related to Gestalt theory: Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka (Sternberg, Robert Sternberg, Karin 2012; Gordon, 2004). They attempted to explain how individuals perceive a chaotic stimulus around them. They described a series of laws discussing the inherent tendency to discover order in chaos. Gestalt's principle is mainly asserting that a whole is not necessarily a sum of its parts, but a "whole effect" (Behrens, 1998). The "whole effect" is often correlated with a higher effect, but it is a separate effect more specifically. Similar to this, by perceiving a collection of individual items as a whole, the mind 'informs' what the eye sees. In this respect, Gestalt psychologist noticed how humans are hard-wired and formed different 'laws' of perception. These can be listed (Figure 1) as the 'good figure' law; the law of proximity; the law of similarity; the law of good continuation; the law of common fate; and the law of closure (Gordon, 2004;

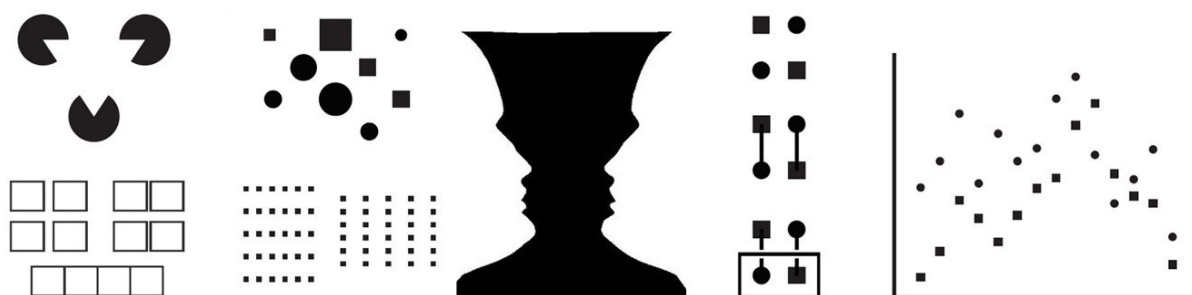


Figure 1: Gestalt theory. A representation of subjective contour. The same objects are grouped visually. Objects that are brought together in close proximity are perceived as together. Close proximity portrays horizontal or vertical relations between the objects (Wong, 2010).

Gestalt, dominated by isomorphism, implies that the observed pattern reappears in the brain until the visual experience happens for the first time. Particularly, the nature of the brain's physiological structure is isomorphic (analogous) to the object's shape (Koffka, 1935), which allows the imaginative mechanism, based on its prior understanding and experience of the same or related objects, to compensate for any missing information. Alhazen explained that vision currently happens in the cortex instead of the eyes (Lindberg, 1967). He also discussed how the process of seeing is informed by individual perception and defines how and what we see. He studied the defects of the eye in depth and showed that based on personal context and experience, visual perception can either be fooled or strengthened.

## 2.1.3. Emotion Theory

According to Merriam Webster dictionary (2011), emotion is defined as "either the affective aspect of consciousness, the state of feeling or a conscious mental reaction that is experienced subjectively a strong feeling that is normally channeled towards a particular object and typically accompanied by behavioral and physiological changes in the body." Emotion is a mode of behavior that is purposeful, or has an intellectual motive. It also portrays itself into feelings, as the personalized appraisal of that which is unprejudicial and being expressed in the purpose or idea (Dewey, 1895).

A mechanism in which perceptions are created with the available energy can be useful for decision-making about behavior. However, this system deals only with decisions regarding challenges that are actually apparent. Moreover, because mood states may very well represent current resources, their position may also be constrained in decision-making. Contrarily, feelings are responses to objects that should not be there physically. Absent objects can be symbolically represented so that they may be from the past, the future, or the imagination of an individual. Emotions will also guide decisions regarding a number of circumstances with both long-term including immediate consequences.

### 2.1.4. Cognitive Appraisal Theory

Cognitions are internal mental portrayals that are classified as thoughts and ideas. The consequences of cognitive are involved in different processes and occasions forming perception, memory, decision-making, judgement, and intuition. As internal mental being, cognitions are not obviously detectable but are still controllable to assess using the method of science. Cognitions can be personally or subjectively obtained from questioning or experimentally appraised by the use of reaction times, real-time neuro-imaging methods, and psychophysical responses to deduce internal procession. Cognition plays a vital role in assessing a behavior, and entails factors that enhance a better understanding of processes and outcomes, especially in behavior and health related issues (Gellman & Turner 2013).

According to Richard Lazarus, who pioneered the study of emotion theory, based on cognitive appraisal theory, thinking must take place before experiencing emotion. Consequently, a person would experience a stimulus, think about it, and then at the same time experience a physiological emotion and response. These are not only an existing emotion theory, but they also reveal vital examples of how the ideas of emotions are produced vary from each other. What all the emotion theories possessed in common is the idea that emotion is solely based on personally significant stimulus or experience, resulting a psychological and biological reaction (UWA, 2018). Researches also detailed how personality can result in and influence the way in which different individuals cognitively appraise a situation or events.

