

The Sensory Landscape: Translating the Experience of Ranthambore into Interior Design

Aryan Vishwkarma¹, Saras Aggarwal², Satvik Aggarwal³, Sunkashi Shokeen⁴

^{1,2,3}UG Student- Interior Architecture and Design, SOD, World University of Design, Sonapat, Haryana, India.

⁴Assistant Professor- Interior Architecture and Design, Sonapat, Haryana, India.

India

Emails: aryanvishwkarma.23@wud.ac.in¹, sarasaggarwal.23@wud.ac.in², satvikaggarwal.23@wud.ac.in³, sunakshi.shokeen@wud.ac.in⁴

Abstract

The research, The Sensory Landscape: Translating the Experience of Ranthambore into Interior Design, explores how the natural, architectural and experiential qualities of Ranthambore can be interpreted within contemporary interior spaces. Ranthambore is recognised for its dry deciduous forests, rocky terrain, lakes, wildlife and historic Ranthambore Fort, creating a distinctive environment shaped by the interaction of nature and built heritage. The study addresses the limitation of conventional Rajasthan-inspired interiors, which often focus primarily on visual elements such as colours, motifs and decorative forms, while overlooking the multisensory experience of a place. The aim of this research is to identify the sensory characteristics that contribute to the experience of Ranthambore and investigate how they can be translated into interior design through materials, textures, colour, natural light, shadow, sound, temperature, spatial movement and connection with nature. The research will adopt a qualitative approach combining secondary and primary research. Secondary research will draw upon academic papers, books, architectural studies and reliable sources. Primary research will involve site observation, photographic documentation, mapping, sketches, material studies and documentation of environmental and spatial conditions. Selected architectural and interior case studies are analysed to understand methods of sensory and place-based design. The research aims to establish a design framework in which the sensory and experiential qualities of Ranthambore are interpreted rather than directly replicated, demonstrating how interior design can create a meaningful sense of place through atmosphere, materiality, light, sound, texture and spatial experience.

Keywords: Experiential Design, Interior Design, Multisensory, Natural Light, Spatial

1. Introduction

Communication Interior design is closely connected with the identity, culture and character of a place. The surroundings in which people live and interact can influence the materials, forms, colours and spatial qualities used in interior spaces. However, when a particular place is taken as inspiration for an interior, its identity is often represented mainly through visible elements such as colours, patterns, motifs and decorative forms. While these elements can create a visual association with a place, they may not fully communicate the experience of being there. The character of a place is also shaped by its light and shadow, textures, sounds, temperature, movement and atmosphere. These qualities are experienced together and contribute to how a person perceives and remembers a space. This makes the sensory

experience of a place an important consideration in interior design. A material may be understood not only by its appearance but also by its texture and temperature. Natural light can change throughout the day, creating different patterns of light and shadow within a space. Sound can influence the sense of calmness or activity, while the movement of a person through narrow, enclosed or open spaces can create feelings of transition, anticipation and discovery. Therefore, the experience of an interior is not created by its visual appearance alone, but by the combination of sensory and spatial conditions that a person encounters. Ranthambore provides an interesting setting for studying these qualities because its natural and built environments exist closely together. The region is characterised by dry

deciduous forests, rocky terrain, lakes, wildlife and the historic Ranthambore Fort. These elements create an environment that can be experienced through changing light, textures, sounds, temperature, movement, views and the relationship between built and natural surroundings. The present study uses Ranthambore as the site for primary research and aims to observe and document these qualities through field observation, photography, sketches, mapping and material and environmental documentation. The research does not aim to reproduce the visual appearance of Ranthambore or create a conventional Rajasthan-inspired interior. Instead, it explores how the experience of the place can be understood and translated into contemporary interior design. The study follows a process of moving from Place → Sensory Experience → Spatial Strategy → Interior Design, where the qualities observed in the landscape can inform decisions related to materials, textures, lighting, spatial movement, thresholds, views and atmosphere. In this approach, Ranthambore is considered not simply as a collection of visual elements to be copied, but as an environment whose sensory qualities can provide a source for developing interior spaces with a stronger connection to place.

1.1. Aim

The aim of this research is to explore how the multisensory and experiential qualities of Ranthambore can be observed and translated into contemporary interior design.

1.2. Objective

Tables To study the sensory and spatial qualities of Ranthambore and understand how elements such as light, texture, sound, temperature and movement contribute to the experience of the place. To analyse relevant theories and case studies related to multisensory, experiential and place-based design, and understand how sensory qualities can influence the perception and experience of interior spaces. To suggest interior design strategies that interpret the observed sensory qualities of Ranthambore through materials, light, spatial planning, movement and atmosphere, rather than directly replicating its visual elements.

