THE AESTHETICS OF ARCHITECTURE
BEYOND FORM

Edited by Miško Šuvaković and Vladimir Mako

International Yearbook of Aesthetics
Volume 20 • 2020

International Association for Aesthetics
Association Internationale d’Esthétique
Acknowledgements: The Publication Committee of the International Association for Aesthetics.

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Editors: Miško Šuvaković and Vladimir Mako

Published by the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Architecture, International Association for Aesthetics, The Society for Aesthetics of Architecture and Visual Arts of Serbia

Number of copies: 100

Printed by JP Službeni glasnik, Belgrade

ISSN: 1402-2842

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The traditional aesthetics, philosophy, and theory of architecture begin by asking and searching for an answer to the fundamental question of What is architecture? in conceptual, formal-morphological, phenomenonal, productive, functional, and user-based terms. Formal-morphological issues or issues relating to the theory of form are considered important starting points for understanding architectural practice, the work and reception of architecture.

The contemporary aesthetics, philosophy, and theory of architecture transcend the theory of form and move into the domain of analysing and discussing architectural apparatuses, discourses, and models of cultural identification in diachronic and synchronic terms.

The aesthetics of architecture is opening up to the potentialities of contemporary interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies of historical and current architecture, in other words, to studies in the natural, formal, and technical sciences; to studies in anthropology, religion, and esoteric studies; to studies of culture in terms of identification and geopolitics; to studies in epistemology, i.e. the visibility of architectural knowledge and, above all, to complex individual and collective distributions of sensibility and sensitivity in relation to a building, a city, natural and urban ecosystems, and architectural imagination.
Architecture as the strategic apparatus of a building and urbanism as the strategic dispositive of a city transform the spatial (geographical) and temporal (historical) condition into a world of forms of life, in which we are processed ourselves as human individuals and human communities in our spatio-visual phenomenality at a given time. Unequivocally, we are calling for interpreting human subjectification as it occurs in architecture.

That is why architecture may be identified as a human activity – an activity that links work, production, doing with complex geographical and historical processings of forms of life in their sheer singularity and potential generality by transcending the singularity of form.
THE ETHICAL AND EXISTENTIAL MEANING OF BEAUTY

Juhani Pallasmaa

Abstract

Beauty and ethics have not been fashionable topics in the modern era, as artistic quality has been primarily seen in terms of formal novelty and uniqueness. In our consumerist culture, aesthetic aspirations have turned into aestheticisation, a deliberate manipulation of appearances. The current perspective of the approaching ecological, political and moral catastrophes calls for the re-integration of the aesthetic and ethical intentions and qualities. Aesthetic aspirations are related with the world of arts, architecture, design and fashion, but beauty and elegance of thought are essential criteria also in mathematics and sciences as well social judgement. Beauty is not an added surface value on top of the essence of things, as it expresses the wholeness, coherence and integrity of a thing or phenomenon. Beauty is a complete judgement in the same way that we intuitively and emotively grasp the character of complex environmental, architectural and atmospheric situations. Art is seen as subjective expressions, but meaningful art works express the world and its human existential meanings. Aesthetic judgement has been regarded as a solely human reality, but it also exists in the biological world. Appearances are the criteria in mate selection, and numerous animals even construct structures for the sole purpose of attracting a mate. "The purpose of evolution, believe it or not, is beauty”, Joseph Brodsky claims with the assurance of a great poet.

Key Words: Beauty, aesthetics, existential meaning, integrity, ethics, experience.
"Art is not only a selective sampling of the world; art implies transforming the world, an endless modification towards the good."¹