Lazarus suggests that; "cognitive appraisal is an evaluation of the significance of what is happening in the world for personal wellbeing" These "significations" or meaning are categorized into two types; harmful to self and beneficial to self, for example losses and gains, respectively (Schweder, 1993). Lazarus based his theory by stating, "we are constructed in such a way that certain appraisal patterns and their core relational themes will result to certain emotional responses" e.g. the appraisal that if a person has lapsed a moral imperative will result to guilt feeling. Moreover, "once the appraisals have been made, the emotional response is a foregone conclusion, a consequence of biology." Lazarus then stated, "once we appraised that our ego-identity has been enhanced, we tend to react with pride" and so on for every relative theme, and its emotion. He then asserted from another point of view that, "appraisal is a necessary and sufficient condition" to produce an emotion. He suggested that, the psychobiological principle provides for universal in the emotion process of the human species and probably applies to other animals. He also stated that the theory is "evident observationally" (Schweder, 1993).

Since cognitive appraisal depends on the persons subjective assessment and exposition of an event, which is phenomenological. The concept of phenomenology, is not new neither common. It originated from the era of prehistoric philosophical treaties, and in more recent period, it was reflected in the studies made by Adler, Jung, and Rank, together with psychological theorists such as Murray, Tolman, Rogers, Lewin, Kelly, and Heider (Weiner, 1985). Phenomenology has some questionable characteristics that could lead to questioning certain dimensions of our cognitive approach.

The first issue relates to an existing conflict in psychology concerning perception. The classical perception theory possesses three factors; it was veridical normative and "cool". The veridical perspective is seen in the basic question, "How is it that we are able to perceive the work as it really is in order to behave adaptively" in consideration to its normative feature, the main point is on how people perceive in general (Folkman & Lazarus 1984).

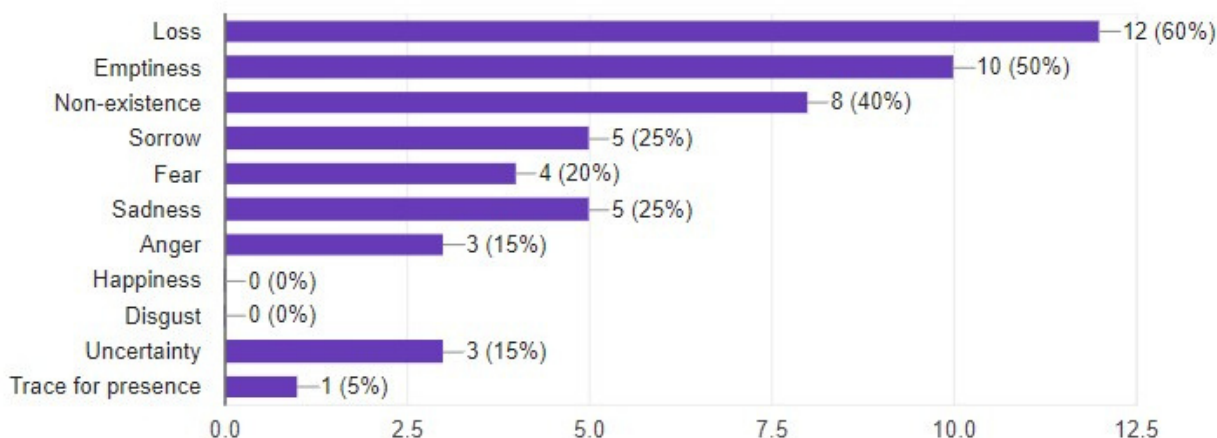
The new look phase had a close relation with phenomenology in that its proponents highlighted that people perceived what they actually want to perceive or what they need to, rather than what is visibly available in the environment. This outlook was never included into the classical perception theory despite its documentation in numerous studies and research. The method of classical perception theorist is a proof today in the field of information interpretation and processing, which, although process centered, is concerned with reliability and focus more with contexts. Eventually all comprehensive theory of cognition and perception has to find a connection to include these seemingly paradoxical outlooks (Folkman & Lazarus 1984).

The pioneer theorist who offered an explanation of the actual definition of appraisal was Magda Arnold, and to give a highlight of what the appraisal process could be and how it connects with emotion (Rose & Smith, 2001). The main important idea behind the appraisal theory is that you possess a thought (which is the cognitive appraisal) before you actually experience an emotion, and the emotion you did experienced depends on the accumulation of that particular thoughts you had (Frijda, 1988; Lazarus 1991). If your thoughts tell you that something is positive, you will surely have a positive emotion about that thing than if you had negative appraisal, and likewise the opposite is relevant. Appraisal theory describes the way different individuals can have entirely different emotions about the same event.

### 3. SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey was conducted with 21 respondents, 60% of them are master of science students, and 40% are Ph.D. students from the Faculty of Architecture in Eastern Mediterranean University. In the light of the perception theory, the questions raised in the survey seeks to understand; the perceived absence, how people experience absence differently, the consequences of absence and the type of emotions people feel when they think of absence.

Due to the survey findings on open ended questions, 40% of the respondents understood absence to be something which no longer exist or not available. The most frequent answers given to the definition of absence can be listed as follows; "Not being in the expected place on expected time", "Absence is defined as the nonexistence of something", "Something that exists no more", "Something missing, something is not where it's supposed to be." 30% of the respondents think that absence is loss of someone or losing something. Some of the repeated answers can be given as; "Not being present; loss; invisible or untouchable yet sensible; something valuable to qualify as absent", "Anything you lose, miss, mostly affect your life or your surrounding", "Losing something." Ten percent of the respondents defined absence as, "absence of emotion." A respondent stated that, "In my point of view, I will define it as something missing between families, couples and friends, like not caring or showing enough love for the one we care about or being there for them when they need us, as no one exist to support that person so he/she will feel the absence of emotions in his life." 20% of the respondents have different ideas such as: "Absence is the unknown sequence", "Visual absence", "Absent is something or someone which is not taking or paying attention."