1.3. Research Methodology

Figures The research follows a qualitative approach, As shown in Figure 1 Interior Design Strategies

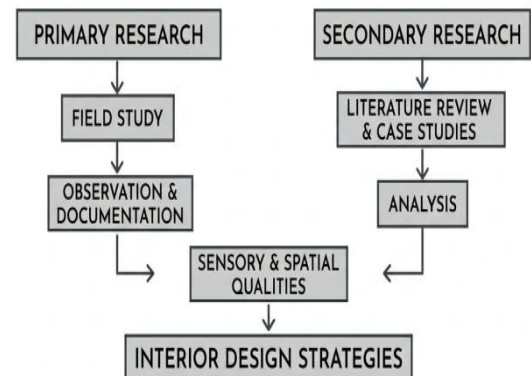


Figure 1 Interior Design Strategies

1.4. Need of Study

The need for this study arises from the way place-inspired interiors are often developed through visual representation, using colours, patterns, motifs and decorative elements to create a connection with a particular region. Although these elements can communicate the visual identity of a place, they may not fully represent the experience associated with it. Studying Ranthambore through its sensory and spatial qualities can provide a broader understanding of how a place can influence interior design. The research therefore aims to connect actual field observations with practical interior design decisions, exploring how qualities such as light, texture, sound, movement and atmosphere can be interpreted rather than directly copied.

1.5. Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on the sensory and spatial qualities of selected natural and built environments observed during the Ranthambore field visit, including light, texture, sound, temperature, movement and the relationship between landscape and architecture. The study is limited to the areas accessible during the visit and the conditions observed at that time. As a qualitative study, sensory experiences may vary between individuals and environmental conditions.

1.6. Research Gap

Existing research has explored multisensory experience and place-based design in architecture and interiors. However, there is scope to further study how the sensory experience of a specific place can be understood and translated into interior design. In this research, Ranthambore is studied to explore this

connection.

1.7. Research Question

How can the sensory experience of Ranthambore be understood and translated into contemporary interior design?

2. Literature Review

Architectural Spence (2020) explains that architectural experience is not limited to vision, as different senses work together in understanding a space. Pallasmaa (2016) also discusses how sensory conditions contribute to the atmosphere and mood of architecture. These studies support the need to consider sensory experience while studying interior spaces. de Wit (2016) examines how landscapes are experienced beyond their visual appearance. Holl, Pallasmaa and Pérez-Gómez (2006) discuss the role of perception and the body in architectural experience, while Norberg-Schulz (1980) connects architecture with the character and identity of a place. Together, these studies provide a basis for understanding a place through its experience and character. Rodrigues and Skinner (2020) discuss the connection between sensory qualities and place identity, while Globa, Beza and Wang (2022) study multisensory design as a way of creating stronger place experiences. Zhang et al. (2024) also examine the relationship between sensory experience and place identity. In the Indian context, Rao and Saksena (2021) study wildlife tourism and local communities around Ranthambore, giving a wider understanding of the relationship between tourism, environment and the region[1].

3. Case Study

3.1. Primary Case Study - Ranthambore, Rajasthan, India

Ranthambore was studied through a physical field visit to understand the character of the place through direct observation. The study covered the natural surroundings and the local built environment, including streets, shops, everyday buildings and architectural elements. One recurring feature observed across different types of buildings was the use of white balconies with a similar black floral pattern. The repeated use of this element showed how a particular architectural detail can become part of the visual character of a place and appear across different building types[2]. As shown in Figure 1 Landscape

study

Source Ranthambore National park.



Figure 2 Landscape study
Source Ranthambore National park

The field visit also revealed a contrast between the relatively simple local setting and the presence of high-end hospitality spaces within the region. This contrast showed how the character and experience of a place can be shaped not only by its level of development but also by the way its built environment responds to its surroundings. The observations from Ranthambore form the primary basis for the later analysis, where the sensory and spatial qualities of the place are examined for their possible translation into interior design[3].

3.2. Secondary Case Study - The Chavni, Lohagad, Maharashtra, India

The Chavni is a heritage resort located near Lohagad Fort in Maharashtra. The project is based on the idea of a traditional Maratha chavni, or transit camp, and has been designed to reflect the region's heritage, history and relationship with its surrounding landscape. The resort incorporates accommodation in tents and carts along with courtyards, gardens, pathways and other outdoor spaces, while also providing contemporary hospitality facilities. As shown in Figure 1 Landscape study The Chavni, Lohagad, Maharashtra, India[4].



Figure 3 Landscape study
The Chavni, Lohagad, Maharashtra, India

The project is relevant to this research because it demonstrates how the identity of a place can be interpreted through spatial planning, material character and the relationship between built spaces and the surrounding landscape. Rather than reproducing a historic building directly, The Chavni uses the idea of the traditional chavni as a basis for creating a contemporary hospitality experience. Its spatial organisation and accommodation types connect cultural references with the physical setting around Lohagad, showing how local history and landscape can influence the experience of a contemporary interior and built environment[5].



