

Optimizing the Restorative Potential of the Italian Renaissance Garden: A Pattern Library

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A Pattern Library is an organized set of patterns that can be adapted for use in many contexts as solutions to design challenges. Patterns are themes and concepts that can vary in meaning and appearance based on their setting. The purpose of our Pattern Library is to serve as a tool for those who will contribute to the design of a culturally meaningful, historically appropriate, and mentally and emotionally restorative outdoor greenspace to improve quality of life for participants of the Joseph S. Bruno Auburn Abroad program in a Renaissance-era Palazzo in Italy.

Existing literature (e.g., Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Pearson and Craig, 2014; Hartig et al., 1991) indicates that time spent outdoors positively impacts mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing; this project acts as a case study of how environmental factors promote mental and emotional health for students experiencing stress and fatigue. The Pattern Library utilizes Attentional Restoration Theory (ART) as its theoretical framework, aligning spatial design and landscape elements along with characteristics of Italian Renaissance gardens to ART's four principles: *fascination*, *being away*, *extent*, and *compatibility*. *Fascination* allows people to rely on effortless attention instead of exerting energy to fixate their attention on a scene. The experience of *being away* entails either physically or psychologically removing one self from one's everyday environment. *Extent* is the quality of having sufficient scope and coherence to allow a person to remain engaged with their environment. Finally, *compatibility* entails a fit between a person and their environment.

The result of this research is a series of books, each focusing on one principle of ART, describing techniques, concepts, and landscape features that can be used in virtually any combination to create a restorative outdoor space appropriate to its historic and geographic context. When an outdoor greenspace is developed that utilizes the patterns in the Library, Joseph S. Bruno program participants will have a place to go that helps them recuperate from study abroad stressors and optimally ben-

efit from their experience in Italy. This Pattern Library is written specifically for the Joseph S. Bruno program's outdoor greenspace, but its core tenants can be applied to spatial design at large to develop built environments that are optimally restorative and healthful.

Statement of Research Advisor

Hollen conducted an emergent analysis of literature regarding restorative environments and the human connection to nature to identify emergent patterns and a suitable theoretical framework, then synthesized and distilled the complex concepts of the literature into simplified patterns that can be integrated into the Joseph S. Bruno program's outdoor greenspace renovation. She printed her volumes of *The Pattern Library*, hand-stitched the binding, and delivered the finished collection in a customized, handcrafted wood box set.

—*Lindsey Tan, Interior Design*