Rainer Maria Rilke

**Beauty and Aestheticisation**

Beauty and ethics, as well as their relationships are, no doubt, unfashionable subjects in today’s artistic and architectural discourse. In the era that reveres appealing images and formal inventions, the ethical perspective has been pushed aside, and the ethical dimension has rarely entered recent writings on art and architecture. Artistic quality is seen as a subjective and unique expression, and instead of suggesting an ethical resonance, it is expected to exhibit unforeseen imagery. In fact, beauty has been a problematic concept in the arts for more than a century, and artists have questioned or neglected the entire notion. Finally, in our obsessive consumerist culture, beauty has turned into a deliberate aesthetic manipulation and seduction; everything from products to environments, personality to behaviour, and politics to war, is now manipulatively aestheticised. This implies a distinct calculated manipulation and loss of sincerity. Besides, today’s celebrated formalist and rhetorically dramatized architecture hardly aspires for beauty and serenity, as experiences of the unforeseen, stunning and the unheimlich, or of outright imbalance and threat, are frequently more apparent in its imagery. The requirement for beauty has been replaced by the obsession with newness. Paradoxically, however, even newness turns into repetitiousness. ”As the new is searched only because of its newness, everything becomes identical, because it has no other properties but its newness”, the Norwegian philosopher Lars Svendsen (1970-) points out.²


True beauty is always connected with timelessness as it turns our consciousness to permanence and eternity. "The language of beauty is essentially the language of timeless reality", philosopher Karsten Harries (1937-) claims. What is the meaning of this distancing of art and architecture from beauty, ethics and life? In his book *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture and Literature* (1925), José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) suggests that the subject matter of art has gradually shifted from "things" to "sensations" and, finally, to "ideas". In Ortega’s view, this development has gradually weakened the human content in art.

Regardless of whether one agrees with this analysis or not, it opens a thoughtprovoking view into the transformation of the essence of art. This is a shift from the concrete and sensory representations to the fabricated and cognitive expressions. Art has turned autonomous and self-conscious of itself, its means and ends. At the same time, it has moved towards the realms of conceptuality and science. In this development, the role of beauty has changed accordingly, and it is difficult to relate sensory representation and phenomenal experience of beauty with the cerebral and instrumentalised ideas in today’s artistic expressions. Not surprisingly, these fundamental changes in artistic thinking and focus also apply in architecture.

**The Ethics of Limits**

Sublime beauty was the highest aspiration of art until the end of the nineteenth century, but the quasi-rational and materialist culture of today regards art as a cultural deviation, entertainment and investment. However, an interest in the connections of ethics and aesthetics, truth and beauty, seems to be re-emerging again.

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The haunting environmental and ecological problems and the consequences of uncritical technological development, such as digitalization, artificial intelligence and genetic manipulation, are also awakening wider ethical concerns. At the same time, the attention is shifting from the forced and noisy, but mentally empty architecture of abundance to the ways of building that are emerging in the developing world. This architecture is bound to be based on real needs, scarcities and necessities. In these ways of building, architectural form still arises from the materials and ways of constructing, not from detached aestheticised elaboration and meaningless compositional complexities. While the existential meaning is disappearing from the constructions of the world of surreal wealth, the severely restricted constructions in the realities of need still mediate existential and ethical values. This architecture of limits expresses the beauty of necessity as opposed to the limitless aesthetics and swiftly changing fashions of abundance. Leonardo da Vinci’s wise advice on the meaning of limits, “Strength is born from constraints and it dies in freedom”, has regrettably been forgotten.\(^5\)

The perspective of approaching ecological, political and moral catastrophes definitely calls for a re-integration of the aesthetic and ethical sensibilities. At the same time, our focus needs to be shifted from the subjective, exclusive and exceptional back to the universal and existential concerns. *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (1997)\(^6\) of Karsten Harries, as well as several other significant philosophical books of the past few years, such as Elaine Scarry’s (1946-) *On Beauty and Being Just*,\(^7\) and Martha Nussbaum’s (1947-) *Poetic Justice*\(^8\) also exemplify these concerns.

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Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996), the Nobel Laureate poet, wrote frequently about the interactions of these two mental dimensions and even gave the aesthetic perception primacy: "Man is first an aesthetic creature before he is an ethical one." He considers our aesthetic instinct as the origin of ethics: "Every new aesthetic reality makes man's ethical reality more exact, because aesthetics is the mother of ethics". But for the poet, aesthetics means something more universal and autonomous than today’s commercialized beauty, serving the purposes of desire, convention, consumption and forced change.

