

Has Architectural Photography Changed the Way Architecture is Perceived Today?

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Abstract: *Architecture has always been at the forefront of advancements of human life over the ages. The constant urge of humans to evolve and better themselves has led to a massive evolution in architecture as well. The world of architecture keeps growing with new ideas, designs, technologies and with that the need to preserve not just the architecture of the past but also document the present for the world to see. We have been documenting buildings in various ways since ancient times but architectural photography is a relatively new phenomenon. Over time this process of photographing has become an important part of the field of architecture, especially today in the world of social media. It not only helps people around the globe gain knowledge while sitting at home, but it has also become a tool for a designer to showcase their thoughts to a much bigger audience and potential clients in an easy manner. The possibilities and the exploration in this field of photography have ultimately paved the way for architecture to be perceived like never before.*

Keywords: Architecture, Architectural Photography

1. Introduction

Architecture is a broad subject, encompassing everything from skyscrapers to shacks. Virtually everywhere we go, we are surrounded by some sort of architecture on a daily basis. Because of this, it should come as no surprise that architecture is such a popular subject in photography.

Architectural photography is the photographing of buildings and similar structures that are both aesthetically pleasing and actual representations of their subjects. Architectural photographers, are usually skilled in the use of specialized techniques and equipment. A tenet of architectural photography is the use of controlled perspective, with an emphasis on vertical lines that are non-converging (parallel). This is achieved by positioning the focal plane of camera at so that it is perpendicular to the ground, regardless of the elevation of the camera eye. This result can be achieved by use of view cameras, tilt/shift lenses, or post-processing. Architectural photography in simple terms can be defined as the photographing of a built structures or designed spaces that are both aesthetically pleasing and represent the subjects accurately. It is often categorized as a special field of photography. This field of photography typically comprises of either the exterior views of the buildings with the space it is set in or the interior of the buildings with all its elements.

Traditionally, view cameras have been used for architectural photography as they allow for the lens to be tilted or shifted relative to the film plane. This allows for control of perspective, as well as a variety of creative possibilities. In a similar fashion to landscape photography, a deep depth of field is usually employed so that both the foreground and background (to infinity) are in sharp focus. More recently, digital single lens reflex (DSLR) cameras have been used in the field of architectural photography. These cameras also employ detachable, tilt shift lenses of varying (usually fixed) focal lengths. Architectural photography is typically created from either the exterior views of buildings, or in the interior buildings. The techniques used in each of these types of

photography are similar, but do have some difference and sometimes require different equipment.

2. Problem

To study various aspects of Architectural Photography and its impact on the perception of Architecture and advancements in the field of Architectural Photography.

3. History of Architectural Photography

The discovery of architecture photography dates back and incidentally coincides with the birth of photography. In 1827, Nicéphore Niépce used an exposure of several hours on an asphalt-coated plate to capture the view from his window.

Although the subject was chosen for practical reasons rather than aesthetic, it was the beginning of a new process nevertheless. The static nature of architectural subjects like that of still-life made them popular in the early days of photography as extremely long exposure times made it impossible to capture moving subjects.

Buildings were documented through various means like paintings or pencil sketches but architectural photography was a relatively new and more effective development. They have been a highly valued photographic subject through the history of photography. By 1860s architectural photography became a recognized visual medium. It played a leading role in realms of photography as not just an art form but also as an instrument of documentation and cultural construction.

This field became more creative as the technology upgraded in the early 1900s. Photographs were becoming an important element of architectural books and magazines. Architect's started hiring photographers for commissioned work to document their designs. The introduction of architectural magazines promoted more architects to document their work through photographs. Architectural photography began to be used to make foreign countries and cultures accessible to the

general public, as well as to document the possessions of individuals and institutions.

The changes in architectural style between the world wars changed how the buildings were photographed. The Bauhaus movement founded by Walter Gropius in 1919 began to consider photography as an art form, viewing the medium as “the perfect combination of manual dexterity, technical progress, and artistic expression.” Unusual perspectives, selective compositions gave way to photographers giving architecture a dynamic of its own.

In the following years, the technical advancements led to a mass shift in photography. The advent of pocket-sized 35mm cameras before World War II made photography available to the masses. The flexibility of smaller camera systems transformed the camera into a new kind of notebook and gave birth to modern photojournalism. The post-war period in the booming construction world of the '50s and '60s saw architectural photographers work with new equipment, film and techniques to bring back the emptiest and most static conventions of picturing architecture.

The 70s saw a change in the philosophy of architectural photographers. Taking cues from art practices, they started to consider buildings less as a static structure and focus more on the activities happening inside or around the structure along with the existing photographic practices of the past. Bold shadows and diagonal lines in compositions and experimentation with other techniques became part of the photographer's creative output. This led the foundations for the modern photography process which we experience today.

