

TEMPORARY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS IN SRI LANKAN FILM PRODUCTION DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

A temporary built environment refers to a spatial arrangement intentionally created or modified for limited duration use, where design decisions are shaped by reversibility, adaptability, and planned disassembly rather than permanence. While this concept is well-established within architectural discourse, comparable spatial conditions are evident in film production design, where environments are constructed, transformed, and dismantled to meet the temporal demands of filmmaking. Despite these visible parallels, film production design has rarely been examined through the broader architectural discourse on temporary built environments. This study investigates Sri Lankan cinema to examine how film production design functions as a form of temporary built-environment practice. A qualitative interpretive approach was adopted, drawing on structured interviews with four experienced Sri Lankan production designers. The analysis was guided by three spatial dimensions identified in architectural literature: temporality, material construction, and experiential narrative organization. The findings confirm that cinematic environments operate through these interrelated conditions while also exhibiting a distinctive characteristic specific to production design: dual functionality combined with operational flexibility. Film sets function simultaneously as representational architecture and as technical infrastructure, requiring continuous spatial adjustment during filming. The study argues that Sri Lankan film production design constitutes a specialized form of temporary built environment practice. By demonstrating how temporally bounded spatial systems operate beyond conventional architectural typologies, the paper expands the discourse on the built environment to include mediated and industrial spatial practices.

Keywords: *Perceptual Authenticity; Production Design; Spatial Design; Sri Lankan Cinema; Temporary Built Environments.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge developed within one disciplinary field can illuminate parallel practices in another, particularly where shared spatial or material concerns exist (Cross, 2006; Till, 2009). Within architecture and urban design, the concept of temporary built environments is well established, referring to spatial arrangements intentionally created for limited durations yet fully functional during their period of occupation (Kronenburg, 2007; Bishop & Williams, 2012). Such environments are typically defined by temporality, reversibility, adaptability, and planned disassembly rather than long-term permanence (Brand, 1994). Temporary pavilions, exhibition structures, and event-based installations

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demonstrate how architectural practice accommodates transience while maintaining structural coherence and operational functionality.

Comparable spatial conditions can be observed in film production, where environments are constructed, adapted, and dismantled according to the temporal requirements of filmmaking. Scholars examining the relationship between cinema and architecture have argued that cinematic environments operate through spatial logics comparable to architectural practice, positioning film sets as constructed spatial artefacts rather than merely visual backdrops (Neumann, 1996; Penz & Thomas, 1997; Bruno, 2002). Within the collaborative structure of filmmaking, production design is responsible for shaping the visual and spatial world of the narrative through the creation and transformation of sets, locations, and environmental contexts (LoBrutto, 2002; Barnwell, 2020). Although these environments are temporary in duration, they must appear materially stable, spatially coherent, and experientially convincing in order to sustain narrative credibility on screen (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019).

The historical relationship between architecture and film production design further reinforces this connection. Many early set designers and art directors were trained in architecture or related spatial disciplines, bringing architectural drawing conventions and spatial planning methods into cinematic practice (Neumann, 1996; Bergfelder et al., 2007). In several European film industries, the role was even described using architectural terminology: set designers in Germany were sometimes credited as “architects,” while in France the term “architect-decorator” was used to describe those responsible for the spatial design of film environments. These historical practices illustrate how architectural knowledge informed early studio set construction and contributed to the development of cinematic spatial design. Consequently, much of the historical and theoretical literature on production design has approached cinematic space through architectural representation and visual construction (Affron & Affron, 1995; Ramírez, 2004). However, while this scholarship acknowledges architectural influence, it rarely examines film sets explicitly as forms of temporary built environments within built-environment discourse.