**Chart 1:** What do you feel when you think of "absent thing?"

The above-mentioned emotional expressions (Loss, Emptiness, Non-existence, Sorrow, Fear, Sadness, Anger, Happiness, Disgust, and Uncertainty) were categorized and used in the survey based on the categorization of emotional expression stated under the emotional theory.

The question given to the participants was "What do you feel when you think of "absent thing?" It is understood that 60% of the respondents described it as loss, 50% of them described it as emptiness, 40% also described it as non-existence, 25% of them expressed it as sorrow, 20% described fear, 25% described sadness, 15% of them described it as anger, and 15% described it as uncertainty, while only 5% of the respondents described it as a trace for presence. On the contrary, none of the respondents described the feeling of the "absent thing" to happiness or disgust (Chart 1).



**Figure 3:** Louise Bourgeois, untitled artwork, 1946-1947, oil on canvas, 660x1120mm. Artist Rooms Tate and National Galleries of Scotland.

Participants were asked to give their perception on Figure 3, Louise Bourgeois artwork. The answers given to this open-ended question are quite different from each other. Four participants highlighted emotions and they pointed out the artist's childhood experience on this painting. The common answers were anger, sorrow, insecure and feeling lost. The second most frequent answers given to that question were free spirit, freedom, and loss of self-control. Moreover, confusion and uncertainty were stated in the same frequency. The least frequent answer given was being lost and absence of form. The most striking answer was stated as; "An eye, as if there is an eye always watching over you, that there is and will always be a higher form of power or a higher state that has an overlook on you. The different type of eyes I see in this painting makes me feel that, there will always be different opinions or different point of views surrounding the same element (the element could be you, me, or even a simple object) but there is always a way out to a place where a true self can explain themselves without the need of proving anything and just flow with the wind under sun rays."



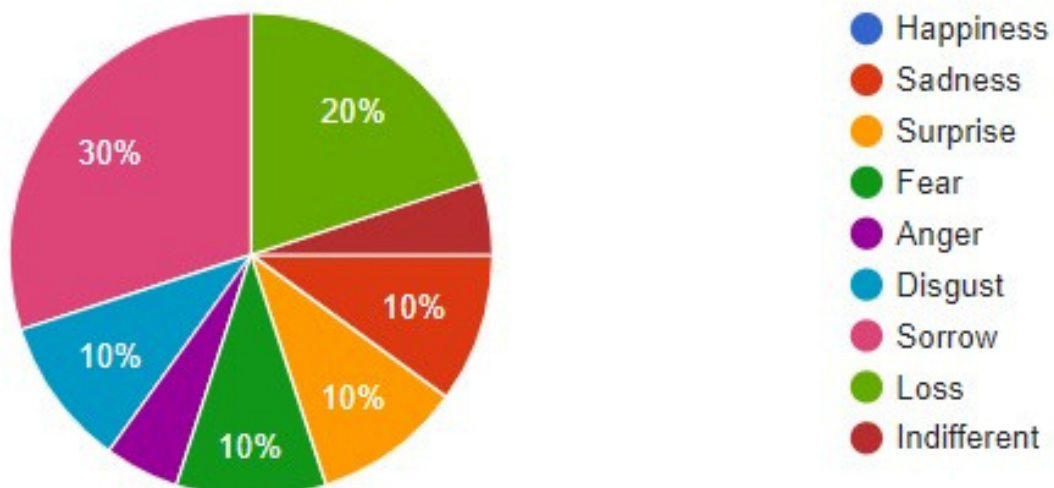
**Figure 4:** Louise Bourgeois, "10 am is when you come to me", (2006).

Participants were asked to give their perception on figure 4, Louise Bourgeois artwork called "10 am is when you come to me." The 25% of the answers given to this open-ended question shows that participants perceived two people's love relationship, which is quite complicated. They stated "ups and downs", "feeling of love", and "feeling of void", and they also mentioned the time spent in a relationship. The other 25% have different perceptions. They frequently mentioned someone reaching out to another or reaching out to something that is lost. However, the least frequent but striking answers given were as follows: "There is the main hand which could be the hand in need and it's the darker red hand, there is also the other hand which is the helping hand that is always try to pull the first individual. Until the second individual becomes affected and contagiously becomes the darker hand in need and the first individual tries to redo what the second hand once did earlier and this loop goes on and on and on.", "This is like a representative painting of modern periods. We are such a huge advanced civilization and since the inventions that seems like make us closer to each other actually somehow separates us. We are trying to reach each of us but there are several staffs that make us individual among these crowd", and "Unstoppable marching of time that is slowly guiding us to our inevitable destiny."

Participants were also asked to relate the meaning of the painting on figure 4, either personally or emotionally. 25% of the participants related the meaning of the painting to someone who looks for love and found it. Another 25% related the meaning of the painting to emotions. 15% of the participants stated loss of the loved one and 10% mentioned the struggle of finding a safe place. The rest of 25% perception is different from each other such as "fear of trusting someone", "absence of order and proportion."