This boom continued until the end of the 20th century. The introduction of digital technology brought with it the ability to correct image perspective and distortion—tasks that were previously extremely difficult to perform. Traditional aspects of architectural photography, such as the documentation of construction sites, began to take on artistic aspects, giving architectural photography a twin role as an artistic and documentary medium. The developments since then have not changed the purpose of architectural photography per se but have brought in the changes in the methods and tools used to perform it. That being said, the change it brought in the way buildings are portrayed and understood beyond its static nature continues to be of prime importance.

4. An insight into the tools used today- Camera and Supporting Equipment

4.1 Camera

A camera is an optical instrument that record images that can be shot directly, transmitted to another location, or both. These images may be still photographs or moving images such as videos or movies. The term camera comes from camera obscura (Latin for "dark chamber"), an early mechanism for projecting images. The functioning of the camera is very similar to the functioning of human eye.

4.2 Lens

A camera lens (also known as photographic lens or photographic objective) is an optical lens or assembly of lenses used in conjunction with a camera body and mechanism to make images of objects either on photographic film or on other media capable of storing an image chemically or electronically. A lens may be permanently fixed to a camera, or it may be interchangeable with lenses of different focal lengths, apertures and other properties.

4.3 Tripod

In photography, a tripod is used to stabilize and elevate a camera, a flash unit or other photographic equipment. All photographic tripods have three legs and a mounting head to couple with a camera. The mounting head usually includes a thumbscrew that mates to a female threaded receptacle on the camera, as well as a mechanism to be able to rotate and tilt the camera when it is mounted on the tripod. Tripod legs are usually made to telescope, in order to save space when not in use. Tripods are usually made from aluminium, carbon fibre, steel, wood or plastic.

4.4 Flash

A flash is a device used in photography producing a flash of artificial light (typically 1/1000 to 1/200 of a second) at a colour temperature of about 5500K to help illuminate a scene. A major purpose of a flash is to illuminate a dark scene. Other uses are capturing quickly moving objects or changing the quality of light. Flash refers either to the flash of light itself or to the electronic flash unit discharging the light.

4.5 Drones

Drones are the latest and one of the most revolutionary developments in photography equipment in modern times. A remote-controlled camera with the capacity to fly has made capturing aerial images a very easy task. It has offered the possibility of a unique perspective and an infinite number of composition with the utmost ease. Its use in architectural photography has brought an influx of new ideas to portray architecture in its environment, especially when the project scale is so big that it couldn't be completely captured from the ground level.

4.6 Post Production Software

Post-production software - popularly known as editing software - came into being with the advent of digital photography. These software programs are the modern version of the photo developing process that exists for generating photographs from film cameras. The photographs were captured as negatives on the films and were later developed in the labs using through a chemical process to produce the final image. Similarly today, the photographs are recorded in the cameras digitally instead of films and later on these photos are developed using these editing software programs on a computer. Digital photography has proved to be advantageous in terms of providing better

control over image processing than film photography. These processing software provide better control over colour corrections, contrast, perspective corrections as well as have made creating panoramas a comparatively easier process as compared to developing films.

There are several editing software for different types of operating systems that people use but the two most popular software used by many photographers around the world are Adobe Lightroom and Adobe Photoshop. They are easily available for all operating systems and are very easy to learn and use.

4.7 Social Media/Internet

This is a tool that has seen unprecedented growth in the last decade. A platform running on the internet that is free, easy to access and provides the user with a global audience while sitting at home, social media has become a popular resource among the people today. Various applications and websites like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Pinterest etc have made image sharing very easy across the world. These various social medias amount to around 2 billion images shared every day. The ease of access to smartphones and cheaper internet services has made these applications easily accessible to people.

Its impact has been hugely visible in every aspect of our lives which also includes architecture and architectural photography. It has become a platform where we can show our work in the form of pictures and text to a global audience. It also helps impart knowledge as well as gain knowledge from things happening around the world. It has also become a very potent marketing tool with almost negligible costs involved to showcase your ideas. Although as every positive, there come certain negatives, the same rule applies to social media as well. This ease of access of content has also given birth to duplication of work, sharing of fake or manipulated content etc to name a few. Responsible use of these platforms can't be stressed enough in current times.

5. Technical Aspects/ Camera Controls

The camera is the image-forming device, and photographic film or a silicon electronic image sensor is the sensing medium. The respective recording medium can be film itself, or a digital electronic or magnetic memory. Photographers control the camera and lens to "expose" the light recording material (such as film) to the required amount of light to form a "latent image" (on film) or RAW file (in digital cameras) which, after appropriate processing, is converted to a usable image.

5.1 Focus

The position of a viewed object or the adjustment of an optical device necessary to produce a clear image: in focus, out of focus

5.2 Aperture

Adjustment of the lens opening, measured as f-number, which controls the amount of light passing through the lens. Aperture also has an effect on depth of field and diffraction - the higher the f-number, the smaller the opening, the less light, the greater the depth of field, and the more the diffraction blur.