This parallel suggests a productive conceptual overlap between architectural temporary structures and cinematic spatial fabrication. In both domains, environments are deliberately constructed to function within defined time frames while maintaining structural integrity and perceptual coherence. However, despite these visible similarities, temporary built environments have been predominantly theorised within architectural discourse, with limited engagement beyond conventional building typologies (Kronenburg, 2007; Bishop & Williams, 2012). While cinema–architecture relationships have been explored from aesthetic and representational perspectives (Neumann, 1996; Penz & Thomas, 1997), film production design has rarely been examined as a material and operational form of temporary built environment practice. This disciplinary separation has restricted recognition of cinematic environments as legitimate temporary built environments and has left practitioner-based spatial knowledge underexplored, particularly in Global South contexts such as Sri Lanka.

While production design encompasses multiple visual components including props, costumes, and graphic elements the present study focuses specifically on spatial set construction, location transformation, and environmental dressing, as these elements most directly correspond to the architectural notion of temporary built environments. By

narrowing the analytical scope to spatial environments rather than broader aesthetic elements, the paper establishes a clearer dialogue between architectural spatial theory and cinematic design practice.

Against this conceptual background, the present study aims to examine how early Sri Lankan film production design practices can be understood through the defining characteristics of temporary built environments. Sri Lankan cinema provides a particularly relevant case study, as production design frequently involves adaptive reuse of existing locations, minimal permanent intervention, and context-responsive spatial modification under economic and material constraints.

Adopting a qualitative research approach, the study combines cross-disciplinary literature analysis with structured narrative interviews conducted with four award-winning Sri Lankan production designers selected through archival credit observations and professional recognition. The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis guided by spatial dimensions identified in built-environment literature. Through this methodological framework, the paper investigates how cinematic environments may be understood as temporary built environments, thereby contributing to broader architectural discussions of temporality and adaptive spatial practice.

1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to address the identified gap between architectural discussions of temporary built environments and cinematic spatial practices, this study establishes the following objectives to guide the theoretical and empirical investigation.

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine how temporary built environments are conceptualized within architectural discourse and film production design scholarship.
- To investigate how temporary cinematic environments are constructed and operated within Sri Lankan film production practice.
- To analyze cinematic spatial practices through the dimensions of temporality, material construction, and experiential–narrative organization.
- To contribute to built environment discourse by positioning film production design as a form of temporary built environment practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section brings together the key ideas that shape the conceptual foundation of this study. It begins by outlining how temporary built environments are understood within architectural scholarship, and then turns to film production design to explore how similar spatial concerns emerge within cinematic practice. Rather than treating architecture and film as separate domains, the review places them in conversation, highlighting shared questions of temporality, material construction, perception, and event-based spatial organization. By drawing these strands together, the section establishes a comparative conceptual framework that guides the analysis of temporary spatial environments within Sri Lankan film production.

2.1 TEMPORALITY AS A SPATIAL CONDITION IN ARCHITECTURE AND FILM.

Temporality has long been examined within architectural discourse as a defining condition of certain spatial practices. Temporary built environments are understood as spatial settings intentionally created for limited durations, yet fully functional during their period of occupation (Kronenburg, 2007; Bishop & Williams, 2012). Unlike permanent structures associated with longevity and continuity, temporary environments foreground adaptability, reversibility, and planned disassembly as central design principles (Brand, 1994). Mehrotra (2014) further conceptualizes ephemeral urbanism as a cyclical spatial phenomenon shaped by processes of appearance and disappearance, positioning temporality as a productive spatial logic rather than a deficiency (Mehrotra & Vera, 2017). Similarly, Till (2009) challenges permanence as architecture's dominant value, arguing that buildings must be understood in relation to time, uncertainty, and change.

Comparable temporal conditions can be observed within film production design. Film sets and transformed locations are constructed specifically for the duration of production and are dismantled or restored upon completion. Although inherently time-bound, these environments must function operationally and visually throughout filming. Scholars exploring cinema architecture relationships note that film sets are not merely representational backgrounds but constructed spatial artefacts operating through architectural logics (Neumann, 1996; Penz & Thomas, 1997). Thus, both architectural temporary structures and cinematic environments share a foundational condition: they are spatial systems defined by duration yet required to perform coherently within that limited timeframe.

