Framing the art [A] vs. architecture argument

By Barie Fez-Barringten

Abstract:
What’s the argument; who’s arguing?; and, how does resolving that architecture is the making of metaphors settle the argument? Through analogies, similes and evidence I present arguments supporting the resolutions surrounding the way architects and urban designers make metaphors. This is done by presenting the thinking on making both natural and synthetic cities as well the design of buildings and neighborhoods. Cited throughout are evidence of linguistic, cognitive, psychological and philosophical mechanisms of the metaphor and their applicability. All of this to reify the stasis of architecture as an art by the inference that, as art [A], it too, makes metaphors.

This argument is relevant to communicate between unlike peoples, disciplines and roles [C] in the creative process. The relevance of this monograph is that it provides the authoritative evidence defining the architects, planners, and designers' scope of services and owners' conceptual basis for considering projects. For cognitive, linguists and other scientist this monograph provides the evidence for application and of theory.

Key words:
What's the argument [2] and who’s arguing?

Empirically, the title of the essay posing the tensional relationship between art and architecture depends on who and where you are and are you apathetic or a connoisseur when it comes to your surroundings. On the other hand the title may express an ideal irrespective of time and place to a transcendental definition about the inherent qualities of all creation, use and perception of the material world (and man’s longing to covet that world). At the end of the day the title and the inner working of the creation have pragmatic results from science. Whether architecture is an art [A] or not is argued amongst practicing professionals, owners architects, engineers and artist, scholars and contactors and to a much greater degree between members of society as manifest in literature, mass media and academia. It is the general public, users, real-estate markets, real estate agents, appraisers, and possibly financiers who dicker about such unpractical mater. After all, what you call something and how you may define it does not really limit practice, use and market. Government officials, practitioners, owners would never want their descendents to be what it is that art has come to signify: irresponsible, ambiguous, and unreliable.

Rather design, engineering and science should be predictable, manageable and efficient, all virtues seemingly antithetical to art and admittedly to artist. Most artists like being artist enjoying their well known characteristics, objectivity, sanctification and perspective.

On the other hand there are many architects whose practice reject the mundane, banal and mediocrity of plane vanilla, hack and under-funded projects only seeking and accepting commissions which seek an” artistic”, creative and inventive solution, creation and work. The architects will often propose their portfolio filled with colorful renderings, models and photographs emphasizing the art of architecture, exotic forms, and brilliant design.

These portfolios raise the level of excellence, accomplishments and creativity to new heights hoping to compete against other like-minded architects.
In these cases they freely bandy the “art” word balancing it with other more responsible adherence to budgets, functions, and corporate identity. Underlying the social argument is a matter of rightness, social identity and the iconic value of resources, especially material matter, including precious stones, metals, antiques, cloths, etc. Social values and the ability man-made goods identify a culture, society, families, groups, companies and individuals is the heart of the argument. No one will argue about art of architecture in general but they will about the art of specific buildings.

Who was the architect and was he considered and artist? Have other people valued the building and has it been traded and valued over time. Does it have unique patterns, forms, shapes, colors and what is its relative cost? Is it more expensive or in a class of expensive buildings. The issues and questions are endless but the underlying motive is the same, values are at stake. These arguments care little about the science, axioms, and reasoning of metaphors but are about metaphor’s essence, that it is a man-made artifact of value, made by an artist, craftsman, and manufactures resulting in a valued property. Whether real or liquid property the product is a referent, which refers, connects transfers and likens one thing to another.

In the case of buildings the argument of the art of the building may involve its price, quality, origins, uses, location and history of ownership. In any case the opponents would not delve to find the metaphors, concepts, ideas but appraise the value based on the market and comparables for similar buildings.

Metaphors would only be considered when the seller or the buyer, maker or user, owner or the public had to originate their valuation. As soon as that happens the parties to the work need a vocabulary aside from public opinion to evaluate, the work. While architects make a combination of conceptual and technical metaphors they do so metaphorically and by attending to scientific, material and factual matters. Yet in so doing, no matter to what degree of technical or conceptual the very process of any work translating requirements from wishes to design to construction to occupation involves metaphors, symbols and representations which carry-over and describe one thing in terms of another.
How does claiming that architecture is the making of metaphors settle the argument?