**Figure 5:** Louise Bourgeois, "Rejection Makes Me Wild", (2001-2002).

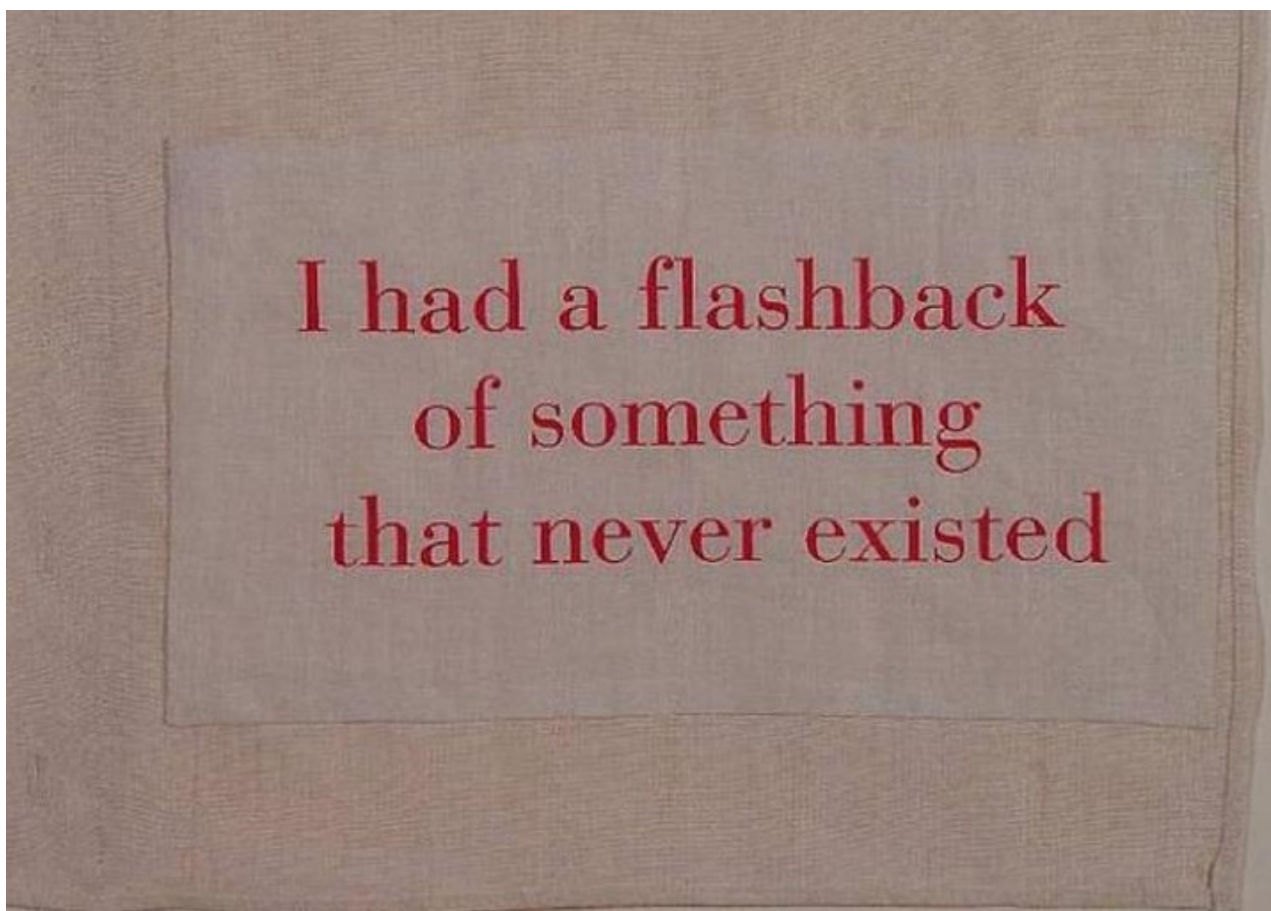


**Chart 2:** How does the artwork make you feel?



Participants were asked to state how the artwork makes them feel when they look at the “Rejection Makes Me Wild” in figure 5. As it is shown in chart 2, it is understood that 30% (6 people) stated that they feel sorrow, 20% (4 people) felt loss, 10% (2 people) felt disgust, 10% (2 people) stated sadness, 10% (2 people) stated fear and the last 10% (2 people) stated surprise. Participants were also asked to state what they see when they look at the artwork of Louise Bourgeois in figure 5. The 40% of the answers given to this open-ended question shows that participants perceived depression, sadness, anger, disappointment, terrified, fear and sorrow.

15% of the participants stated that they see a man feeling in deep pain. 10% stated a disturbed and trapped person. The other 25% of the participants stated, “old sculpture”, “loss of identity”, “the last breath” and “I don't see a sad expression on his face but I feel that way. People perceive things differently. ...this made me feel that the presence and absence of something can change through perception.”



**Figure 6:** Louise Bourgeois, “I Had a Flashback of Something that Never Existed” no. 18 of 34, from the illustrated book, *Ode à l'Oubli* (2002).

Participants were asked to interpret the artwork of Louise Bourgeois “I Had a Flashback of Something that Never Existed” and relate this sentence to the “absent thing”. The answers given to this open-ended question are similar for most participants. As 65% of the participants stated non-existence in different ways. The most striking answers can be listed as follows; “That I had an imagination of something I wish that had been real with the one we loved, but that thing was absent between us and only existed in our imagination”, “Considering the Bourgeois's childhood maybe she has always had a dream of close family that she has never had.” “...My interpretation in regards to the absent thing is that, it would be a certain scenario I have gone through personally I wish had happened to me but never happened ...I would've loved to have flash backs about ...a memory that I don't have but I wished that I had ...but it never really happened because I wasn't really physically there or have gone through any of them”, “A dream of something which cannot be seen or touched but can be felt emotionally”, “Absence refers to the feeling or memory that someone or something is away or not present.”