2.2 MATERIAL CONSTRUCTION AND STRUCTURAL CREDIBILITY

Architectural discussions of temporary environments emphasize material flexibility, portability, and structural sufficiency rather than monumentality (Kronenburg, 2007). Temporary structures may employ lightweight systems, modular components, and reusable materials, yet they remain materially convincing and structurally stable during use (Brand, 1994). The emphasis is not on permanence but on achieving adequate performance within defined temporal parameters.

Film production design similarly requires environments to achieve material credibility. Production designers translate narrative concepts into constructed spatial form, coordinating architecture, décor, texture, and colour to produce coherent environmental worlds (LoBrutto, 2002; Barnwell, 2020). While sets may employ temporary materials or non-load-bearing constructions, they must appear materially stable and spatially believable on screen. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) argue that *mise-en-scène* including setting functions to sustain narrative coherence and perceptual realism. Therefore, both architectural temporary structures and cinematic environments negotiate a balance between material construction and functional appearance, albeit for different purposes.

2.3 PERCEPTION, EXPERIENCE, AND EVENT-BASED SPATIAL MEANING

Temporary environments in architecture are frequently discussed in relation to event-based occupation and experiential engagement. Tschumi (1996) conceptualizes architecture as an event-oriented practice in which spatial meaning emerges through action and uses rather than permanence. Similarly, Mehrotra (2014) emphasizes the atmospheric and participatory qualities of ephemeral urbanism, where spatial value

derives from lived experience rather than longevity. Bishop and Williams (2012) further note that temporary environments such as festivals, exhibitions, and short-term urban interventions are structured around anticipated activities, deriving purpose from facilitating human interaction within defined temporal boundaries.

Cinematic environments operate through comparable spatial principles. In film production design, space is not constructed for long-term habitation but for narrative activation, where spatial environments are designed to support storytelling and guide audience perception (McLean, 2007). Sets are designed to accommodate character movement, camera positioning, and dramatic action, organizing spatial form according to story requirements (Barnwell, 2005; LoBrutto, 2002). At the same time, production design shapes the emotional and psychological dimensions of narrative space through environmental composition cinematic environments (Barnwell, 2020; Bordwell & Thompson, 2019). Film sets must generate mood, atmosphere, and symbolic meaning while remaining perceptually coherent within the frame. As Neumann (1996) observes, cinematic space operates at the intersection of architectural construction and visual experience.

In both architecture and film, therefore, temporality is not defined solely by duration but by the activation of space through event and perception. Architectural temporary structures facilitate real-world events, while cinematic environments facilitate narrative events; yet in both cases, spatial meaning arises through human engagement and temporal progression rather than static occupation. This convergence reinforces the conceptual alignment between temporary built environments and film production design as practices structured around experiential and event-based spatial organisation.

2.4 COMPARATIVE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

Temporary built environments have been extensively theorised within architectural discourse, whereas film production design literature addresses similar spatial concerns in a more dispersed manner, without explicitly framing cinematic environments through the conceptual lens of temporary built environments. By bringing these two disciplinary perspectives into dialogue, Table 01 synthesises the shared spatial conditions identified across both fields. Architectural scholarship consistently highlights temporality, material construction, and experiential or event-based spatial meaning as defining characteristics of temporary built environments. The comparative framework presented in Table 1 demonstrates that these same spatial conditions also operate within cinematic environments.

Table 1: Comparative spatial dimensions of temporary built environments in architecture and film production design.

