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The Rhythm Of Arousal, The Rhythm Of Light

Starting off with a philosophical understanding of rhythm, I elaborate the relationship between rhythm as a condition for existence and rhythm as an aesthetic quality. In the modern western tradition, rhythm has been understood as an aspect of time, whereas the pre-socratics offer a definition in which the flow of rhythm determines the shape of objects.

This view, I argue, could be valuable in an architectural theory that wishes to grasp the interconnectedness between living bodies and dead form. Following with examples of my work with dance in architectural education in the Arctic territories of Sweden, the investigation of rhythm is set in a unique climate context. Polar nights and midsummer sun disturb our ideas of sound circadian rhythm. Light and other stimuli create arousal, darkness and lack of stimuli induce rest. But it is in the optimal variation and level of arousal that we find ourselves at our best performance. And yet we are all different. In learning environments, it is therefore essential that we design for a rhythm where all children may grow, learn and flourish. I will sum up by offering a tool which has been very helpful in engaging architectural teams in creating learning spaces for diversity and variation, where each child may find her own rhythm.