World Journal of Innovation and Modern Technology, Vol. 8, Issue 12 (Dec) 2025
ISSN 2682-5910
DOI: 10.53469/wjimt.2025.08(12).04

New Fusion: The Spatial Experience Reconfiguration of Art, Architecture, and Artificial Intelligence in the 21st Century

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Abstract: ***Since the 21st century, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), digital technologies, and spatial computing has profoundly reconfigured the traditional relationship between art and architecture. This paper focuses on the AI-driven "new fusion" paradigm, exploring how it has evolved from superficial formal borrowing to deep algorithmic symbiosis, fundamentally reconfiguring human spatial experience. Through a combination of theoretical analysis and representative case studies (e.g., Refik Anadol, teamLab, and AI-assisted architectural design), the study reveals how AI, as a novel creative medium (where data is the pigment and algorithms are the brush), is revolutionizing the art world, and its empowering role throughout the architectural lifecycle—from intelligent form generation and performance optimization to sustainable construction. Furthermore, the paper extends its scope to the urban scale, analyzing how public art integrates with city-wide data networks through AI and examining the impact of technologies like digital twins and the metaverse on immersive ecosystems. Finally, the paper critically reflects on key issues including human-AI collaboration models, algorithmic bias, copyright ethics, and data privacy. The research concludes that AI is not a replacement for creators but a catalyst for a new symbiotic relationship centered on humanity, mediated by data, and embodied in space, ultimately aiming to create future environments that are more interactive, personalized, and human-centric.***

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Art and Architecture; Spatial Experience; Digital Twin; Immersive Design; Algorithmic Bias.

1. INTRODUCTION

The entanglement of art and architecture constitutes one of the most enduring dialectics in Western cultural history, tracing back to the Vitruvian triad of firmitas, utilitas, venustas—firmness, commodity, and delight—wherein aesthetic experience was already recognized as integral to built form. This relationship intensified during the Renaissance, when figures like Michelangelo and Brunelleschi blurred the lines between sculptor, painter, and architect. In the twentieth century, the modernist project sought to dissolve disciplinary boundaries altogether: the Bauhaus famously advocated for a Gesamtkunstwerk, or total work of art, while figures such as Le Corbusier and László Moholy-Nagy experimented with kinetic sculpture and photograms as extensions of spatial thinking. Yet despite this long history of cross-pollination, contemporary scholarship remains disproportionately focused on the pre-digital era. Kenneth Frampton's influential Modern Architecture: A Critical History (2007), for instance, concludes its narrative before the widespread adoption of computational design, leaving a critical gap in our understanding of post-2000 developments. The emergence of artificial intelligence, big data analytics, virtual and augmented realities, and spatial computing has not merely added new tools to the creative repertoire; it has fundamentally reconfigured the ontological status of both art and architecture.

No longer confined to discrete objects or static enclosures, they now operate as dynamic systems embedded within networks of data, perception, and interaction. This paper contends that the early twenty-first century marks the advent of a qualitatively new phase—what we term the "new fusion"—characterized by algorithmic interdependence, data-driven materiality, and experiential fluidity. By examining key practices and theoretical shifts, this study aims to articulate the logic of this fusion, analyze its transformative impact on spatial experience, and critically interrogate its ethical, epistemological, and aesthetic implications.

2. PARADIGM SHIFT: FROM JUXTAPOSED SYMBIOSIS TO ALGORITHMIC ENDOGENEITY

But the advantages of silicon-based space are precisely what we need to be wary of, and once abused, it will have a certain danger. Take efficiency as an example, if we blindly pursue it and allow the disorderly development of silicon-based space, it is very likely to repeat the mistake. Let's review the history of the development of