5.3 Shutter Speed

Adjustment of the speed (often expressed either as fractions of seconds or as an angle, with mechanical shutters) of the shutter of control the amount of time during which the imaging medium is exposed to light for each exposure. Shutter speed may be used to control the amount of light striking the image plane; 'faster' shutter speeds (that is, those of shorter duration) decrease both the amount of light and the amount of image blurring from motion of the subject and/or camera.

5.4 White Balance

On digital cameras, electronic compensation for the colour temperature associated with a given set of lighting conditions, ensuring that white light is registered as such on the imaging chip and therefore that the colours in the frame will appear natural. In addition to using white balance to register natural coloration of the image, photographers may employ white balance to aesthetic end.

5.5 Metering

Measurement of exposure so that highlights and shadows are exposed according the photographer's wishes. Many modern cameras meter and set exposure automatically.

5.6 ISO Speed

ISO Speeds are employed on modern digital cameras as an indication of the system's gain from light to numerical output and to control the automatic exposure system. The higher the ISO number the greater the film sensitivity to light, whereas with a lower ISO number, the film is less sensitive to light.

5.7 Autofocus Point

On some cameras, the selection of a point in the imaging frame upon which the auto-focus system will attempt to focus. Many Single-lens reflex cameras (SLR) feature multiple auto-focus points in the viewfinder.

6. Comparison between the old and new architectural photography

Table 1: Comparison of Analog & Digital Architectural Photography

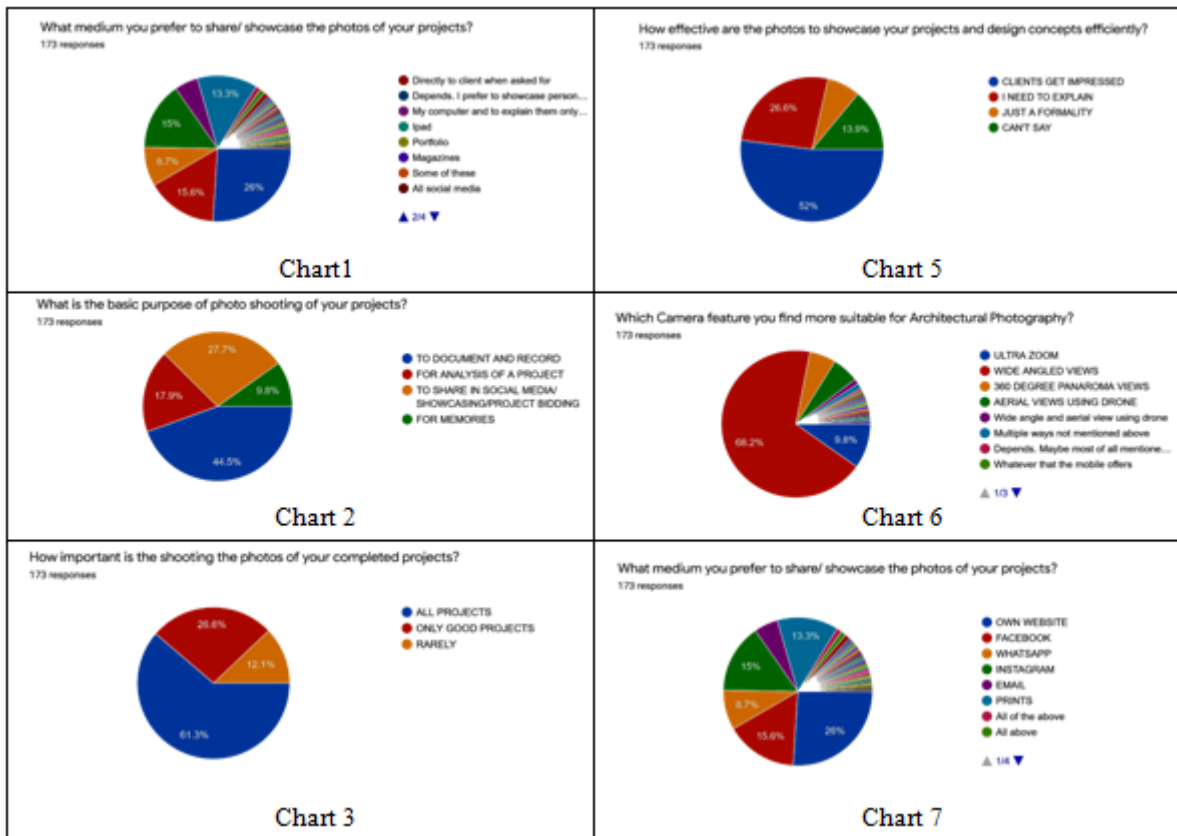
| Analog Architectural Photography (Film) | Digital Architectural Photography |
|---|---|
| Cameras were bulkier. | Cameras are much lighter and portable. |
| Results can be viewed only after the photos were developed. | Instant results on the screens built-in camera. |
| A very limited number of images (depending on the film roll) More film rolls amounted to higher costs. | The limit depends on the capacity of the memory card used, still significantly higher than films. |
| Images were carefully thought before capturing as the no. of photos were limited. | A higher number of image limits sometimes can lead to hurried compositions with the results lacking sufficient quality. |
| Larger sensors meant higher dynamic ranges. | Small sensors cannot reproduce a similar dynamic range. |
| The lens quality was limited to a certain extent. | The quality of lenses today is much higher. |
| Image processing in the labs is a tedious job. | Processing can be done easily on a computer with the help of software. It has also made possible to practice new techniques like panorama stitching and high dynamic range (HDR) imaging. |
| Images were more authentic as manipulation was very difficult. | Ease of manipulation has given rise to unauthenticity. |
| Difficult to archive images in print form for longer periods. | The digital format makes archiving images easy and can be stored forever. |
| Image multiplication is difficult. | Images can be multiplied easily in lesser time. |
| Had a very limited audience as the prints couldn't be circulated easily. | Ease of circulation due to the internet gives way to a larger audience. |
| Lesser control in terms of attributes of the picture. | More control in terms of what attributes we can control in the picture. |
| No option for aerial photography. | Drones fitted with digital cameras used for aerial photography. |