Spatial Dimension	Architectural Temporary Built Environments	Cinematic Spatial Practice (Production Design)	Key References
Temporal Condition	Time-bound structures; planned dismantling; reversibility; cyclical transformation.	Sets constructed for limited filming duration; dismantling or	Kronenburg (2007); Bishop and Williams (2012); Neumann (1996)

Spatial Dimension	Architectural Temporary Built Environments	Cinematic Spatial Practice (Production Design)	Key References
Material Condition	Lightweight systems; modular construction; structural adequacy within limited lifespan.	restoration after production. Set fabrication; adaptive material use; structural stability for filming.	Brand (1994); Barnwell (2020); LoBrutto (2002)
Experiential–Narrative Condition	Atmosphere; experiential engagement; event-based spatial meaning; activation through human use.	Narrative credibility; mood creation; perceptual realism; spatial organisation around character movement and action.	Mehrotra (2014); Tschumi (1996); Bordwell and Thompson (2019); Wille (2015); Barnwell (2005)

This synthesis establishes a comparative conceptual foundation for the empirical investigation that follows, in which Sri Lankan cinema is examined as a focused case study to assess how the architectural principles of temporary built environments are enacted through film production design practice. By situating the analysis within Sri Lankan cinematic practices, the study illustrates how temporally bounded spatial systems function within a distinct cultural and industrial context, thereby extending architectural discussions of temporary built environments beyond conventional building typologies.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study investigates how principles associated with temporary built environments are enacted within Sri Lankan film production design practice. The research is guided by the comparative spatial framework developed in the literature review, which identified three core dimensions of temporary built environments: temporality, material construction, and experiential–narrative organisation. Rather than generating new theoretical categories inductively, the study examines how these established spatial principles are manifested within practitioner accounts of cinematic set construction. A qualitative interpretive approach was adopted to access professional knowledge embedded in production design practice and to interpret cinematic environments as temporally bounded spatial systems.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYTICAL ORIENTATION

The study adopts a qualitative interpretive research design grounded in a concept-guided analytical framework. The objective is not to measure production efficiency or evaluate technical performance, but to understand how spatial decision-making processes reflect the defining characteristics of temporary built environments. The research seeks to interpret how practitioners conceptualize duration, reversibility, material substitution, and perceptual coherence within the operational realities of filmmaking.

The empirical investigation forms part of a broader doctoral study documenting the evolution and working practices of production designers in Sri Lankan cinema. Within the scope of this paper, the research integrates cross-disciplinary theoretical perspectives derived from architectural discourse with practice-based qualitative inquiry. This

integration enables cinematic spatial environments to be examined through the lens of built-environment theory while remaining grounded in practitioners' experiential knowledge. The analytical orientation is deductive: the spatial dimensions identified in the literature review provide the interpretive structure through which interview material is examined.

3.2 PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND SAMPLING STRATEGY

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure that participants possessed substantial professional experience and long-term creative involvement in Sri Lankan cinema. Selection criteria focused on practitioners who had participated in multiple feature-length productions, received national-level professional recognition, and maintained sustained engagement in production design across different industrial phases. These criteria ensured that the selected participants had accumulated extensive experiential knowledge of spatial construction under varying economic, technological, and aesthetic conditions.

Through this process, four veteran production designers, identified in this study as Designer A, Designer B, Designer C, and Designer D, were selected as expert participants. Collectively, their careers span several decades of Sri Lankan film production, enabling reflection on both continuity and transformation in temporary spatial practice. Their experience across studio-based productions and location-based filmmaking provided a rich basis for examining how principles of temporary built environments operate across diverse production contexts.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data were collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews focusing specifically on spatial aspects of production design. Interview discussions addressed duration planning, dismantling and restoration processes, modification of existing locations, material selection and fabrication strategies, and the spatial organisation of sets in relation to narrative and technical requirements. While an interview guide ensured consistency across participants, conversations were allowed to develop narratively so that practitioners could articulate reflective accounts of their lived professional experiences.

Interviews were conducted in participant-selected environments, primarily their homes or workspaces, in order to encourage open and detailed discussion. With informed consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The transcription process preserved terminology, emphasis, and descriptive nuance relevant to spatial interpretation, ensuring that practitioner accounts could be examined accurately in relation to the conceptual framework.