Figure 2 Landscape study

Source: The Chavni, Lohagad, Maharashtra, India

4. Comparative Analysis

The primary case study, secondary case study and literature review were compared to identify common

approaches to understanding place, sensory experience and design translation[6 – 11].

Aspect	Ranthambore	The Chavni	Literature
Place	Natural + built character	Heritage + landscape	Place identity
Sensory Experience	Direct observation	Designed experience	Multisensory perception
Culture	Local + historic identity	Maratha heritage	Cultural context
Spatial Experience	Natural and built movement	Courtyards + pathways	Movement + perception
Design Translation	Source of observations	Design precedent	Theoretical support

Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions

Conclusion

This research explored how the sensory and experiential qualities of Ranthambore can be understood and translated into contemporary interior design. The study moved beyond the visual representation of a place and considered how environmental conditions, architectural character, spatial movement and the relationship between natural and built surroundings contribute to the experience of Ranthambore. The primary field study provided direct observations of the character of the region, while the secondary case study of The Chavni demonstrated how cultural and landscape references can be interpreted within a contemporary built environment. The literature review further supported the importance of considering sensory perception in the understanding of architectural and interior spaces. The comparison of these sources indicates that the identity of a place can be communicated through spatial experience and material qualities rather than through direct reproduction of traditional visual elements. The research therefore establishes Place → Sensory Experience → Spatial Strategy → Interior Design as a useful approach for translating the character of Ranthambore into interior spaces. Rather than creating a Rajasthan-themed interior through motifs and decoration, the approach can use the observed qualities of the place as a starting point for developing atmosphere, materiality, spatial sequence and connection with the surrounding environment. As shown in Figure 3 Architectural study Source: The

Chavni Architecture and heritage.



Figure 3 Architectural study

Source: The Chavni Architecture and heritage

Recommendations

The study recommends that place-based interior design should begin with an understanding of the actual characteristics and experiences of a site. Designers can use field observation, sensory mapping, photography, sketches and material studies to identify qualities that may not be apparent through visual references alone. The research also recommends interpreting local identity rather than directly copying traditional architectural elements. Natural materials, spatial transitions, controlled views, changes in light and relationships with landscape can be considered as design strategies where appropriate to the project. Such an approach can allow contemporary interiors to maintain a connection with their context without becoming visually dependent on decorative motifs.

Suggestions

Further research can develop the study through more detailed sensory mapping and documentation of Ranthambore across different seasons and times of day. Future studies may also examine how individual sensory conditions affect users' perception of an interior through interviews, user studies or experimental spaces. The research can further be developed into a practical interior design proposal based on the sensory findings from Ranthambore.

This would allow the identified qualities to be tested through materials, lighting, spatial planning and movement, providing an opportunity to evaluate how effectively the experience of a real landscape can be translated into an interior environment.

References

- [1]. Spence, C. (2020). Senses of place: Architectural design for the multisensory mind. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 5, 46. doi: 10.1186/s41235-020-00243-4.
- [2]. Pallasmaa, J. (2016). The sixth sense: The meaning of atmosphere and mood. *Architectural Design*, 86(6), 126–133. doi: 10.1002/ad.2121.
- [3]. de Wit, S. (2016). Sensory landscape experience: Stepping outside the visual landscape of the motorway in the Garden of Birds. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 11(3), 20–31. doi: 10.1080/18626033.2016.1252157.
- [4]. Rao, A., & Saksena, S. (2021). Wildlife tourism and local communities: Evidence from India. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 2(1), 100016. doi: 10.1016/j.annale.2021.100016.
- [5]. Holl, S., Pallasmaa, J., & Pérez-Gómez, A. (2006). Questions of perception: Phenomenology of architecture. William Stout Publishers.
- [6]. Spence, C. (2020). Designing for the multisensory mind. *Architectural Design*, 90(6), 42–49. doi: 10.1002/ad.2630.
- [7]. Rodrigues, C., & Skinner, H. (2020). Towards a theoretical framework on sensorial place brand identity. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 13(3), 273–295. doi: 10.1108/JPMD-11-2018-0087.
- [8]. Norberg-Schulz, C. (1980). *Genius loci: Towards a phenomenology of architecture*. Rizzoli.
- [9]. The Chavni. (n.d.). *The Chavni: A Heritage Boutique Resort*, Lohagad, Pune, India.
- [10]. Globa, A., Beza, B. B., & Wang, R. (2022). Towards multi-sensory design: Placemaking through immersive environments – Evaluation of the approach. *Expert Systems*

with Applications, 204, 117614. doi:
10.1016/j.eswa.2022.117614.

- [11]. Zhang, J., Zou, Y., Li, Y., Peng, C., & Jin, D. (2024). Embodied power: How do museum tourists' sensory experiences affect place identity? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 60, 334–346. doi: 10.1016/j.jhtm.2024.08.009.