Architecture is the making of metaphors [B] establishing the stasis between art and architecture focus attention on the commonplace between all arts and also architecture and with supporting topoi, evidence, axioms, and issues warrant the ways and means that the architect, while attending to the practical, scientific, banal and mundane, makes metaphors. Regardless of which one of the arguments we choose, so long as the stasis has no value amongst society, scholars and the profession there cannot be a real-world dispute. As any argument, it needs two parties who agree to disagree, where success ultimately depends on the assent of an audience and who both agree on the focal point (stasis) of the argument. Architecture as the making of metaphors cannot be used to teach or affect the practice of architecture unless educators and practitioners agree to the vocabulary, the premises and practicality. So long as society does not acknowledge the degree of art [A] in science, art [A] in architecture and art [A] in engineering metaphors and art [A] in the argument where absolutes, liability and certainty are normative. So while architecture is the making of metaphors the truth would easily settle disputes it is rather marginalized by both sides of the argument that look to metaphors of social, cultural and context.

They expand their differences beyond agreeable intersections to such a large degree that they can only unreasonably agree or disagree. However, it is in this way that the metaphors are very effective as a base of both inductive and deductive reasoning as the metaphor clarifies the relationships and makes them part of the argument.

In their unreasonable non-arguments they toss around superficial, but socially accepted metaphors. In our argument we have claimed that art [A], is the making of …………; not that architecture is art [A], but that architecture is an art [A], meaning that architecture is one of the arts and has its’ (arts) characteristics. It is different than saying that it is art [A]. This means that all of the characteristics that distinguish any of the arts or any other field still are their unique distinctives but that some of the non-arts [A], do have artistic characteristics and in particular one which is the dominant, most prevalent and common. Common because it is in all concepts of art’s Technical and conceptual dimensions.
That is to say that even the technical of art [A] has a both a technique and concept of the technique both common to all the arts and yet unique to its own medium. At the heart of these arguments is often the inability to define either art or architecture so that arguments do not have a stasis and arguments are never resolved.

**The arguments (and resolutions) about architecture and metaphors [1]**

The reasons supporting my claim affecting policy and procedures of real estate development, housing and urban development, professional practice affecting cities, projects, buildings and single family residences.

**Resolutions:**

1. That architecture is the making of metaphors [B] and
2. Architecture is the making of metaphors is the stasis of why architecture is an art [A] [3];
3. Why art is the making of metaphors [4], and
4. Why the architect is responsible for both the technical and conceptual architectural metaphors; and
5. Why architects like all the other arts is responsible for presenting society with public, social, contextual and cultural perspectives.

**Introduction:**

Early monographs justifying architecture as the making of metaphors were steeped in deductive reasoning since we could not find new information pertaining to metaphors.

Many of my monographs included analyzing and explaining the syllogism:

- *Art [A] is the making of metaphors*
- *Architecture is an art*
- *Therefore architecture is the making of metaphors.*

Till now we did nothing to reason why art is the making of metaphors or why architecture is an art. Since 1967 I proceeded to analyze the presumptions and find its many applications. This new information in Metaphor and Thought by Andrew Ortony first published in 1979, provides evidence to support inductive reasoning and to this end each axiom is its own warrant to the inferences of the above syllogism and the answer to questions of why metaphor is the stasis to any of the syllogism’s conclusion.
As with many investigative studies mine is not different as it was prompted by a personal dilemma affecting my intellectual, professional and artistic career. Unannounced and discouraged, as a child, before dawn, I’d take to the Bronx streets examining cellars, fire escapes, sewers, gutters, sidewalks, buildings, fences, grilles and gratings. I’d build huts on empty lots, dig and inhabit holes in the ground and build covered sheltered rooms in our sun parlor.

I’d build miniature stage settings out of tissue boxes and light them for various effects. It wasn’t until I married a sculptress who, like my self, believed that building and sculpture should have common concern above and beyond Kent Bloomers [16] observation that skyscrapers and sculpture problem to engage the ground are similar. My wife and I looked to the positive and negative spaces, shapes and forms, the top and bottoms and then contextualization that come for my interior design experience designing places with the peculiar characteristics of the people and places.