**Beauty in Science**

Beauty, reason and truth are usually seen as exclusive properties and notions, but they can well share the same mental and emotive grounding. Beauty and reason seem to be equally valid approaches and criteria of judgement in both science and art. Erich Fromm (1900-1980), philosopher and social psychiatrist, provides a striking expression of the fusion of beauty and truth: "Beauty is not the opposite of the ugly, but of the false." This view directly points at the interconnection of the aesthetic and ethic criterias. Aesthetic aspirations are primarily related with the world of the arts, architecture, design and fashion, but beauty and elegance of thought are essential criteria also in mathematics, physics and other sciences. Beauty represents comprehensive and synthetic qualities and integrities, which cannot be formalized and expressed through any other means. The experience of convincing and disarming beauty is a proof of the correctness, coherence and inner harmony of the phenomenon. The pure beauty of a Piero della Francesca or Johannes Vermeer painting is likely to be beyond analyses and explanations, as it penetrates every cell of the viewer.

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11 Erich Fromm, original source unidentified.
The theoretical physicist Paul A.M. Dirac (1902-84) argued that the theories of physics, which project beauty, are probably also the correct ones. Physicist Hermann Weyl (1885-1955), who completed the quantum and probability theories, made an even more outspoken confession: ”My work has always attempted to combine truth with beauty, but when I have been obliged to choose one of the two, I have chosen the beautiful.” Today, mathematicians sometimes use the notion ”dirty proof” (in the sense of ”ugly”) of a mathematical proof, which has been attained through immense computing power, beyond the capabilities of human perception and intellectual grasp.

The Holistic Essence of Beauty

It is evident that beauty is not an added surface value on top of the essence of things, as it expresses the coherence, wholeness, integrity and completeness of a thing or phenomenon. Our current culture prioritizes power, intelligence, reason and quantification, although emotive reactions and intuitions are often our most synthetic modes of understanding, and beauty implies the experience of a complex entity as an integrated singularity. Altogether, we tend to regard perceptions, skills and understanding as processes that advance from details and parts towards entities. This simplistic idea of the dynamics of understanding is regrettably also the prevailing method in education. However, neuroscience has established that we grasp entities first and these experienced entities give meaning to the parts.

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13 ”In meinen Arbeit habe ich immer versucht, das Wahre mit den Schönen zu vereinen; wenn ich über das Eine oder das Andere entscheiden musste, habe ich stets das Schöne gewählt”. The quotation appears above the bust of the Hermann Weyl in the Herman Weyl Zimmer at the ETH in Zürich.

14 The notion was used by several of the mathematician presenters at the *Simplicity in Arts and Mathematics: Ideals of Practice in Mathematics & the Arts*, City University of New York, Graduate Center, 3 – 5 April, 2013.
This realization shakes the accepted pedagogical elementarist foundations in a fundamental manner. Students of art and design, for instance, should first be made to encounter real and complete works of art emotionally, and only later given detailed intellectual analyses of the artistic phenomena. The individual sensory experience of the work has to precede its conceptual analyses and cognitive understanding. "According to the right hemisphere, understanding is derived from the whole, since it is only in the light of the whole that one can truly understand the nature of the parts", Iain McGilchrist (1953-), therapist and philosopher, argues.\(^{15}\)

Beauty is a complete judgement of a thing in the same way that we grasp the characteristics of places and vast environmental situations through our unfocused atmospheric sense. As I enter a space the space enters me. "I enter a building, see a room, and – in the fraction of a second – have this feeling about it”, Peter Zumthor confesses.\(^{16}\) Beauty is an immaterial experiential quality, which suggests a distinct "thingness"- the sensuous and mental thingness of beauty. As the light artist James Turrell has argued, also light can project a "thingness" in our experience.\(^{17}\) Beauty, like atmosphere, is a complex experiential quality, which is encountered and grasped in a synthetic, embodied, multisensory and emotional manner, rather than understood through intellectual reading. As we experience beauty, it does not remain outside of us, but becomes part of our very being.