7. Methodology

An online survey through Google forms was conducted with 500 + architects to know their views upon Architectural Photography and Camera properties. Following is the outcome in graphical form.

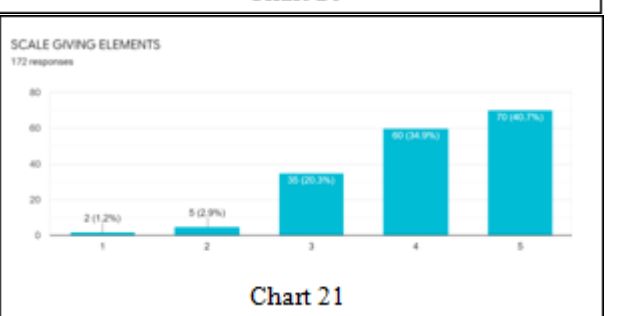
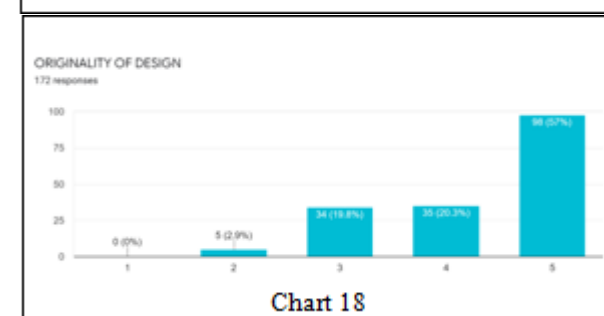
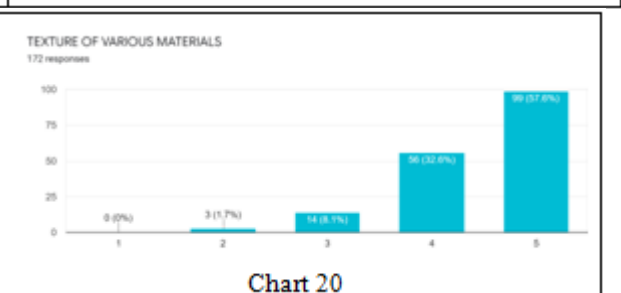
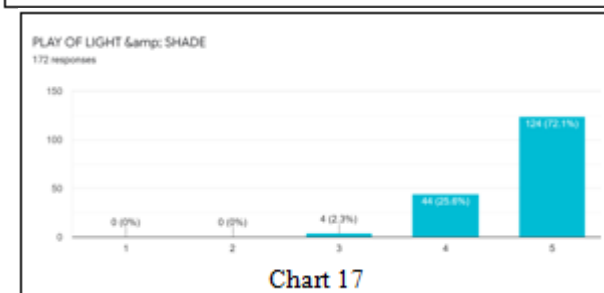
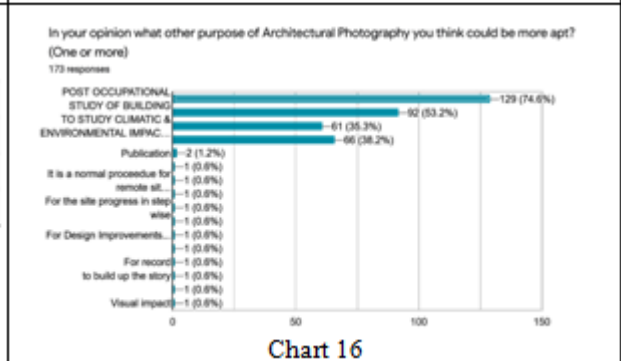
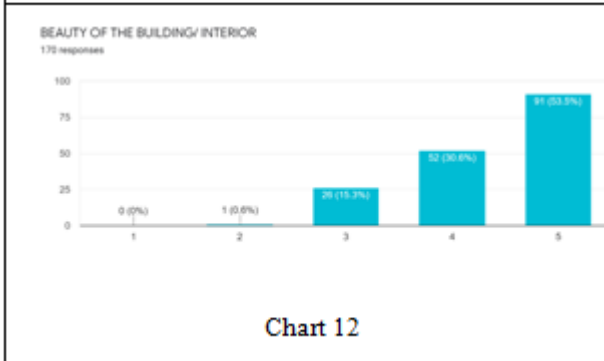