carbon-based cities: as one of the technological foundations of modern civilization, cars have profoundly shaped the planning logic of the modern cities we live in, but such spatial structure logic based on technological superiority is also one of the underlying reasons why modern urban life is so boring. Historically, the collaboration between artists and architects often took the form of what can be described as juxtaposed symbiosis: a cooperative yet functionally segregated arrangement in which artistic interventions were applied to pre-existing architectural frameworks without altering their core logic. This model, dominant throughout much of the twentieth century, treated art as a decorative or symbolic overlay—enhancing but not constitutive. The collaboration between artist Olafur Eliasson and architects Henning Larsen and Batteríi on the Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavík (completed 2011) exemplifies this paradigm. Eliasson's geometric glass panels, inspired by Icelandic basalt columns, were meticulously engineered to refract light and create chromatic effects across the façade. Yet these interventions were integrated at a late stage in the design process and did not inform the building's structural or spatial organization (Jodidio, 2011). The artwork remained thematically resonant but operationally distinct.

In stark contrast, the "new fusion" of the twenty-first century is defined by algorithmic endogeneity—a condition wherein art and architecture co-emerge from a shared computational matrix. Refik Anadol's WDCH Dreams (2018), created for the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall, offers a compelling illustration. Rather than applying a pre-composed visual layer, Anadol's team trained a custom neural network on 45 terabytes of the orchestra's archival material—audio recordings, photographs, program notes—allowing the AI to "dream" new visual narratives derived from this cultural memory. These hallucinations were then projected in real time onto Gehry's titanium-clad surfaces, with the building's complex curvature actively shaping the distortion and flow of the imagery (Anadol, 2018). Here, architecture is not a passive screen but an active participant in the generative process; the artwork is not a fixed object but a constantly evolving data performance. This represents more than technical novelty—it signals a conceptual shift: art and architecture are no longer adjacent disciplines but intertwined processes, unified by algorithmic logic and data flow. The boundary between container and content dissolves, giving way to a hybrid spatial-aesthetic organism.

3. AI AS A NEW ARTISTIC MEDIUM: DATA, ALGORITHMS, AND MACHINE HALLUCINATIONS

The rise of AI in artistic practice marks a profound redefinition of the very notion of medium. In the classical sense, medium referred to physical substances—oil paint, marble, bronze—that carried artistic intention. Today, the primary medium is increasingly data: vast, heterogeneous, and often unstructured datasets drawn from scientific archives, social media, environmental sensors, or neural interfaces. Refik Anadol's studio, for instance, has processed everything from quantum physics datasets to real-time brainwave recordings (EEG) from volunteers, transforming these immaterial flows into immersive visual environments he terms "machine hallucinations" (Anadol, 2020). These are not random patterns but statistically generated extrapolations—what the machine "imagines" based on learned distributions within the data. In this context, the algorithm functions not as a neutral tool but as a cognitive partner: it perceives correlations invisible to the human eye, synthesizes novel forms, and introduces an element of autonomous creativity.

This paradigm recasts the artist's role. No longer the sole author, the artist becomes a "curator of conditions"—designing the problem space, selecting and preprocessing datasets, tuning hyperparameters, and framing the aesthetic output. This echoes earlier experiments in generative art, such as Vera Molnár's algorithmic drawings of the 1960s, which used early mainframe computers to explore combinatorial geometry. However, contemporary deep learning models—particularly diffusion models and transformers—introduce a level of semantic depth and contextual awareness previously unattainable.

The work of teamLab further extends this logic into the realm of participatory experience. In installations like Borderless (2018), visitors' movements, tracked via ceiling-mounted sensors, directly influence the behavior of digital flora and fauna. A flower may bloom where one steps; a flock of birds may scatter at a gesture.

The artwork thus becomes a responsive ecosystem, co-authored in real time by human presence and algorithmic rules (Nakamura, 2020). Perception shifts from passive observation to active co-creation, dissolving the traditional subject-object divide and recentering experience as the locus of aesthetic meaning.

