

Here is sociology to good nightclub design. How people move through space while they are dancing is critical. Because New York is one of the biggest melting pots in the world, we felt the way we would generate the most excitement was to create a metaphorical melting pot on the dance floor. With the design I attempted to encourage the "user" or patron to forgo his/her social boundaries while experiencing crobar.

The mix of gay/ straight. Black/White, young/old. downtown/uptown is a difficult one to mesh into one unit. If you think back to the Roman Coliseum, the design was specially tailored so that specific social classes sat in specific places. Each entered and exited through separate halls and terraces. The people's experience of the "event" and view of the gladiators varied from man to man based solely on the designer's ability to manipulate flow through space. It is really a laborious task to program space. You have to take into consideration the building's core functions as well as code requirements and mechanical requirements. Then you decide how you want the user to experience the event. That's what separates good design from great design.

Nightclub design is a little like designing a roller coaster ride. I ask hundreds of tactical questions. I want to encourage emotion and disassociative experience. I'll decide how I want people to feel when they approach the facade in a cab. Do I want them to feel welcome? Warm and fuzzy? Or do I want them to feel intimidated initially, then feel compressed when they enter, and then released into the journey of the night? All the crobar design themes have a thread that is easy to say and very difficult to achieve. There is an implied connection between the physical space and the user that seamlessly moves people across vague thresholds.

The tunnel in crobar NYC is a perfect example of a threshold. It connects the reed room with the great room. Both rooms have totally different vibes and totally different music. The only way in and out of those rooms is the tunnel. Because of the space's physical dimensions - approximately 12' wide by 18' long •• once you are in, there is literally NO TURNING BACK. That makes the heart beat faster, the palms sweat, and adrenaline pump.

Inside the tunnel I installed "white noise" generators that cancel the two disparate sound frequencies of the other rooms and create a moment of silence once you step inside. That's a bit of humor in a nightclub that is "all about music." In this instant the absence of sound emotionally sets up the user's next experience. It's almost like a palette cleanser of sorbet in a five course meal. As you exit the tunnel into the great room, the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. You can't help but want to dance and smite. Sometimes I stand up on the mezzanine and watch people smiling and dancing as they come through. We designed the space to react WITH people instead of react TO people.

For crobar Miami Beach, we had to insert the architecture while preserving the existing box because we were required to preserve a historic 1933 movie theatre. I designed a promenade of columns that were inserted randomly "through" the space. It is the careful manipulation, intersection, and declaration of various spaces and their arrangement that allows people not to just flow through space (that would be a modernist goal), but to stay within the space while being forced into views that visually capture the space. No matter where you stand, you are mentally and visually thrown into multiple spatial experiences.

People might ask what kind of social or political dislocation this design represents. If you look around Miami Beach, the whole project could be interpreted as a social and political monologue. By implication, we are telling people: if this is different from everything else on the Beach, then pay attention to the exceptions. The column and the promenade were born in Miami and then developed further in Chicago and New York. The promenade is an interactive piece that humanizes the "mega club" experience. By using volume you minimize the nakedness of seemingly overwhelming space. The columns also provide scale where none exists and evokes emotion. You create a landscape where people move in, out, and between the columns. Most importantly you force people to see a certain way - just like in the Coliseum. I'm happy that thousands of people enjoy the spaces that I design. It's a very special experience to see people enjoying my art. D

