designing in the age of anxiety – shaping space through affect
what role do our cities, buildings and spaces play in contributing to /addressing this Age of Anxiety?
does our built environment impact us?

Bryant Park, New York City
There is a myth, sometimes widespread, that a person need only do inner work, in order to be alive like this; that a man is entirely responsible for his own problems; and that to cure himself, he need only change himself...

the fact is, a person is so far formed by his surroundings, that his state of harmony depends entirely on his harmony with his surroundings.
There is increasing research into how people’s experiences of the places they build are central to their well-being, their physical health, their communal and social lives, and their sense of self.
The most important characteristic of our built environment is whether it meets the needs of its occupants, residents and visitors, both material and psychological.
These characteristics are often at the periphery of conversations about the future of design.
architectural criticism and discourse has historically been shaped by interpretation and narrative, its currency being meaning
cost
profit
speed of construction
the modern imperative to design something unique and individual tends to override considerations of how it might shape the behaviours of those who will live with it
the pursuit of economy, at the expense of experience, has led to landmark projects that fail to recognize basic aspects of human behaviour.
“Affects are the biological responses that attach meaning to the stimuli encountered from moment to moment. Affects are the origin of the experience of good and bad. Affects tell us what to pay attention to. They are the spotlights of our minds.”

Silvan Tompkins
90% of our cognitions are nonconscious
complexity  surface  form  light  volume  landscape  direction/cognition  autonomy/agency  social isolation
complexity
surface
form
light
“A recurrent feature of the comments we receive is the wisdom in planning a building where the architects and users work together for maximum effect, in the way the building looks and feels and in its performance.

Many of our visitors tell us that we have “opened their eyes” about how a medical research institute should look and function and go back to their cities ready to emulate this building that we so much enjoy working in.”

Professor Angel Lopez
Co-Director, Centre for Cancer Biology
landscape
direction/cognition
autonomy/ agency
social isolation
important for how we act in the present...how we will conduct ourselves in the future
thankyou