3.4 ANALYTICAL STRATEGY: FRAMEWORK-GUIDED SPATIAL INTERPRETATION

The analytical strategy was deductive and framework-guided. Rather than employing open thematic coding to generate emergent categories, the analysis examined interview transcripts in relation to the three spatial dimensions established in the literature review: temporality, material construction, and experiential–narrative organization. Transcripts were read repeatedly to identify passages in which participants described time-bound construction processes, reversible interventions, material negotiation strategies, perceptual considerations, and narrative-driven spatial adjustments.

Extracted segments were interpreted as manifestations of temporary built environment principles within cinematic practice. This approach enabled practitioner knowledge to be translated into spatial categories consistent with architectural theory, while avoiding the imposition of unrelated analytical constructs. The purpose of the analysis was therefore not to produce independent themes, but to assess how established temporary built environment characteristics operate within film production design.

During the interpretive process, two additional recurrent characteristics dual functionality of space and operational flexibility emerged consistently across participant accounts. These were not treated as independent emergent themes, but as refinements that extend the comparative framework when applied to cinematic environments. Together, this framework-guided qualitative interpretation enables film production design to be examined as a structured and operational form of temporary built environment practice.

4. FINDINGS: TEMPORARY SPATIAL PRACTICES IN SRI LANKAN CINEMA.

This section interprets practitioner interviews through the three spatial dimensions identified in the architectural literature on temporary built environments: temporality, material construction, and experiential–narrative organisation. The analysis confirms that these three conditions are clearly operative within Sri Lankan film production design.

However, beyond these architecturally derived dimensions, the interviews consistently revealed one additional spatial characteristic specific to cinematic practice: the dual and operationally flexible nature of constructed space. This feature, while aligned with the conceptual framework developed from temporary built environment scholarship, emerges as a distinctive intensification within production design.

4.1 TEMPORALITY: DURATION AND REVERSIBILITY

Architectural temporary built environments are defined by limited duration, planned disassembly, and reversibility. Practitioner accounts demonstrate that cinematic environments operate under comparable temporal logic. All four designers consistently described duration as a primary planning parameter. As Designer B explained, “We first consider how long the set needs to remain. The materials depend on that timeframe”.

Unlike permanent construction, cinematic sets are calibrated precisely to filming schedules. Structural sufficiency is measured against the required period of operation rather than long-term endurance. In location-based productions, temporality is reinforced through reversibility. Existing houses are frequently modified for filming purposes, but these interventions remain temporary and must be removed without permanently altering the original environment. As Designer C explained, “When we work inside a real house, after filming the house must return exactly to how it was”.

Fixings are minimized, surface treatments are removable, and added elements are detachable. This mirrors architectural temporary installations where occupation is provisional and restoration is expected. Studio-based practice intensifies this cyclical logic. Sets are fabricated for dismantling: “The panels, windows, and doors are stored separately, but the space itself never remains the same (Designer B).”

Material elements may persist, but spatial configuration does not. In both architectural and cinematic contexts, temporality is embedded structurally rather than treated as an afterthought.

4.2 MATERIAL CONSTRUCTION: SUBSTITUTION AND STRUCTURAL SUFFICIENCY

Architectural temporary structures frequently rely on lightweight systems and modular components while maintaining functional adequacy. A parallel material strategy is evident in cinematic construction. Production designers consistently emphasized that economic limitations should not compromise perceptual credibility. As Designer A emphasized, “The audience must never perceive those limitations”.

Lightweight substrates, plywood frames, and composite materials are used to simulate masonry, concrete, or earthen walls. Surface layering plastering, texturing, ageing transforms temporary assemblies into perceptually stable architectural elements.

What distinguishes cinematic material practice is the calibrated relationship between structural adequacy and visual illusion. Sets must support performers, lighting equipment, and technical crews safely, yet they are constructed for controlled dismantling. Reuse is systematic: panels are dismantled, stored, and reassembled in new spatial configurations.