Phenomena and creatures of nature are beautiful, because as products of timeless evolution, they are complete, integrated and self-sufficient entities. Altogether, we should finally acknowledge that emotions and experiences of beauty are a domain of "existential intelligence",


implying a comprehensive judgement of the perceived phenomenon. Mark Johnson (1949-), philosopher, makes the significant remark: "There is no cognition without emotion, even though we are often unaware of the emotional aspect of our thinking."\textsuperscript{18} In his view, emotions are the source of primordial meaning: "Emotions are not second-rate cognitions; rather they are affective patterns of our encounter with our world, by which we take the meaning of things at a primordial level."\textsuperscript{19} Emotions unify ethical and aesthetic qualities and give them their lived existential meanings. "It is only with the heart that one can see right. What is essential is invisible to the eye, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944) asserts.\textsuperscript{20}

**Intelligence and Experience**

In his book *Intelligence Reframed* psychologist Howard Gardner (1943-) identifies ten categories of intelligence beyond the characteristics measured by the standard IQ test: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, inter-personal and intra-personal, naturalistic, ethical and spiritual intelligence.\textsuperscript{21} Based on my personal experiences and intuitions, I wish to add four further categories - aesthetic, emotional, atmospheric, and existential - intelligences to this already thought-provoking list of the psychologist. It is evident that even in the creative fields and their education, the complexities of human intelligence, embodied and emotional capacities, and the essences of the phenomena of beauty and ethical judgement are hardly understood, not to speak of the complex and unconscious nature of creative processes.


\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 18.

\textsuperscript{20} Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, Chapter 21 (Reynal & Hitchcock (US), Gallimard (France), 1943).

The poetic and artistic reality of a work of art is not in the material and physical object, but in its internalization through individual experience; beauty has to be experienced and felt. This is the seminal view of John Dewey’s (1859-1952) book Art as Experience of 1934: "In common conception, the work of art is often indentified with the building, book, painting, or statue in its existence apart from human experience. Since the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience, the result is not favourable to understanding [...] When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that renders almost opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals.”

Art articulates and expresses the world of lived experiences, and it mediates the human mental essence of these very encounters. A true artist is not depicting an isolated detail or aspect of the world. Every real artistic work is a microcosm, a complete world of its own, or in the words of Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-86), the film director, "a whole world as reflected in a drop of water.” Every true work of art projects an entire world.

Art and the World

I wish to argue firmly that art is not merely aestheticization, as it is a form of genuine thinking about the world and our being in that very world, through embodied and poeticized images and means characteristic to the art form in question. "How would the poet or the painter express anything other than his encounter with the world”, Maurice Merleau-Ponty asks pointing out the existential focus of art.

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How could the architect express anything else, we need to ask accordingly. Significantly, like Dewey, the philosopher does not regard the material or performed work itself as the objective of art. "We come to see not the work of art, but the world according to the work", he states.\(^{25}\)

This view turns art into a mediating act; it tells primarily of something else than of itself; the meaning of art is always behind and beyond the work itself. This position also rejects the common idea of art as the artist’s self-expression. Indeed, art is a relational medium, which tells us about the essences of the lived world, or perhaps more precisely, about being a human in this world. Balthus (Balthazar Klossowsky de Rola, 1908-2001), one of the finest realist painters of last century, points out the significance of the world as the artist’s true subject: "If a work only expresses the person who created it, it wasn’t worth doing [...] Expressing the world, understanding it, that is what seems interesting to me."\(^{26}\) In another context the painter articulates his position further: "Great painting has to have universal meaning. This is no longer so today and that is why I want to give painting back its lost universality and anonymity, because the more anonymous a painting is, the more real it is."\(^{27}\) This is a thoughtprovoking argument against the understanding of art as self-expression or aestheticisation.

**Art and its Past**

Here again the ethical perspective enters the domain of art and architecture. Like all art, the art of building is simultaneously about the lived world and the layered histories and meanings of the art form


itself. All arts carry their timeless traditions along their route towards the future. Meaningful works are conversations across time, and truly radical works open up new ways of reading and experiencing works of history. Just think of how Picasso, for instance, has opened our eyes to see the 25,000 years old cave paintings.

All great artists reveal the existential essence of art. As a consequence of this multiple perspective, also architecture needs to have a double focus; the lived world and the mythical traditions of constructing. The highly refined technologies of today tend to weaken the deep unconscious meanings and hidden mythical contents of building, which are echoed in all great architectural works. All meaningful works are timeless and they are always simultaneously about the past, present and future.

