

# Architecture in the Meantime

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## Abstract

Three basic premises will set the stage for the arguments developed in this lecture: 1) that the two commonly distinguished kinds of time –clock time and lived time—rank unequally in architecture because the first derives from and abstracts the second, succession abridges *passage*, 2) that time in architecture does not exist only ‘on my side,’ in the temporality of bodily movement or of one’s memories and anticipations, but also on the side of buildings, their locations, configurations, and materials, and 3) that the settings in which our lives unfold present themselves to perception at different speeds – fast and slow, or accelerated and delayed—and do so at the same time, concurrently, or, as we commonly say, *in the meantime*. That last word abbreviates ‘mean solar time’ (the hour angle of the mean sun) but like the synonym *while* it can also refer to duration that has more plasticity, less fixity, a distended or contracted passage. Key in understanding this sense of time is overcoming the modeling of time on metric space, minutes or hours akin to inches or feet. The much-discussed notion of simultaneity is also unhelpful here, for that idea takes for granted the punctuality of periods, prior to their synchrony. The word *phase*, which we commonly associate with the moon, to describe the time of its waxing and waning, is more helpful, because it implies unfolding and cycles. “The wheel or the world swings through the same phases,” R. Kipling.

Close readings of a single building will be used to describe and interpret not so much the ways that buildings exist in time, but how time exists in them.

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