

Luke Ralston
Analysis Assignment Two
1-29-2016

Continuation and Movement in a Graveyard

Symbolism in design is an easy aspect to analyze and draw conclusions from. Whether it is a simple cross, or an intricate fresko, designers place messages in their work. Traveling between Verona and Venice, Italy, we stopped at a small graveyard. Designed by Carlo Scarpa, the Brion Tombs, were a geometrically intricate series of spaces that pulled the visitor through the tombs, compressing and then releasing multiple times. The themes of continuation and movement were themes captured best by two spaces towards the rear of the tombs.

Towards the rear of the site, just past the main tombs, were six, quarter-inch thick metal cables that stretched about 20 feet across an open space. I originally assumed that they were some sort of support or bracing system for the wall until I realized that the wall was leaning in the wrong direction, and the cables never met the wall on the opposite side. Walking closer to the angled wall, I noticed that the cable was not fitted into the wall, but rather the cable was secured in the crack between two slabs, held by tension with a spring on the outside of the graveyard. In the crack that it was secured, the wall was hollow for a few inches. On the other end, the cables were secured by metal pegs on a hexagonal piece of metal which sat a foot above the ground on a metal pole. The pole sat on the edge of a small water feature that ran perpendicular to the cables from one end of the site to the other, bordering an enclosed walkway.

The cables and their connections were an abstraction of a stringed instrument. On one side, the cables were held in place by tension, and the other side they were wrapped like the tuning pegs on a guitar. These connections allow the cables to freely vibrate. When the cables were struck, their vibrations echoed in the small hollow space of the wall, creating musical sounds.

Where does this piece fit into the whole picture? The walkway's floor, which runs perpendicular to this feature, consists of large, stone tiles. The tiles are purposely loose, making noise when stepped on. The noise made when walking startles the user, and forces the user to walk slower, hoping to make less noise in a place where sound is culturally disrespectful. This design choice challenges the notion of what a graveyard is and how people should act when walking through it.

These two noise creating features in the tomb area capture the two of the themes of the overall design. The walkways captures movement, and emphasize the action of moving with sounds. The tensile cables reflect continuation. Vibrations represent a moving force, energized and reverberating down the cables towards the hollow, slanted wall and out into the world.

Scarp challenges the notion of death and what happens afterwards. His design uses sounds, but those of silence, in a graveyard to symbolize the aspects of continuation and movement. Using symbolism in a subtle, subjective way creates a space that is experienced differently by every visitor, allowing them to draw their own conclusions and creates a truly unique experience.