10% of the participants stated reincarnation and rebirth with imagination. A participant stated his interpretation in these words, "Some scientists and philosophers say, ...we do not learn anything from the beginning because we already know everything and everything we discover is about our memory. We remember everything. So, in this sentence we can say that, it makes us feel like DeJaVu even though it does not exist. It can be a memory from our pre-life, or it can be done in our dream or imaginations etc. Human being is a creature that wants to believe whatever he/she needs to believe. That is how we created flashbacks." and the other 10% stated the term "infinity." One of the participants explained that, "Human brain is limited with the term infinity. We cannot imagine infinity because our brain cannot process infinity. So, something that never existed for us might be present in some other period of time." 15% of the participants ascertain the impossibility of having flashback of something that has never existed.

#### **4. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

The outcome of the survey made it clear that perceived absence is different for each person when questions are asked based on a visual artwork. When it comes to an abstract understanding, we have seen that the answers given were seemingly closer in the rate of 70%. It is understood that the majority believes the absent thing is a non-existence of something in the expected time-place and loss of something. The respondents also described the emotional interpretations of certain terminologies that depict absence, and pose a similarity of response, vocabulary-wise. Moreover, they portray the same meaning (i.e. absence of something and loss), but on analyzing their further explanations, it shows the individual responses to be different. This gives a better understanding that according to the emotional perception theory, two individuals may appraise certain circumstances in the same way but their feeling about the event may differ.

Consequently, the responses obtained from the participants about Louise Bourgeois artworks were also striking. They assessed the works via the lens of their common professional background and appraised each with thoughtful diverse interpretations, which indicated the majority of the responses are inclined to emotional expositions.

The artworks used in this study were selected intentionally (a text, an abstract painting, a sculpture of a face, and some gestures) and the survey aimed to test the perception of participants with a deeper understanding on various typologies of artworks through visual perception. The outcome was unexpected, as it is understood that participants gave similar answers on an abstract text when it is compared to a work of art. Furthermore, this result shows that written expression has more similar perception than a visual artwork, such as painting or sculpture.

The theory of perception has traditionally been very different from the study of emotion. Perception, cognition, emotion, and other essential mechanisms have been indirectly regarded by psychologists as separable phenomena to be observed in isolation. Emotional consequences can be more pervasive than most people know in real-world settings. It is also believed that recreating the world is one of the key tasks of the visual system, forming a representation as realistic as possible in the brain. Although studies, over the last ten to fifteen years, have shown that this is not the case. Study results suggest that what we perceive and experience is a systematically twisted version of reality instead of reproducing images within the brain. The benefits and costs of coping with the environment are more of what we "see."

The perception of the absent thing is a peculiar and paradoxical phenomenon after being reviewed via several perception theories: visual, emotional, self-perception, and cognitive appraisal theories. Absence seems to be an inevitable part of our world and experiences. Presenting the "absent thing" from perceptual point of view, we believe that human perception of absence poses a paradox and it involves our imagination, including our memory. Furthermore, we believe we can feel, experience, and perceive absence differently due to our backgrounds.

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# THE CONCEPT OF ABSENCE FOR THE MORPHOLOGICAL LAYERS OF FAMAGUSTA WALLED CITY

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Her research interests include the theories of architecture and urbanism, urban design, urban issues, memory studies, and environmental psychology.



## **Abstract**

Absence, as the main focus of this study, leads us to decide the main objective of this paper, which is to extend the concept of absence and presence through typo-morphological study; the layers of the historical core of Famagusta have been examined to represent the absent ideology in various layers. This research is to investigate the relation between the absence and different layers that reflects the existing urban morphology in different time periods to answer the main research question. What can be perceived as absent in Famagusta Walled City when compared with its historic development? In this research, a qualitative methodology will be used and an interpretive approach is applied. Assumptions from the researchers are needed to analyse the data and relate them with the main concept of the absent thing. Information will be collected with document/literature analysis and empirical work. To be able to understand and describe the absent thing and its components, research is done by considering different approaches of philosophy and architecture on an urban scale. Through the exploration of the theoretical concept, the main ideology of the absent thing is applied to the morphological analysis of Famagusta Walled City, in order to identify layers of different time periods. As a result, these layers will be reflected through an installation, to represent the absence in the development process of the city.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Problem Definition**

As a result of the multilayer characteristic of the Walled City, spatial arrangements and physical metamorphosis arose as the different layers of urban pattern. Observations show that the various types of urban voids lead to the different levels of discontinuity and absence of a disintegrated fabric and reflect a reality of urban form.

### **1.2 Aim and Objectives**

The aim is to answer the main question of the research, which is:

How can multilayer urban form and urban voids at different levels be expanded and transformed into one another through the theory of absence and existence?

This main concern has several sub-questions that have to be answered or explored in the process:

What is the main reason for the absence and presence transformation of urban form?

How could a layer of urban form spaces transform into the absent through time?

How could a lost space transform into presence?

### **1.3 Methodology**

This study aimed to examine the concept of the absent thing with an interdisciplinary approach under different branches of philosophy and architecture on an urban scale. Besides philosophical approaches, the main point of this study is to define and represent the presence and absence in physical space through various historic layers. Typo-morphological layers are the dominant sense of existence and pre-dominant focus in human background and urban design. They provide an important link between the existing physical environment and absence. The presence of the existing physical environment can reflect the absence when the layers are represented by considering time. To be able to understand existence, presence, and absence it is very important to consider time issues. Presence is dependent on time. Something can be present in one period but time can change it to absent. If we perceive time periods as different layers of the past, then by creating these layers in visual formats we can represent the absence.