This aligns closely with architectural discussions of flexible and portable temporary systems, but cinematic practice intensifies material mobility by combining substitution, simulation, and cyclical reuse within rapid production timelines.

4.3 EXPERIENTIAL–NARRATIVE ORGANISATION: PERCEPTUAL ACTIVATION

Architectural temporary environments are frequently structured around events and experiential activation. Cinematic environments similarly derive meaning through narrative activation rather than permanence. Practitioners repeatedly emphasised the importance of perceptual authenticity within cinematic space. As Designer D noted, “If the audience feels that the space is artificial, then the illusion is broken”.

The interviews further revealed that selective spatial completion functions as a defining strategy within production design practice. As Designer A explained, “We build what the camera sees. Behind the camera, things can remain open”.

Unlike conventional architecture, cinematic space is framed and mediated through camera perception. It does not require complete architectural enclosure but must instead appear spatially convincing within the cinematic frame. Spatial organisation is therefore adjusted according to narrative and technical requirements. As Designer C stated, “Sometimes we move a wall because the scene requires it”.

Thus, experiential coherence supersedes architectural realism. Space is organised around action, framing, and emotional tone. In this sense, cinematic practice aligns with architectural event-based theories but operates through perceptual framing rather than direct physical occupation.

4.4 PRODUCTION DESIGN–SPECIFIC EXTENSION: DUAL FUNCTIONALITY AND OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

While the three spatial dimensions align closely with architectural temporary built environments, one additional condition emerged consistently from practitioner accounts: the dual and operationally flexible nature of cinematic space.

Cinematic environments operate simultaneously at two levels: (1) As representational architecture within the narrative frame, (2) As technical infrastructure for production operations. As designer A and C explained: “The space must look complete on camera, but behind the camera it is completely different.”

Walls may be partial, ceilings removable, and structural supports concealed outside the frame. A single constructed element may function both as narrative surface and as anchor for lighting or camera equipment. Furthermore, spatial flexibility is embedded in construction: “We must always think about where the camera will go (Designer D).”

Movable panels, detachable roof sections, and modular framing systems allow continuous adjustment during filming. While architectural temporary structures are designed for adaptability, cinematic environments require dynamic intra-use modification within a single production cycle.

This dual functionality and operational flexibility represent an intensification of temporary built environment logic. They are not separate from the framework but extend it within the industrial and performative conditions of filmmaking.

The deductive analysis confirms that Sri Lankan film production design operates through the three core dimensions associated with architecturally temporary built environments. At the same time, cinematic practice introduces a distinct extension: space functions simultaneously as representational architecture and as adaptive production infrastructure.

This layered and operationally flexible spatial condition distinguishes production design as a specialized form of temporary built-environment practice. Figure 01, 02 and 03 illustrates selected examples from Sri Lankan film production environments, demonstrating the key spatial conditions identified through the interview findings, including temporality, material construction, experiential–narrative organization, and operational flexibility. Together, these examples visually demonstrate how temporary cinematic environments function simultaneously as narrative spaces and active production infrastructures.

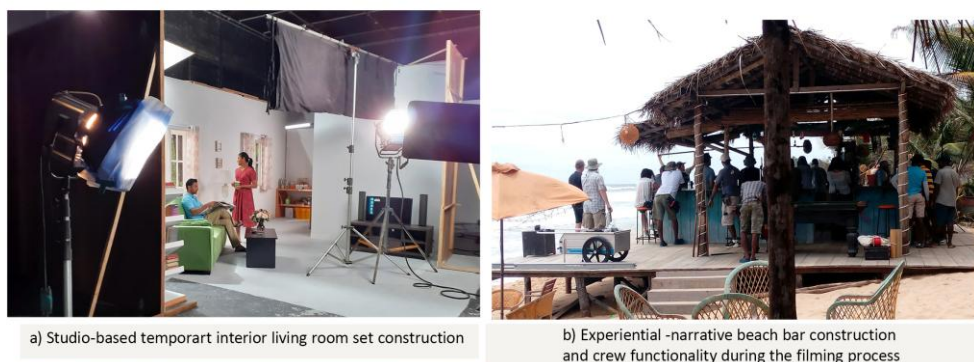


Figure 1: Examples of temporary cinematic environments in Sri Lankan film production practice
(Author's archive)