In this regard we discussed metaphors and their use in design and programming so that when we heard Irving Kriesberg’s [17] announce that art was the making of metaphors we immediately recalled our experience of the art of architecture and found the reason. This was back at Yale in 1967 and the rest is history.

The argument for Architectural Urbanism as the Making of Metaphors:

Urban design, Urban Planning and Real Estate Development make of metaphors. Newtown, malls, city centers, urban renewal, alternate use, and green building designs have already shifted design from limited building, site and project design to include theme, marketing, internet, life style maintenance and holistic wellness living, recreation and entertainment, they already use interdisciplinary vocabulary. The built environment is being synthesized and controlled by new design professionals, design tools and multi-disciplinary teams. Both architectural practice and use of its outcomes are incomplete because while it is a metaphor it is not known nor understood.

To be complete the practice and use of the built environment must be consciously designed and known as a metaphor; in this way it will be complete and relate to its use and purpose. At the moment there is a "disconnect"(disparity) between the creative and user community. It may explain why there is a profusion of banality and apathy toward
the built environment. On the other hand there is another maker of metaphors which has

evolved to engulf and expand built metaphors and as the other design professionals so
does this need to be translated from reality to the classroom to prepare the next
generation of makers of metaphors. Conceptual tools beyond each profession are needed
to conceive of the collaborative mega projects and at the other end of the economic
spectrum the revitalization of deteriorated urban cores, including retrofitting and
changing uses of building types. While a work of urban design may be intrinsically
metaphoric, momentarily metaphoric and metaphoric to its owner and general public it
may be mistaken, fallacious, accidental, and irrelevant.

By a process of making, understanding and reifying metaphors of building parts
and whole; and town parts and whole the project is made relevant.

The resolution to the arguments for contemporary urban design:

1.1 Is to discover the conceptual basis of the shift in design profession’s paradigm
ushered by the potential to interact electronically and exchange information and input
from end users, builders and manufactures? Not a unified language but a conceptual
base of concerns, ways of considering one thing in terms of another, transferring,
bridging, carrying over, sharing, macro values with mini issues.

1.2 To identify how design professionals currently carry out the design process and what
additional tools are needed to expand practice to include metaphors and metaphorical
ways. Architects typically plod through six phases of programming planning, schematics,
preliminary final design, working drawings and bidding; and possibly supervision. Most
other services are optional as additional services.

1.3 To acknowledge that at the moment building codes and state statues include
registered architects, interior designers and engineers as responsible. Planners, poets,
writers, artists are not included. Each has an association, which promulgated policies, and
procedures and each teach their respective discipline in universities.

1.4 As without a vision a nation perishes so with out metaphors the resulting works are
irrelevant and discarded. In this regard the metaphor means that the thing has value and is
valued and has a grasp not only of the moment and the present context but also of the
future, and its relationship to other contexts. The interdisciplinary urban design and
development team would benefit from such an overview, linkage and commonality.

**Informal Reasoning [2]**

Since architecture is the making of metaphors follows from the *formal* deductive
claim that since art [A] is the making of metaphors and architecture is an art [A]
therefore it too makes metaphors. This *formal* logic, which achieves deductive certainty,
is that it has limited relevance to everyday affairs. Design professionals realize that there
is a world of concerns outside of their professional practice, which is now being absorbed
by others or disregarded. Introducing metaphors into the process widens the
conversation and inclusion of other concerns.

Inductive uncertainty in concerns of building and using habited places are making
the built environment reflective of the public users where the design and outcome are the
intended metaphor. Making the right metaphors and then optimally using their final
product is one of the contemporary social issues.

Urban planners, designers, real estate developers, Architects and interior
designers are well aware of this as witnessed by the surge in synthetic urban design, new
urbanism, and green buildings and green building products. This example shows that
there is already so much agreement in and amongst the building industry and its
information technology supports. They all agree on that architecture and all that makes up
the environment is indeed related and cohesive. Yet they are each separate and sovereign
disciples with there on vocabulary and budgets, codes and ordinance, engineering, etc.
The reasoning that is not sponsored is the age-old unifying language, which will bridge
and tie them so that what they produce is a cohesive work of art. Already Real Estate
developers of new towns, new cities have already achieved all of this but without an
exegesis to explain what is they are doing.