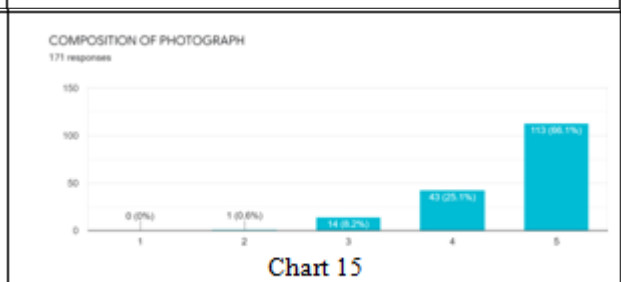
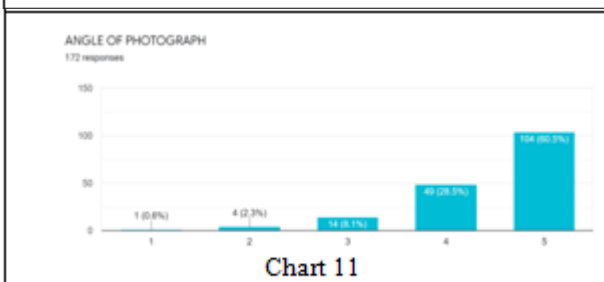
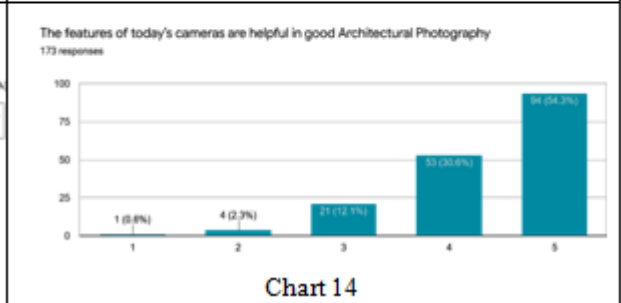
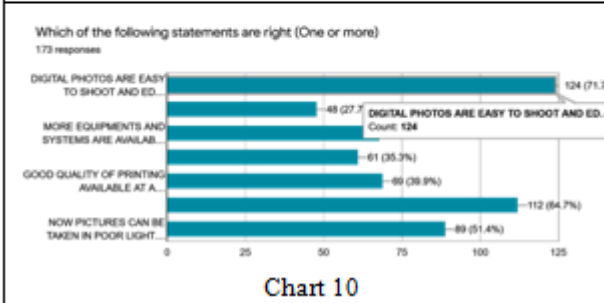
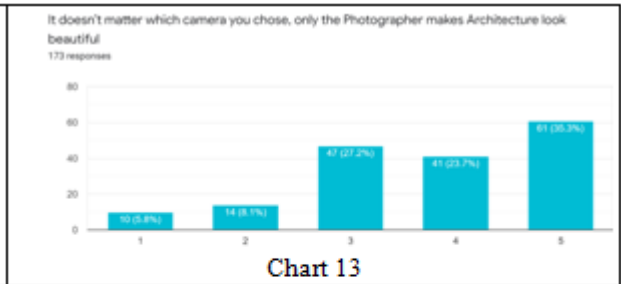
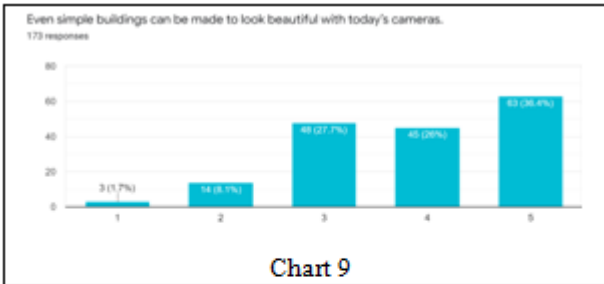
7.1 Questions about Architectural Photography in general:

Various questions were put forth before Architects in the Survey, Following are the pie charts showing the responses to these questions.