A Biological Perspective

The aesthetic reality has also been extended to biological phenomena. It is well known that certain selective criteria, that could be regarded as aesthetic choices, such as symmetry and signs of health and strength, are essential factors in mate selection among animals. Certain ”aesthetic” gestures, rituals and deliberate constructions are also used to attract a mate, such as the silk balloon of the Balloon fly (Hilara sartor), the huge staged and decorated nests of the bowerbirds (Ptilonorhynchidae), and the co-ordinated group singing and dancing by male Blue manakins (Chiroxipia caudata).

A recent book The Evolution of Beauty by Richard O. Prum (1961-) re-introduces Charles Darwin’s second book on evolution entitled The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex published in

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1871 \(^{30}\), published 13 years after his celebrated *On the Origin of Species*.\(^{31}\) Darwin published his second book after becoming convinced that the selective principles in his first theory could not explain all the variations among animal species, including the proverbial case of the peacock’s tail. In the Victorian era, a book that suggested autonomous aesthetic choice for sexual purposes, practiced by the female sex, could not even be discussed. However, scientists have recently shown through mathematical modelling that, indeed, the two theories of Darwin combined fully explain all the variety among animal species, including the peacock’s tail. Surprisingly, an individual aesthetic judgement is a principle of choice also in the animal world.

The notion of *Biophilia*, ”the science and ethics of life,” introduced and articulated by the biologist Edward O. Wilson (1929-), expands the human ethical responsibility beyond the realm of human interaction all the way to our duty in maintaining bio-diversity.\(^{32}\) Semir Zeki, a pioneering neurobiologist also connects aesthetics with biological evolution, as he suggests the feasibility of ”a theory of aesthetics that is biologically based” in his book *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain*\(^{33}\). With the intuition and courage of a poet, Joseph Brodsky supports the scientist’s view:

”The purpose of evolution, believe it or not, is beauty, which survives it all and generates truth simply by being a fusion of the mental and the sensual.”\(^{34}\)


Beauty, empathy and integrity

We have an amazing unconscious capacity to identify ourselves with other living creatures and even with objects and phenomena of our perceptions, such as human and spatial situations, and to project ourselves and emotions onto them. "Be like me", is the imperative of the poem in Joseph Brodsky’s view.35 Somewhat unexpectedly, empathy is a capacity that also animals posses, as Frans de Waal’s book The Age of Empathy argues.36

The recent research on the chemical communication and collaboration of plants and trees extends the realm of purposeful communication far beyond our own mental worlds.37 We even simulate the individual characters of great novels and momentarily share their fates, lives, life situations and emotions. Experiencing a work of art is an exchange, the work lends us its authority and magic, and we lend the work our emotions. Neuroscience has associated this act of unconscious mirroring and exchange with our "mirror neurons".38 The great ethical value and human equality of art is that we are able to experience our own emotions mirrored by the most profound and sensitive minds in human history. We do not only reflect the thoughts, feelings and experiences of the living, as our empathic imagination can also bring the dead back to life. We can sense through the skin, muscles and emotions of Michelangelo, see through the eyes of Piero della Francesca, hear through the ears of Johann Sebastian Bach, and feel through the heart of Rainer Maria Rilke. As the master poet suggests in the motto of my essay, art and beauty are not only adjectives, they constitute the very core of humane and dignified life.

38 Mirror-neurons were discovered by the research group of Giacomo Rizzolatti and Vittorio Gallese in the University of Parma about 30 years ago.
Beauty is a synthetic and integrated character and quality of a phenomenon, akin to the human ethical quality of integrity. The notion of integrity also refers to the singularity, inner coherence and autonomy of a thing, behaviour or phenomenon. In 1954, at the age of 85, Frank Lloyd Wright formulated the mental task of architecture followingly: ”What is needed most in architecture today is the very thing that is most needed in life – integrity. Just as it is in a human being, so integrity is the deepest quality in a building […] If we succeed, we will have done a great service to our moral nature - the psyche - of our democratic society […] Stand up for integrity in your building and you stand for integrity not only in the life of those who did the buildings but socially a reciprocal relationship in inevitable.”