4. AI-EMPOWERED ARCHITECTURE: FROM INTELLIGENT DESIGN TO SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE

AI's incursion into architecture extends far beyond representational aids or parametric modeling; it is reshaping the discipline's epistemological foundations. Traditionally, architectural design has relied on iterative sketching, physical modeling, and rule-based computation. AI introduces a new mode of reasoning—one rooted in statistical inference, pattern recognition, and generative exploration. In the conceptual phase, machine learning models can rapidly generate and evaluate thousands of design alternatives constrained by multi-dimensional criteria. For example, in a 2022 collaboration, SmithGroup and Oak Ridge National Laboratory employed a trained neural network to analyze 256,000 building energy simulations, producing 1,400 massing options that optimized solar access, photovoltaic potential, and envelope efficiency simultaneously—solutions that human designers might never have conceived due to cognitive and temporal limitations.

As designs progress, AI enables fine-grained performance optimization. Multi-objective algorithms can navigate the complex trade-offs between daylight autonomy, thermal comfort, structural materiality, and spatial usability, producing solutions that balance competing imperatives in ways manual methods cannot (Wong & Li, 2023). At the scale of construction, AI integrates with digital fabrication systems: robotic arms guided by generative algorithms can 3D-print concrete forms with minimal waste, while computer vision systems monitor site safety and progress against BIM models.

Perhaps most transformative is AI's role in operational sustainability. The Arup Neuron platform, deployed in Hong Kong's One Taikoo Place, fuses real-time IoT sensor data—occupancy, temperature, lighting—with predictive AI models to dynamically adjust HVAC and lighting systems. This "active sustainability" achieved a 15% reduction in energy consumption without compromising occupant comfort (Joh, 2022).

Table 1: Paradigm Shift in Art–Architecture Collaboration Models

Characteristic Dimensions	20th Century Model	21st Century Model
Core Driver	Architect-led functional and aesthetic concerns	Data, algorithms, and AI as generative foundations
Art–Architecture Relationship	Mutual influence with clear disciplinary boundaries; art as applied overlay	Deep co-constitution and algorithmic symbiosis; art and architecture as a unified experiential system
Creator's Role	Distinct roles: artist (content) vs. architect (form)	Hybrid role: artist/architect as curator, director, or algorithmic orchestrator
Role of Technology	CAD/BIM as representational or production tools	AI as an autonomous or co-creative medium
Spatial Experience	Static, object-based, visually oriented	Dynamic, immersive, multi-sensory, and data-responsive

Table 2: Current State of AI Applications Across the Architectural Lifecycle

Architectural Lifecycle Stage	AI Technical Maturity (1–5)*	Industry Adoption Rate (%)**
Conceptual Design	4	60%
Schematic & Detailed Design	3	45%
Performance Simulation	5	70%
Digital Fabrication & Construction	4	50%
Construction Site Management	2	25%
Operational & Facility Management	3	40%

5. URBAN-SCALE FUSION: INTELLIGENT PUBLIC ART AND DIGITAL TWINS

The logic of the "new fusion" has inevitably scaled from buildings to cities, where AI, architecture, and art converge in the realm of urban governance and public experience. Contemporary smart city initiatives—such as Singapore's City Brain or Barcelona's Sentilo platform—deploy networks of sensors, cameras, and AI analytics to monitor traffic, energy use, and public safety in real time. Within this context, public art is no longer confined to monuments or murals but has evolved into a dynamic interface for urban data. Refik Anadol's Machine Hallucinations: Sphere (2023), commissioned for the 580,000-square-foot LED exosphere of the Las Vegas Sphere, exemplifies this shift. The installation synthesizes real-time meteorological data from Las Vegas with cosmic imagery from NASA's Hubble and James Webb telescopes, transforming the entire structure into a luminous planetarium that reflects both terrestrial weather and deep-space phenomena (Sphere Entertainment, 2023). The building becomes a civic instrument of wonder and reflection, bridging local experience with cosmic scale.

Complementing this physical transformation is the rise of the digital twin—a real-time, data-synchronized virtual replica of a city or building. Platforms like NVIDIA Omniverse or Microsoft Azure Digital Twins enable planners, architects, and artists to co-simulate urban interventions before physical implementation. A proposed light festival, for instance, can be tested for crowd flow, energy load, and visual impact within the twin, allowing for iterative refinement. This blurs the line between planning and performance, simulation and reality.