Figure 2: Examples of temporary cinematic environments in Sri Lankan film production practice (Author's archive)



Figure 3: Examples of temporary cinematic environments in Sri Lankan film production practice (Author's archive)

Table 02 subsequently presents a comparative summary of the spatial dimensions identified in the interview findings.

Table 2: Comparative summary of spatial dimensions identified in the interview findings

Spatial Dimension	Architectural Temporary Built Environments	Cinematic Spatial Practice (Production Design)
Temporality	Limited duration; planned disassembly; reversibility.	Time-bound sets; restoration of locations; cyclical studio reconfiguration
Material Construction	Lightweight systems; modularity; structural sufficiency.	Material substitution; surface simulation; reusable panels; visual credibility.
Experiential Organisation	Event-based activation; atmosphere; human occupation	Narrative activation; perceptual framing; selective completion
Production-Specific Extension	Adaptability and flexibility	Dual functionality and operational flexibility within active filming

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examined whether Sri Lankan film production design can be interpreted through the conceptual framework of temporary built environments established within architectural discourse. The findings confirm that the three defining spatial dimensions identified in the literature review, namely temporality, material construction, and experiential narrative organisation, are clearly operative within cinematic practice. Duration functions as a governing design parameter in set planning. Reversibility and dismantling are embedded in both location transformation and studio fabrication. Material strategies prioritise structural sufficiency and perceptual credibility within defined timeframes. Cinematic environments therefore operate as temporally bounded yet fully functional spatial systems rather than improvised constructions.

The analysis also demonstrates that film production design intensifies these architectural principles under the industrial conditions of filmmaking. Structural adequacy is calibrated not for long term occupation but for concentrated operational use. Material substitution and surface simulation reveal a distinction between material permanence and perceptual permanence, showing how architectural credibility can be achieved through calibrated sufficiency rather than mass or longevity. Spatial organisation is activated through narrative framing, where selective completion and camera mediation replace full architectural enclosure. In this sense, cinematic environments align closely with event based temporary environments in architecture while operating through mediated perception rather than direct physical occupation.

Beyond the three dimensions derived from architectural theory, one additional characteristic emerged consistently from practitioner accounts: dual functionality combined with operational flexibility. Cinematic environments operate simultaneously as representational architecture within the frame and as technical infrastructure for production. Concealed structural systems accommodate lighting, camera movement, and crew circulation, while visible surfaces sustain narrative coherence. Spatial assemblies are designed to permit adjustment during filming, not only dismantling after use. This layered and responsive condition extends architectural discussions of adaptability by demonstrating how temporary spatial systems can remain structurally coherent while undergoing continuous modification during occupation.

By situating Sri Lankan cinema within the broader discourse on temporary built environments, this study broadens the conceptual scope of temporary built environments beyond conventional architectural typologies such as pavilions, exhibitions, and installations. Film production design demonstrates that temporally bounded spatial systems can be materially efficient, structurally reliable, experientially activated, and operationally flexible within constrained economic and industrial contexts. Recognizing cinematic production design as a legitimate form of temporary built environment practice contributes to a more expansive understanding of how time-based spatial infrastructures function across disciplines.

Future research may extend this investigation through detailed case studies of specific Sri Lankan films, production designers, or studio practices in order to examine how temporary spatial environments vary across historical periods, genres, and production conditions. Comparative studies between studio-built sets and transformed real locations may further contribute to understanding adaptive spatial practices within Sri Lankan

cinema. Such investigations would also support the documentation of practitioner-based spatial knowledge within local film production culture.

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