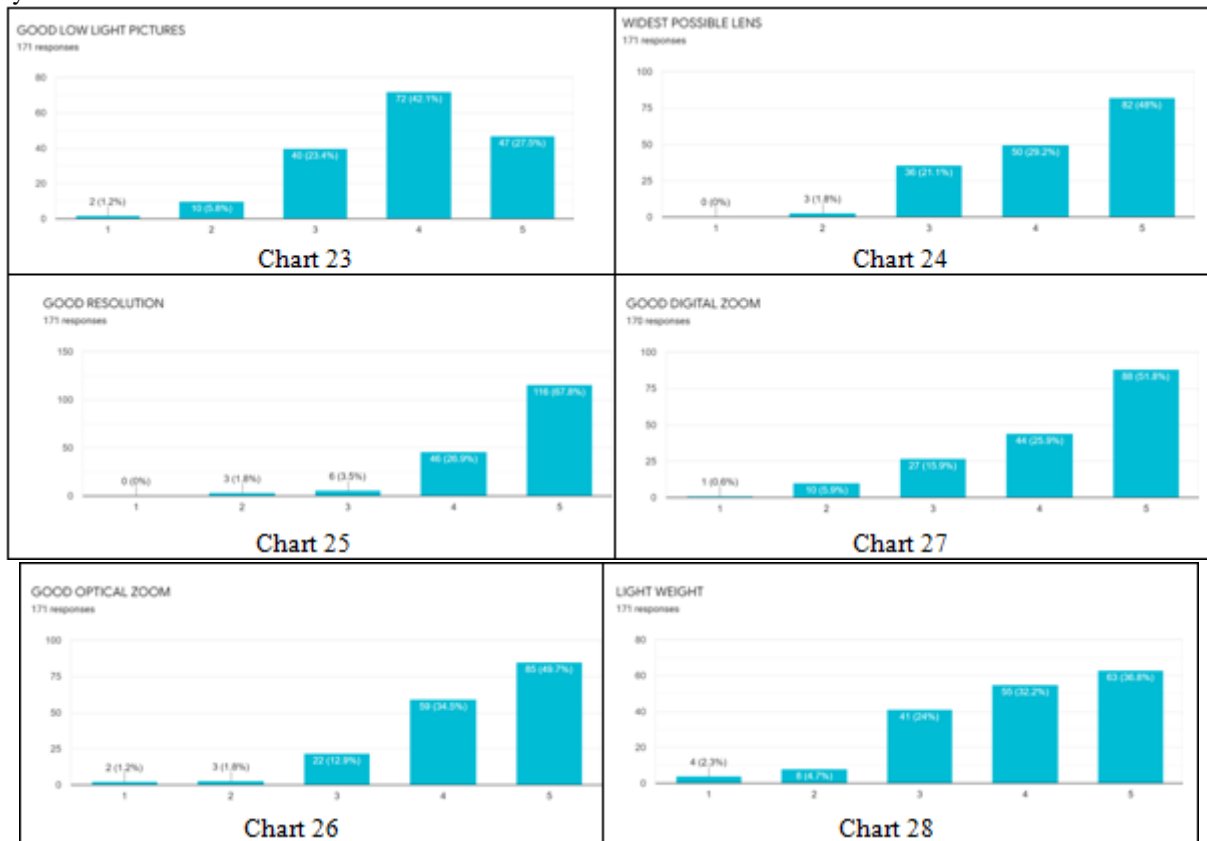
7.2 Some questions about a good photo

In the Survey some questions were asked about the property of a good photograph. Following is the outcome of the same.



7.3 Some questions about camera properties

Some questions were asked about the property of modern camera and its versatility over old one. People responded in this way.



7.4 Opinion of some of the participants on how the evolution of modern Photography has impacted the way how the Architecture is perceived now?

- Yes
- It's very important now a days ... it's a part of architecture profession.
- Yes. Because of modern photography, objects appearance has certainly made greater impact in the way it is perceived now to the client or common man.
- Yes the photography has impacted on architecture planning n concepts even a photo can emphasise the architectural concept and design of any project.
- Yes it has changed the perception of people...
- Its good to have good camera to click the pics with wide zoom angle. and
- Yes
- Yes for sure it has impacted and has made architecture more of a visual treat. It's helping understand the trend followed by architects worldwide
- Outreach is better
- Yes. The evolution of modern photography has impacted the way architecture is perceived now.
- Technological inventions always advance the path and quality but old is gold too!! That needs expertise and love and pain to create unique beauty.
- Due to the advance cameras and editing options , many of them are taking the advantage for false publicity , presentations, and posting on media. Architecture is in

real means is plan, function of spaces and not only aesthetics.

- Vividness of architectural photography..
- Ya agreed because post click edits makes it unrealistic and un reliable. So it is necessary to keep image as it is
- Yes, We can see the photographs of work of so many great architects without searching in books, by just clicking on their websites. It is so much easier and better. It has definitely changed for clients who can simply see the documentation of the work amongst s/he wants to choose.
- Yes it has in a way that it is easily accessible and the process has become way faster.
- Agreed
- Photography change real mean of architecture because it has different angle and view to create and justify and analysis the design to go through it. Photography is the right medium to study or to analysis your own project good and bad of design , and move right angle, avoid, projection, shade, shadow and give you real feel to this world
- Photography as a visual tool becomes important in today s media/ info age
- Not necessarily. Good design has always been displayed. But today with help of photography skills eve the bad designs are made to look good. Now people can easily determine what they need due to so many digital options. So yes change has happened.

