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VISUAL COMMUNICATION AS A FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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The modern city is not only a physical space, but also a complex system of signs, images and visual messages. In conditions of high density of information flows, visual communication becomes one of the key mechanisms of social interaction, spatial orientation and the formation of urban identity. This determines the relevance of philosophical understanding of visual communication as an integral element of the urban environment.

Communication in a socio-philosophical context is seen as a basic mechanism for reproducing sociality. G. Simmel emphasised that urban life is shaped through multiple forms of interaction mediated by signs and symbols [1]. The city thus appears as a space of constant exchange of visual signals. From the perspective of semiotics (R. Barthes), visual communication can be interpreted as a system of signs that forms a special 'language of the city.' Visual images not only convey information, but also construct meanings, reinforcing certain social norms and models of behaviour. M. McLuhan, viewing media as an extension of human senses, pointed out that the dominant channel of communication influences the structure of perception of reality [2]. Visualisation of the urban environment enhances the role of visual perception, forming a specific type of urban sensitivity and everyday experience. Complementing these approaches, A. Lefebvre viewed urban space as socially produced. In this context, visual communication acts as an instrument of symbolic appropriation of space and a means of consolidating power and cultural meanings in the urban environment.

Visual communication occupies a dominant place in the process of information perception: a significant part of the information about the urban environment is absorbed through the visual channel. The visual language of the city includes signs, symbols, text, colour codes, graphic design elements and multimedia forms. Visual communication makes the city 'readable': it allows people to navigate the space, ensures safety and forms a holistic image of the urban environment. The main elements of visual communication include: navigation and orientation systems; road signs and visual safety elements; outdoor advertising and information media; visual design of facades and public spaces; elements of urban symbolism. These elements shape the visual landscape of the city and act as intermediaries between the space and its users.

Visual communication can both enhance a sense of comfort and belonging, and also generate visual noise and alienation. From a philosophical perspective, visual communication plays a role in shaping urban subjectivity, defining the ways people interact with space and with other city residents.

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