**The argument [2] for Architecture as the Making of Metaphors [B]**

Evidence of crisis:
The public is apathetic about their environment because it is irrelevant. People are lonely in big cities because their buildings have no individuality, identity and are impersonal. They wander the streets in search of the *illusive place*.

Ticky-tack suburbs are likewise lost and disenchanted. Builders and real estate developers fill the gap where the design professionals leave of providing the romance, images and story of the built environment. Disney, Las Vegas, Hilton, etc. provide the story and enclose it with buildings and artifacts. Whether we make them or not architecture is a metaphor (bland or romantic) and if architects don’t make them others are. Planning, design and building professional need a new paradigm. Both architectural practice and use of its outcomes are incomplete because while it is a metaphor it is not known nor understood. To be complete the practice and use of the built environment must be consciously designed and known as a metaphor; in this way it will be complete and relate to its use and purpose.

At the moment there is a "disconnect"(disparity) between the creative and user community. It may explain why there is a profusion of banality and apathy toward the built environment.

Metaphors that define and fill the environment stand as icons reflecting their presence or absence of relevant information despite designer’s willful intention or disregard. Seeing the built environment, buildings, parks, etc as metaphors by placing this conversation at the center of the planning, programming and building program will return the city back to its inhabitants and engender their care and concern for its up-keep. People like Jane Jacobs, Lewis Mumford realized some of this but they focused on particular functional solutions. To begin with my claim that architecture, as art, is too the making of metaphors took place with the academic audience in mind, in particular architectural scholars. To this day it is only this audience, which has published my monographs and entertains this argument. Knowing this may be the case my former mentor Dr. Paul Weiss guided me to first define the metaphor, link it to architecture as he so well did in our Yale lecture series.

Weiss then advised that I proceed to come up with evidence and relevant examples. To this end the lecture series presented prominent design professionals who
gave examples which suggested that the claims being advanced was not universal truth but subject to the acceptance of the actual listeners. In fact most of the warrants I have listed below are derived either directly or indirectly from Dr. Paul Weiss. Since the original lecture series in 1967 and many learned journals publications no counter argument has been put forth that architecture is not the making of metaphors.

The closest counterclaim has been to prefer a world where architecture would not be metaphorical but something direct, instinctive and void of references; as a kind of mindless psychic impulse of creativity coupled with a likewise similar mindless non-empirical perception of the final work. These counter arguments are fallacious because whether intended, perceived or not work architecture is a metaphor, the process by which it is created is metaphorical and the elements from which it is composed are each metaphors.

Like a sheet of music, poem, a manuscript, painting, sculpture which is in a warehouse and not seen does not make these works of art nay less metaphorical because they are not perceived. They are also not any less metaphorical because their creators did not intend them to be metaphors. As art is the making of metaphors and has intrinsic value and relationships with it self so is a work of architecture. In this sense you might say that that any thing crafted, manufactured or synthesized by man demands it is composed by process analogous to the way an artist creates a work and the way a work is perceived.

In the first place we are using the term in a metaphorical a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance. [3] A metaphor is something used, or regarded as being used, to represent something else; emblem; symbol. This transference defines a process in literature, which we claim is true for art and by extrapolation for architecture. We metaphorically transfer the definition of the nature of metaphor by a metaphor to the making works of art and from works of art to works of architecture.

In the second place without respect to the inner working of the metaphor, all forms of art, architecture and landscape and environmental works are claimed to be metaphors of man’s identify, achievements, value and stature. [4]
They are sometimes called monuments, historical preservation landmarks or just ordinary homes, building and public utilities. These are all read by the public and sewn into the cultural and value vocabulary of society. These are the ways in which metaphors are most often identifies other than the literary ones. However, despite the plethora of historical and contemporary evidence we still need to explain the experiential personal evidence that can only be experienced, and described by the result of the both the creative and users experience of the work as the arguments witness of the work of the metaphor.

So for any one work are there two metaphors about the same work? One for the seen and another for the unseen; that’s absurd, so that must be that it is the same work which is the same metaphor which we engage on different levels, intensities and perspectives. Technicians will find the hidden while the general public the superficial. With education some will appreciate the wok’s historical methods while others its technical metaphoric vocabulary.