- The perspective or the lens to see a building changed with good photography. It can lead to a better understanding and experience of the object. also, images are easier to process in one's mind than just explanation. So yes it has changed somewhat the architectural reception.
- Yes I do think that development in camera technology had made Field More Dynamic
- Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. And the right capture -composition, angle, colours, props- makes a lasting impact. What catches the eye etches the mind.
- It has made Architecture more live and interesting
- Yes. Remote Camera angles have become easy. And photography has become much cheaper
- I agreed in this digital era We should show our creativity with help of photography and worldwide social networking platform
- In a way, it has changed the aesthetics, people are aware of the power of image and the visual aspect of design has become important.
- Yes, it does impact the way even a man who has little or no knowledge about the architectural field. The modern photography had broken the wall between architectural field and the rest by reaching out and appealing various other professional fields too.
- Its the affordability and availability of the technology .which is present in abundance .
- Yes modern photography in architecture helps in many ways
- Undecided
- yes i do agree
- Yes, I think modern photography has a lot of impact on architecture and on the people as well. It has given a new perspective to the Architecture. People are more aware about Architecture due to architectural photography. There is a huge scope of architectural photographers in the future.
- Yes, modern photography has enhanced the public perception of architecture and it has also improved the narration of buildings & interiors along with surrounding landscape.
- Yes, it definitely has changed the view of people towards Architects and Architecture, and sometimes we come across people who have already gone through pictures with noticing quite a good numbers of architectural elements they want in their designs. Which is amazing.!
- Yes. It has changed
- Agree. Share outcome/ survey report to us.
- Up to some extent yes; but perhaps because of modern gadgets, editing software.
- Yes, i totally agree that the evolution of modern photography has impacted the way how architecture is perceived now as the higher resolution pictures captured these days put a huge impact on the thought of people.
- Yes, surely it has.
- Not really
- TRUE, different types of lenses project the world around you on to the flat plane of the camera sensor. Digital image processing allows you to remap this, such as this view of a factory taken with a fish-eye lens
- All the above points can be complied in getting the answer
- Yes it have impacted
- definitely true. it has changed many views.
- YES ITS TRUE
- Yes, modern photography plays an important role in perceiving Architecture in a more appealing way by creating a visual interest in the building in a very strong way of presentation.
- Previously design changes after execution was difficult due cumbersome photography process, now it is very easy with Mobile photography which is very handy also.
- May be it has as people get influence by it !
- Yes, today's architectural photography has changed people's perception towards architecture, And also present spaces in interesting ways so people are more attracted toward it...
- Yes, I believe photography sometime is better than reality, to showcase Architecture, photography is an epic tool!
- Yes definitely, It has impacted a lot.
- Yes photograph will capture complete structure or scenario which will helpful for architect to analyse the work done
- No, I don't think so.
- Yes of course you have covered most of the points through questions here
- Wild angle
- . Hence they are more demanding and have an idea what they actually want.
- Depiction of Architectural projects through smart photography and technique is very useful in present world for success in Architectural profession
- yes I completely agree with the above point as it has created sense of awareness towards environmental impact
- Photographs are play an important role for marketing your products. The wide angle view, ultra HD quality, drone camera view etc give a positive idea to the customers to opt an architect's service. For example we can search and find a lots of photographs of The Konark in google, same object but different qualities of presentation. So presentation is the most important factor for any business. After all " Jo dikhta hai... wohibikta hai". Thank you
- Yes, it creates impact of design to help in next project.
- Surely
- Projects can be displayed to its best potential
- Yes i do agree modern photography has change the architecture, it gives new perspective towards structure
- STILL IMAGES
- Definitely with advancement in technology, editing software and tools Architectural Photography rather photography as whole is taken to next level
- In last 30-40years of architectural history, architects are continuously creating 'Memory of places' instead of innovations in design.... Ar. Gehry has broken the chain....Now if you want to show a new creation in the architectural design line than you must present the same in a realistic way.... To achieve one better than other the modern photography is an important tool.
- Yes , as we are moving towards a modern and sustainable architecture we have got to Know the scale and many elements which can enhance building performance , in aesthetics also.

- yes definitely agree
- modern photography plays very important role of showcase
- Ya
- Yes photography had made a great impact in today's architecture
- Absolutely. Photography of buildings also make them objects of desire for cultural tourists. More sophisticated walk-throughs enable cultural tourists to enjoy buildings using imagination when they're not able to physically visit them, and people with disabilities and/or infirmities benefit from good photography. Hence architecture is made more accessible. Good photography, like good writing, should stimulate the imagination of being in the building and create a sense of place in the mind.
- Evolution of photography helps to perceive the architecture visually
- Very much agreed. A good photograph is necessary to showcase the project. The concept can easily be explained if the photography is done by a professional
- Yes it has helped to expand business by showcasing through social media
- The perception is viewed in a different perspective which is making it more amazing
- The digital format has made the access and distribution easier, and has brought photography to all. This has raised the standard/ quality of architectural projects as a person, even in a small city, has easy access and thus increased awareness of what is being built around the world.
- Modern photography has definitely shifted the focus of architecture from being a complete psychosomatic built environment to just an objectified visual media devoid of other aspects of sensory perception. In other words, modern architectural photography is that highly sought-after botox treatment that has successfully killed the true essence of architecture.
- I partially agree to it as the evolution of technology (social media) has increased the exposure of clients. Now people have easy access to the world of architecture