### **1.4 Limitations**

The study is limited by the historical development and its multilevel urban form in Famagusta Walled City. Although the evaluation of the absence and presence concept is a wide range of research, the aspects of the absence and presence concept will be limited by urban morphological studies of undeliberate urban voids.

## **2 THEORY OF ABSENCE AND PRESENCE**

### **2.1 The Concept of Absence and Presence**

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, absent is defined as “not being in the place where something is expected to be” and present is defined as “the fact that someone or something is in a place”. From these very basic definitions and the fact that both absence and presence are described as being or not being in space first approach to this topic is a scientific one. This framework is based on the integration of the study about perceived-conceived-lived places, and understanding of presence and absence. Representation and perception of absence and presence can be in various ways. They are both the basic states of being and they are both formed around being. Architecturally, presence is solid and form that leads us to perceive the absence as void or space. A black circle in a rectangle can be perceived as the present thing or the absent thing. The same way the rectangle with a black circle in it can be perceived either as absent or present. Without a black circle, a rectangle cannot be present so the absence is creating the presence. In other words, presence is created by absence. Imagine a basic plan representation of a room in black and white. The walls are solid and the space surrounded by the walls is void. There will be no meaning of one without another. Therefore, the definition and perception of absence and presence depend on the states that they found. Representation is the state that absence and presence are found. They can be represented by images or words. Plato argues that the presence and truth are directly linked. He supports the idea that the unmediated truth of speech is a stronger way of representation than the mediation of writing. To make a speech the speaker has to be present but writing can replace this presence. Therefore, representation of the presence with images or writing may not be as true and honest as unmediated speech. For our case, mediated words or images will replace the true unmediated speech when the time issue is taken into account. Therefore, the representation of the past will reflect the absence. Existentialism is a philosophical theory that focuses on human thinking, experiencing, and authenticity. For human life to have meaning, the existence of authentic reality is required. Martin Heidegger, who is a supporter of this philosophy, discusses the presence under time and place dimensions to define the meaning. To be able to understand existence, presence, and absence it is very important to consider time issues. Presence is dependent on time. Something can be present in one period but time can change it to absent. If we perceive time periods as different layers of the past, then by creating these layers in visual formats we can represent the absence. As architects, we can reflect this idea to the cities on an urban or in building scale. If we were able to travel back in time, as we move back we could perceive the absence of each detail on the buildings, the buildings themselves, and the cities. As we know and expect those buildings to be there, when we move back in time, the absence will be represented clearly. Imagine a slow-motion video of a building’s construction process. If it is played backward, we can see how each element of the building becomes absent. The same could be applied to the future as some details on the buildings or buildings themselves may decay and disappear as time passes. Physically everything can be seen as absent excluding the period of its lifetime. So historical maps and images allows us to see what was present. If a comparison is made by overlapping an old map with today’s scenario, the absence of items can be perceived, which is one of the main objectives of this study.

## **3 URBAN FORMS AND TRANSFORMATION**

Cities are considered as dynamic components that have complex structures that change with time and the factors during the process. The source of this dynamic structure that cities have is considered as the change of humanity and knowledge in the process. Therefore, while cities are defined as organisms within the cycle of construction and destruction with a continuous change, urban morphology examines these structural changes in human habitats. Ethnographer Lévi-Strauss (1954, pp. 137-8) characterized cities as 'the most complex of human inventions, at the confluence of nature and artifact'. Many studies on urban morphology were shaped in this direction. The transformations of cities were examined with the components of their metamorphosis in terms of identity, cultural transmission, and social and economic power over time.

In addition, further reading and analysing cities in morphological studies is a common discourse that is claimed to be based on three basic principles.

1. Urban form is defined by three fundamental physical elements: buildings and their related open spaces, plots or lots, and streets.
2. Urban form can be understood at different levels of resolution. Commonly, four are recognized, corresponding to the building/lot, the street/block, the city, and the region.
3. Urban form can only be understood historically since the elements of which it is comprised undergo continuous transformation and replacement (Moudon, 1997, pp. 7).

Therefore, when we define cities as the physical environment of human existence, it turns out that they have three important components: form, time, and resolution.

The smallest formation (cell) in a city consists of a combination of two elements: the specific land plot with its built environment (enclosed and open space). The features of the smallest formation represent the urban form's physical setting and density, as well as permanent, temporary, and eliminated usage over time.

### **3.1 Typo-morphology**

Typo-morphology is an approach in urban morphology that aims to understand cities that are gradually changing by juxtaposing many elements. Typo-morphology is an approach that emphasizes the variation of physical characteristics of cities over time and how the characteristics of cities compare with each other. It is also focused on the transformation of human habitats and the development process of knowledge and usage according to time and era (Moudon, 1994, p.292).

To clarify further, the link between presence and absence ideology and the typo-morphological approach is used by analysing the historical layers and structure of the built environment temporary layers and eliminated layers by the lost spaces.