The original conclusion was that if art was the making of metaphors and architecture is an art then it follows that architecture is too the making of metaphors. However this conclusion contains no new information not already in the premises and thus to add new information one must turn to informal reasoning.

The resolution [2] that needs to be reasoned is to show that art and architecture are an art because they work in the same way. To do so we need to explain how art works and how architecture works and that they both work in the same way. Despite that some arts are applied while others are fine is not necessary to prove at this point. That one is habitable and the others are for not utilitarian is irrelevant for this argument.

While these may be the very things that scholars may disagree they do not enter into this argument. Another may be created. It would argue that a utilitarian product cannot be a work as works of art are only for perception and enjoyment and any utility would only detract from the products scientific, engineering, and manufacturing (construction) needs and necessities. I cannot discount this argument as it may explain why after over forty years of promulgating this hypothesis the “professionals”, “business” and “building law” has ignored and sidestepped the resolution and its apartment truth. While the resolution has gained in importance in theoretical design language and information technology it has not had popular reception.
As a practicing professional I can only attribute this to yet another commonplace that while these who market to consumers and users overlay build works with artistic rhetoric the societies of the creators consisting of manufacturers, builders, engineers, contactors pride themselves on being scientific, controlling cost, schedule and quality they do not want to let the uncertainty implied in art be part of their modus operandi. To the extent that architects are regarded as artist government, corporate, business, and non-architectural and interior design professionals regard architects a service which must be managed and limited despite and because architecture is too an art.

The business community is faced with the dilemma of both wanting the highest quality, imaginative and beauty that results for art while holding in disdain the persons and process which brings about the desired results.

It is for this reason that in 1896 the American Institute of Architects created AIA 210 the Standard form of the General Conditions for construction contract, which mainly puts the architect between the owner and the contactor. So this argument [2] is not about the preeminence between design professionals and the others in the overall project participants as that argument is settled elsewhere and through other instruments. This argument’s aim is to elevate the architect’s creative process above technique, construction and even formal art to include social, psychological, political and economic considerations all of which are included in users decision to create a work of architecture and should therefore be included in its creation. If architecture is the making of metaphors and it is an art than it must also be the sum and summation of all that it selects for reality to include in its product. It is not only to elevate but also to widen the scope of practice beyond current limits.

Other than the controversies I have just stated there is no active controversy as whether architects make or do not make metaphors. What is at odds is whether a building not made by an architect going through the metaphoric process is a metaphor and if so what kind? Or is there a metaphoric knowledge necessary to further add onto the education and practice of architecture? The reason architects are not taught that they are making metaphors is that it seems too complex and uncontrollable. It is for this reason
that non-architects are taking control of the process because architects refuse to include making metaphors into their process.

So the argument is with the profession of architecture. To regain their rightful place in the creation of the built environment architects must include what is at the end: metaphor. To do so architects must both know what the metaphor is at the end and then know how to build it into the making of the work of architecture. Architecture the making of metaphors introduces a paradigm for the creation of habitable metaphors including one that serves as a pattern or model.

Architecture as the making of metaphors [B] is that inclusive set shared by both creator and user. The new paradigm of shapers of built metaphors includes people like Donald Trump, Rockefellers, Astor, Emirs, princes, and kings, with wealth, influence and power not unlike the royalty of old Europe.

The metaphor carries over from one to another proves that the building’s steel structure and curtain wall are metaphoric in that they make the metaphor of the high-rise office building. Remove either one ant the metaphor would no longer exist. Another warrant is that they transfer and the curtain wall depends on the structure while the structure supports the curtain wall they each tell something about each other. They are both linked by bolts and clips, which are attached to each other. The connection is itself a metaphor transferring structure to curtain-wall and vice versa. By analogy the metaphor of each building connector, hardware, structure and cladding is a metaphor for the next and is similarly warranted and to make the inference between evidence and claim.

“It is important to understand the components of an argument, in addition to the claim” A warrant [2] may need a separate argument to back it up.

The claim that architecture is making of metaphors and that buildings are therefore metaphors and the makers are therefore responsible for making the metaphor should be believed and followed by action.