Yet this integration is not without risk. Algorithmic systems trained predominantly on Western urban datasets often misrepresent or erase non-Western typologies—rendering Swahili coastal architecture as "informal" or "dilapidated," for example—thereby reinforcing colonial epistemologies (Benjamin, 2019). Moreover, the promise of intelligent cities may deepen socio-spatial inequalities if access to data literacy, digital infrastructure, and participatory design remains uneven. A truly inclusive urban fusion requires not only technical sophistication but also deliberate commitments to epistemic justice and community co-authorship.

6. CRITIQUE AND OUTLOOK: THE ETHICAL BOUNDARIES OF HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION

As AI permeates creative practice, it surfaces urgent ethical questions that challenge foundational assumptions about authorship, equity, and agency. The first concerns intellectual property and creative attribution. In 2023, the U.S. Copyright Office ruled that works generated entirely by AI are ineligible for copyright protection, effectively placing them in the public domain—a decision that leaves human artists vulnerable to the unauthorized extraction of their styles for model training (U.S. Copyright Office, 2023). Cases like Getty Images' lawsuit against Stability AI underscore the tension between open data and artistic rights.

Second, algorithmic bias threatens to encode and amplify historical inequities. AI models learn from datasets that reflect societal power structures; when these datasets underrepresent or mischaracterize marginalized cultures, the outputs perpetuate distortion. Studies have shown that text-to-image models frequently associate certain architectural styles with poverty or disorder based on skewed online imagery, reinforcing harmful stereotypes (Birhane et al., 2023).

Third, the proliferation of intelligent environments raises profound privacy and surveillance concerns. Buildings and cities equipped with facial recognition, behavioral tracking, and emotion detection systems risk normalizing a panoptic logic that prioritizes efficiency over autonomy. Shoshana Zuboff's (2019) concept of "surveillance capitalism" is particularly relevant here: when spatial data becomes a commodity, human presence is reduced to a stream of extractable signals.

In response, we advocate for a model of critical human-AI collaboration, wherein the human retains ultimate authority over ethical judgment, cultural interpretation, and aesthetic vision, while delegating pattern recognition and generative exploration to AI. This requires new forms of education: architecture and art schools must cultivate "computational literacy" alongside traditional studio skills, preparing students not only to use AI but to interrogate its assumptions and intervene in its logic. The goal is not to reject technology but to domesticate it—to ensure that the "new fusion" serves not only innovation but also justice, plurality, and human dignity.

7. CONCLUSION

The convergence of art, architecture, and artificial intelligence in the twenty-first century represents more than a technological upgrade; it signals a paradigmatic reorientation in how we conceive of space, creativity, and experience. Moving beyond the twentieth-century model of juxtaposed collaboration, the "new fusion" is characterized by algorithmic endogeneity—where form, data, and interaction co-constitute a living spatial system. AI, in this view, is neither master nor servant but a co-speculative partner, expanding the boundaries of what can be perceived, imagined, and built. From Anadol's data-driven façades to teamLab's participatory ecosystems and Arup's responsive buildings, we witness the emergence of environments that are not static backdrops but dynamic participants in human life.

Yet this potential is not self-fulfilling. Without vigilant ethical stewardship, the same technologies that enable poetic immersion can also facilitate control, exclusion, and epistemic erasure. The future of this fusion, therefore, hinges on our ability to balance computational power with humanistic depth—to design not just intelligent systems,

but wise ones. As we stand at the threshold of an era defined by generative models, spatial computing, and urban-scale AI, the task before us is clear: to harness these tools not merely to build efficiently or beautifully, but to build justly, inclusively, and with enduring care for the human condition. Only then can the "new fusion" fulfill its promise as a truly transformative force in shaping the worlds we inhabit.

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