## **4 URBAN DIMENSION OF ABSENCE**

In recent decades, most modern cities have lacked the typical standard of urban space and thus undergone substantial deterioration of their cores, which is evident in the high rates of absence. There are many empty, unused, and abandoned spaces in almost every area, which are voids in general. Nevertheless, it is not possible to define all urban voids as unused or leftover, etc. Many voids are planned to be voids; they are a physical setting of representation of human interaction and reflect a connection between the person and the public, such as parks and squares (Torre, 2000). There are two ways of creating these urban voids: Deliberately and Undesirable. Deliberately voids represented voids that are designed for purposes such as streets, squares, parking lots or parks and etc. Both well integrated or not, these spaces are part of the urban structure and are commonly referred to as positive voids. On the other hand, resulting from a lack of comprehension of human needs and interactions between space and buildings, there are other types of urban voids (Tiesdell & Carmona, 2012), which can be defined as undesirable voids and addressed under various names, such as leftover space, lost space, unused space, neglected space, undefined space. In terms of meaning and with some small variation in context, these undesirable spaces are considered as absence models on the urban scale, often occurring in negative ways, such as unused or leftover spaces that appear in cities after urban planning and development. There are also some voids that were originally planned as positive voids, but they have been converted into negative voids and lost their performance due to the incompetence of the facilities and usage. The negative spaces, which are the subject of this study, have become a reflection of the urban dimension of absence. In order to better understand this matter, first deliberate urban voids will be addressed and then undeliberate urban voids will be discussed.

Roger Trancik (1986) is one of the theorists who had interesting work on the transformation of positive voids to negative voids over time, and the lack of competence about urban mechanisms that have caused lost spaces to these so-called positive spaces. He focused on both urban solids and voids for this purpose, and then established five major reasons for the formation of lost spaces in cities:

- Urban solid classification: "public monuments or dominant institutional buildings, the field of urban blocks, and directional or edge defining building"
- Urban-voids classification: "entry foyers, inner-block voids, networks of streets and squares, parks and gardens, and linear open-space systems"



Figure 1: Five types of voids that might be seen in the urban fabric (Trancik, 1986)

Type	Description
<b>The first type of deliberate void</b>	The passage into one's personal domain transitioning into public spaces. It can be formed as a lobby, door niche or front yard.
<b>The second type of deliberate void</b>	The 'inner block void' that is a semiprivate residential space for circulation, leisure, rest or utility which is consist the single family housing neighborhood.
<b>The third type of deliberate void</b>	The public squares and network of streets. They are used by automobiles and are developed between blocks that contain the active 10 public street life.
<b>The fourth type of deliberate void</b>	The gardens, parks and also public spaces. They are merged the rural settings into an urban fabric
<b>The fifth type of deliberate void</b>	The linear open spaces which usually located along the wetland zones, waterfronts and rivers. They usually made by formal and informal green ways which cut through districts to make edges and also link places together

Negative urban voids represent absence in urban areas that are in need to be reconsidered and redesigned. There are spaces that do not contribute positively to the community or physical environment. In different forms, undesirable voids arise in the urban form. Andrea Rojas (2009) argued that three factors are primarily responsible for creating a negative void. The classification of these urban voids, which are Phenomenological Voids, Functional Voids, and Geographical Voids, is also based on these factors.

Figure 2: Three factors are primarily responsible for creating a negative void (Rojas, 2009)

Type	Description
<b>The first type of undesirable void</b>	<b>Phenomenological Void</b> Due to a specific event like war or natural disasters within a city or area, and causes clearing urban context or historic transformation.
<b>The second type of undesirable void</b>	<b>Functional Void</b> It appears within the urban context due to a change in the pattern of use.
<b>The third type of undesirable void</b>	<b>Geographical Void</b> Formed by a break in urban form due to natural topographical features such as rivers, valleys, hills, lakes, and other unusual terrain.

## 5 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Layers of the Walled City

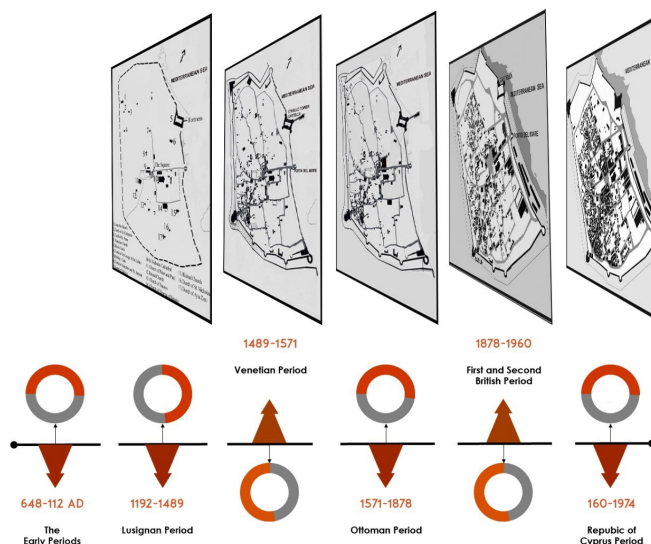
Cyprus is an island country that is located in the Mediterranean Sea on the crossroad of important lines. Geopolitically, the island Cyprus has a very important position and is the third largest and third most populous island in the Mediterranean located in the middle of three continents Asia, Europe and Africa. Famagusta is a city on the east coast of Cyprus and was the island's port city, acting as a gateway for trading goods to Asia, Africa, and Western Europe. The Walled City of Famagusta rose in the 13th century, and developed and changed over time. The walls are about 3.3 km in length and surrounded by a moat. The city walls were an effective defensive system to protect the port and the city from any attacks. It is located on the southeast edge of the city.