BEAUTIFUL, DESTRUCTIVE ACTS
ARCHITECTURE, AESTHETICS AND THE
ANTHROPOCENE

Hans Ibelings

Abstract

Architecture, and by default architectural history, are more focussed on successes than on failure, which is a reflection of the discipline’s self image which emphasizes that it offers solutions and improvements. Even if every act of building is potentially a betterment on the scale of a project, it inevitably leads to a deterioration on a planetary scale. In the light of global warming and environmental decline, architects and architectural historians are obliged to acknowledge that despite the noble intention to make the world better, architecture has negative impacts as well.

Key Words: Architecture, global warming, historiography, Anthropocene, nature, environmentalism.

In 1974, during the conference Towards a quality of life, held in Persepolis, the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy stated that “A city is not the stone and bricks of which its buildings are made. It is a million of acts that go into its making and the millions of acts that go on within it at every moment.” The Heideggerian understanding of the essence of architecture not as a building but as the act of building, and not as a

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dwelling but the act of dwelling, is becoming increasingly relevant again, in the context of the emerging Anthropocene discourse. During the last 250 years — essentially since the Industrial Revolution — human activity has increasingly become a geological force, and given its scale and impact, building, and the zillions of acts that “go into it”, and “on within it,” is a determining aspect of the Anthropocene.

Even if everyone involved has an ethical obligation to consider the consequences of all acts of building, it would be misplaced for architectural historians to lecture architects when they themselves, and me as well, struggle to acknowledge the environmentally dark side of all those beautiful, original, innovative pieces of architecture which usually inhabit our histories of architecture.

Great/beautiful

General histories are rife with atrocities and disasters, but histories of architecture are basically all happy stories of success. Yet, as Timothy Brittain-Catlin has convincingly argued in his exceptional *Bleak Houses: Disappointment and Failure in Architecture*, most architects, and most architecture are failures, or at least not the success designers had hoped for.² Such failures rarely make it into books. If, as the saying goes, history is written by the victors, architectural histories are not only written by the victors, they do not talk about anything but themselves. Constructed from a winner’s vantage point, they simply neglect the vanquished. There is perhaps no better example than Walter Curt Behrendt’s *Der Sieg des neuen Baustils* (1927), which already in its title bears witness of the author’s intentions.³ In the book there is no trace of any of architecture that got the worst of it, only the victorious results of modernism.

In addition to strictly limiting itself to winners, architectural histories tend to see only beauty. Histories of architecture are in essence histories of beautiful architecture, in line with Leo Tolstoy’s observation in the Kreutzer Sonata, written in the same year as the Eiffel Tower was completed: “It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness. A handsome woman talks nonsense, you listen and hear not nonsense but cleverness. She says and does horrid things, and you see only charm. And if a handsome woman does not say stupid or horrid things, you at once persuade yourself that she is wonderfully clever and moral.”

Architectural historians have a similar bias. There is hardly a project in any architectural history book which is not aesthetically pleasing, or at least deemed beautiful, and if there are flaws of any kind — constructive, material, functional — these are casually glossed over, and until very recently, almost completely neglecting the environmental impact beyond how it affects its context visually. The Eiffel Tower is an interesting case in point when it comes to its alleged beauty. The project was famously criticized in 1887 in an open letter, published less than three weeks after construction had started, for the anticipated negative effect on the beauty of cityscape of Paris. The letter was signed by a large group of artists and writers, most of whom have been forgotten — although the list of signers also included some famous writers, and one well-known architect, Charles Garnier, of Opera fame. They deemed “the tower of Monsieur Eiffel” “inutile et monstrueuse.”

The Olympian status of the Eiffel Tower today is not only proof of how aesthetic judgments have evolved in more than 125 years, but can perhaps also be attributed to a secondary mechanism, which is the inverse of Tolstoy’s words: the greatness of the Eiffel Tower as a piece of engineering has amplified the belief that it is sublimely beautiful as well.

