The Production of Religious Architecture in a Diverse World:  
*Youth Perspective*

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Overview

- Project rationale and aims
- Methodology
- Key Findings
- Future developments
Rationale

- Political context of Northern Ireland.
- Examine religion and identity.
- Youth response to religious space.
Project Aims

• This project aims to:
  1. Identify architectural concepts.
  2. Explore the core values in different religions that lead to the adoption of certain spatial configurations.
  3. Examine the impacts of religious places on youth perceptions, ideas and understanding of religion.
Methodology

Identify Case Studies & Architectural Concepts

Recruit Participants Develop Workshops

Concepts
Spatial Dynamics
Purity
Rituals & Symbols
Tolerance
Methodology

Participants → Expectations → On Site Experience → Responsive Actions

Analysis

Drawings
Self-Directed
Photography
Key Words
Observations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Associated Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Spatial Dynamics      | Spatial Dynamics refers to the hierarchy, components and orientation of space within a building. | • What is the most important part of this space?  
• How is the space laid out?  
• Are there different areas?  
• What direction do people worship in?  
Where is a service led from?  
• How do people move around the space?  
• Where do different people sit? | Black |
| Purity                | Purity refers to the gender differences and distinctions between the role of adults, children, gender and social classification. It also refers to preparation before prayer. | • How people prepare to go into their worship space? How do men and women use this space?  
• What do you think about separating men and women? | Green |
| Rituals               | Rituals refer to religious activity conducted within religious buildings.     | • What objects/pictures were in the space?                                     | Red |
|                       |                                                                              | • Is there a holy book in this place and if so were is it located?           | Yellow |
| Tolerance             | Tolerance refers to the condition of accepting or permitting other religious beliefs and practices which disagree with one's own. | • How do people behave in this space?  
• Are there places that you should not stand out of respect? | Blue |
Research Findings

Religious Space

• Demonstrated a clear understanding of religious symbology.
Key findings

Religious Space

- Defined each space through a systematic reflection on objects, text and symbology.
St Georges Anglican Church
St Malachy’s Roman Catholic Church
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Synagogue
Hindu Temple
Key findings

Identity

• Defined religious identities.

• Youth use their own religious identity as a means of understanding and negotiating religious space.

• Spaces were used as a tool to reinforce their own systems of worship.
Key findings

Religion

• A lack of knowledge regarding other religions.

• Spatial experience of architecture can be used as a tool to help identify, explore and remove the anxieties that surround religious identities.
Behind Closed Doors Exhibition

† ☢️ ⚫️

Behind
Closed Doors

CHRISTIANITY
HINDUISM
JUDAISM
ISLAM
Future Developments

- RIBA funded study.
- Promote education in Northern Ireland.
- Further consider findings with other contested spaces.