The walls face the sea and separate the port from the city. The city growth is towards north of the Walled City following the coastline. Famagusta started to form and developed by the people from Salamis which was an ancient Greek city, around 7 km away from the Walled City. The period between the years 1192 and 1571 includes ruling periods of Lusignan, Genoese and Venetian can be called as the Latin period. This is the most significant and important period for the formation and development of Famagusta. In the Lusignan period, natural harbour was a key point for the development of the city. Othello tower was built and a fortress started to form for defensive purposes. Venetians developed the city mainly in a militaristic way. City walls and bastions were built shaping the Walled City more powerfully. The different layers of this construction of the city walls in different periods can be perceived in many parts of the walls even today. (Figure 3) City's urban development was mainly on an axis that crosses between the Ravelin and Sea Gates, which are still present. In 1571, when the island was conquered by the Ottomans, the first attempt was to repair the damaged structures caused by the war. The development in the urban pattern was close to the Venetian period. In 1878, when the island went under British rule, the harbour became the main focus once more. Construction of the new harbour and many warehouses for storing goods was the main development in this period. Famagusta had a steady urban pattern development after British period and with few changes took today's shape. As in many cities, Famagusta hosted many civilisations throughout time and developed accordingly. In addition, much destruction took place in the city caused by wars, earthquakes, and lack of maintenance. This destruction caused many items to change from presence to absence. Some of these absences were restored with a same or different function and some are left abandoned.

Figure 3: Visual representation of layers of the walls (Authors, 2020)

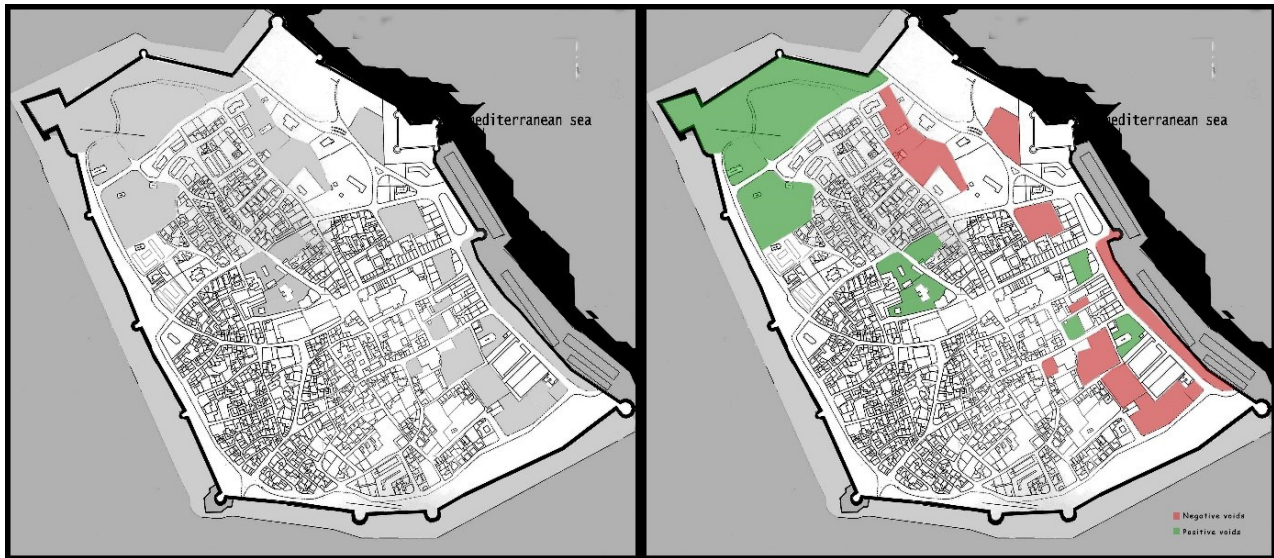


Figure 4: Urban morphology in different periods (developed from Hoşkara, Doratlı, & Zafer, 2003)



Earlier studies provide a background about the solid and void spaces and these spaces are separated into two categories as positive and negative spaces. In addition, the studies about the Walled City of Famagusta show that void spaces are defined as lost spaces without any indication of being positive or negative. (Figure 5) Positive solid and void spaces are studied and discussed to provide evidence that the positive spaces can be transformed into negative solid and void spaces. Car parks, educational and cultural spaces are considered as positive and spaces with no function are classified as negative spaces. So the negative void spaces are perceived as absent in Famagusta Walled City as defined previously.

**Figure 5:** Lost spaces in Famagusta Walled City (developed from Hoşkara, Doratlı, Zafer, 2003)



## 6 CONCLUSION

We have demonstrated that a relation between the absence and urban layers of Famagusta can be studied by visualising these layers. Study focused on the dimensional relationship between absence and presence in Famagusta for a better understanding of absence. To begin with, we define the meaning of absence and understand that an empty space or void is not always corresponds to define absence, and the void can be defined in different variations.

Urban forms are made up of solid and void spaces and these spaces can be categorised as positive and negative places. Being a positive or negative space aimed to define its relation with the absence and presence. In this paper, five main morphologic layers of Famagusta Walled City are studied to define their relationship with absence and presence and reflected through an installation (Figures 6-10). Morphologic layers are represented with solid and void spaces and the absence is related with the voids in different levels. Three types of voids are studied, which are phenomenological voids, functional voids, and geographical voids. It has been observed that phenomenological and functional voids can be transformed into solid/presence through time, historic value, and pattern of use.

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HASAN DEBEŞ  
ÖZGE SELEN KOÇ

THE CONCEPT OF ABSENCE FOR THE MORPHOLOGICAL LAYERS OF FAMAGUSTA WALLED CITY



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# THE ABSENT THING

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