The opinions and agreements about historical and contemporary works are the evidence, which represents the grounds for making the claim. What is not believed and acted is the inference between the metaphor and the claim and the warrants of the inference are necessary to argue the claim.
Footnotes:

1. **Metaphor and Thought**: Second Edition
   Edited by Andrew Ortony: School of Education and social Sciences and
   Institute for the learning Sciences: North Western University
   Published by Cambridge University Press
   First pub: 1979
   Second pub: 1993

2. The form of the argument is based on Northwestern University’s Professor David
   Zarefsky’s course on **Argumentation: The Study of Effective Reasoning** published by
   the ‘The teaching company’.

3. "Teaching the Techniques of Making Architectural Metaphors in the Twenty-
   First Century." Journal of King Abdul Aziz University Engg...Sciences; Jeddah: Code:
   BAR/223/0615:OCT.2.1421 H. 12TH EDITION; VOL.I

4. "Multi-dimensional metaphoric thinking" by Barie Fez-Barrington; Open House,
   September 1997: Vol. 22; No. 3, United Kingdom: Newcastle upon Tyne

   Publishing Co. New York, 1974; my review was published in the Jackson Sun in 1974

6. Metaphorical way of knowing by William J.J Gordon: Cambridge began
   formulating the Synectics method in 1944

References:

A. Art is the intentional and skillful act and/or product applying a technique and differs
   from natural but pleasing behaviors and useful or decorative products in their intent and
   application of a developed technique and skill with that technique. Art is not limited to
   fields, persons or institutions as science, government, security, architecture, engineering,
   administration, construction, design, decorating, sports, etc. On the other hand in each
   there are both natural and artistic where metaphors (conceptual and/technical) make the
   difference, art is something perfected and well done in that field. For example, the
   difference between an artistic copy and the original is the art of originality and authorship
   in that it documents a creative process lacking in the copy.

B. The first lectures "Architecture as the Making of Metaphors" [3] were organized
   and conducted near the Art and Architecture building at the Museum of Fine Arts Yale
   University 11/02/67 until 12/04/67. The guest speakers were: Paul Weiss, William J.
   Gordon, Christopher Tunnard, Vincent Scully, Turan Onat, Kent Bloomer, Peter Millard,
   Robert Venturi, Charles Moore, Forrest Wilson, and John Cage.

C. Argument’s contextual forms

   Three levels of axioms matching three levels of disciplines:
   1. Multidiscipline: Macro most general where the metaphors and axioms and
      metaphors used by the widest and diverse disciplines, users and societies. All of
      society, crossing culture, disciplines, professions, industrialist arts and fields as
      mathematics and interdisciplinary vocabulary.
   2. Interdisciplinary axioms are between fields of art [A] whereas metaphors in
      general inhabit all these axioms drive a wide variety and aid in associations,
      interdisciplinary contributions and conversations about board fields not necessary
      involved with a particular project but if about a project about all context including...
city plan, land use, institutions, culture and site selection, site planning and poten
tional neighborhood and institutional involvement.
3. Micro Discipline: Between architects all involved in making the built
environment particularly on single projects in voting relevant arts [A], crafts,
manufactures, engineers, sub-con tractors and contactors. As well as owners,
users, neighbors, government agencies, planning boards and town councils.

D. Three workable tools:
The arguments (reasons and resolutions) about architecture and metaphors include three
workable tools (schedules):
monograph)
Metaphors [7], and
3. 28 axioms and many sub-axioms [8] in my Metaphor’s Architectural Axioms [9].
The three can be cross referenced to provide a comprehensive, coordinated and complete
picture of the workings of architectural metaphors all inferred from scientific evidence
where these axioms also warrant the claims.

E. Other 2009 Monographs on Metaphors
1. Deriving the Multidiscipline axioms from Metaphor and Thought [1]
2. Metaphor and Cognition
3. The science supporting the stasis to architecture being an art [I]:
4. Language of metaphors applied to multi-disciplined architecture
5. “Metaphor’s interdisciplinary Axioms
6. Metaphoric Axioms for Micro disciplinary Architecture
7. Complex Structure: art and architecture stasis
8. Metaphor axioms of art, architecture and aesthetics
9. Aesthetic principles of metaphor, art and architecture
10. The Six Principles of Art’s & Architecture’s Technical and Conceptual
    Metaphors
11. Metaphoric Evidence
12. Managing the benefits and risks of architectural artificial intelligence

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