8. Observations

- Majority of the people preferred using mobile phones over professional cameras due to reasons like affordability, time required for shooting etc but acknowledge the importance of architectural photography. They also went on to say that they were slowly looking to turn to the professionals for the same as it creates a different impact altogether.
- Mostly used as a tool for documentation, keeping record and for displaying on social media/internet.
- Prefer shooting all the projects and it is also very effective way of showcasing one's work to the client.
- Most of these pictures are either displayed on the website or social media which again emphasizes the importance of how is the work being viewed by the public.
- Majority prefer wide angle photographs as they are able to show more information in a single image.

- Digital photographs are easier to shoot and edit, provide with more creative possibilities in terms of angles, shooting in dark and churning more details and clarity.
- Apart from documentation, architectural photography is also useful for post occupational study of buildings, how the building has been impacted by the climate and its surroundings as well as studying buildings for academic purposes.
- Majority also believe that even the simplest of buildings can be made to look good through photographs and the control that today's cameras provide is a very useful for these purposes.
- While many think that only a photographer can make the building look good irrespective of the camera but this is closely contested by the thought that the quality of the camera also matters to a certain extent.
- A photograph is considered good when it is able to showcase a number of factors of the structure. Colours and textures, concept of the design, play of lights and shadows, overall composition of the picture and the angles it shows and overall beauty of the structure are some of the most important factors that combine to create a picture that can be considered good.
- Majority agreed with to the point that architectural photography has changed the way architecture is perceived today, citing various reasons and explanations of their own.

9. Conclusion

The most important take away from this survey was that the importance of architectural photography as grown over time. The architects of today find it an important tool in expression of architecture to the masses. Its role in architecture has also grown with time. Now, its not just a tool for documentation but also a means to showcase ones work, studying architecture, propagating architecture of one part of the world to another and also to study how a built space evolves starting from its construction to how it is being used once it is built. The architects today have understood the possibilities architectural photography presents them with to showcase their buildings being something beyond just a lifeless structure. Constant improvement in technology and advent of social media has also aided this cause and helped this medium to grow. People are more inclined towards how the building appears and are able to see something extraordinary which they might not notice usually. It has completely revolutionised the way architecture is perceived today.

The study done above manages to put some very interesting point into perspective. The other takeaway from this study is that the importance of architectural photography cannot be argued especially in the current times. Its impact on architecture cannot be belittled. Photography is not merely a tool for documentation but it also performs the role of accentuating and emphasizing the beauty of architecture which people often tend to ignore. It has become a medium through which the ideas and designs can be showcased on a global level. This helps in circulating a regions architecture in the world and compare them with that of other regions. It is also of much use to students of architecture around the

world as they could learn about building styles from around the world.

Another major impact of architectural photography has been its ability to capture time. Capturing time in the sense that a building can be viewed not only in their present but in various times throughout their history as well. It can help gauge the impact of time and the functions that building performed on its lifespan. It also created a sense of awareness among the people as now they could know what existed in particular place or surrounding once the structure there is taken down. That has made it easier to remember the value of culture and the history of a place.

The aspect of photographing structures while they are being constructed also holds a certain significance. It helps to tell the story of how the structure came into being, how the design evolved in the environment it was set in and the materials and people involved in the process. It gives a human touch to these structures.

The documentation aspect was the major reason for boom of architectural photography and that will continue to be the most important part of this practice. How have the designs evolved over a period of time, the influences of changes in culture, environment on the architecture of that place and multiple other such aspects can be understood through photographs. Therefore in some ways it becomes a commentary on the progress of society in that place.

The use of photography has more or less remained the same through ages, only the techniques and the tools involved have changed. They have made it more affordable, flexible and it gives more freedom of experimentation to showcase the same concept in different ways. This has not only helped to accentuate the beauty of the structure in front of the people but it has also bought about a sense of trying to understand it beyond its build form and connect to it on a deeper level on the function it performs. One can also say that capturing these three dimensional structures on two dimensions open up a plethora of dimensions for the audience and architects around the world. It has revolutionised the field of architecture. In a way architecture and photography have become so crucially interlinked that photography can be considered as the soul of architecture.

10. Future Scope

By studying and analysing the modern trends in Architectural Photography this can be foresee that the use of modern gadgets and software has developed a whole new branch of Photography with an unlimited scope for Professionals to indulge in the field which is going to be increased manifold with the invent of newer building forms, material and techniques.

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