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4 Leo Tolstoy, The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 100.
5 “Protestation contre la tour de M. Eiffel” Le Temps (14 February, 1887).
With 7300 metric tons of iron and 60 tons of paint (and counting), the Eiffel Tower is surprisingly light, and it took no more than a fraction the annual pig iron production in Europe at the end of the 19th century to built it. This is perhaps more telling of the scale of the iron and steel industry in the late 19th century, than evidence of the environmentally friendly character of a building like the Eiffel Tower.

The Eiffel Tower at night during the Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1889
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C
Source: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ds.12392

The Eiffel Tower is one of only a few buildings of which the weight has been established adequately. This quantitative aspect of buildings usually gets little attention even if it is one vital aspect to grasp architecture’s environmental impact, which has escalated over the last two centuries, at least in part because the size of the world population

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6 Numbers based on the information provided by the official website of the Eiffel Tower, https://www.toureiffel.paris/fr/le-monument.
is now eight times larger than it was at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. But in addition, particularly in the last 75 years consumption per person has increased significantly. Measured in weight, every individual on Earth now consumes on average more than ten ton of material per year. Which is almost double of the average consumption at the beginning of the Great Acceleration, after the Second World War. Roughly 30 percent of these 10,000 kilograms is biomass, mostly food and timber, 20 percent is fossil fuels, and a staggering 40 percent comprises construction materials. The remaining ten percent consists of metals and minerals, part of which ends up in buildings as well, just as a share of the timber.\(^7\)

In conventional architectural histories buildings like the Eiffel Tower are hailed as symbols of industrial progress, following a narrative in which innovations in architecture are primarily technological innovations. In this discourse the Industrial Revolution is an indispensable factor for the development of modern architecture because the provision of new materials, such as iron, steel, glass, concrete, and later plastic, and the development of new methods of production enabled new forms of architecture. Yet, since all building materials account for almost half of all consumption, this alleged architectural progress is commensurate with an undeniable environmental decline.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution humanity’s negative impact on the Earth has manifested itself in the pollution of air, water and land, the depletion of resources, deforestation and land erosion, and the extinction or existential endangerment of millions of species of plants and animals. Even if it seems that the realization of the urgency to stop, or at least slow this deterioration is still fairly new, these negative effects already were already clear in the nineteenth century, at least to sharp and prescient observers like John Ruskin, who fretted over the “Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century” (1884), or George

Perkins Marsh, who even twenty years earlier published *Man and Nature: Or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, a lucid account of how humans were irreversibly changing the environment.  

Marsh is completely absent from histories of modern architecture, and Ruskin is rarely more than a footnote, usually dismissed as a reactionary eccentric, because he considered industry not the source of progress. Neither Marsh nor Ruskin fit in the profession’s trailblazing optimism, even if some critics and historians, like Lewis Mumford (a friend of Behrendt) and Sigfried Giedion, have resisted to categorically embrace the idea that new is always better. Irrespectively, architectural histories, theirs included, often remain in essence stories of the succession and success of innovations and improvements.

This template not only applies to modernist histories, but also to the more recent, and more skeptical postmodern revisions, which often consists of a variant of this same reasoning, namely that postmodernism was superior to the preceding modernism. Similarly, if mentioned at all, today’s sustainable architecture is commonly presented as better than yesteryear’s less energy-efficient, and more pollutive and wasteful practices.

It should be possible however to step out of this treadmill and to develop an alternative take, of a global warming history of architecture, in which sustainable architecture is not the latest chapter in a ‘better and more beautiful than before’ narrative, but the current segment of a still largely untold story of two intertwined narratives of both architectural advancement and environmental deterioration, from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution until now. Such a novel history requires a reset, to not see progress and decline as mutually exclusive opposites but rather as two sides of the same coin.

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It would open the possibility to see that the conventional highlights of architecture are great artistic achievements but simultaneously bad for the planet, and conversely that some architecture which is less spectacular or beautiful deserves more attention because it is more mindful about its environmental impact. This would allow for the inclusion in architectural histories of projects which until now have been marginalized, or neglected, because they do not fit ‘the better than before’ story, focusses on a narrow definition of progress.

To even begin to tackle the intellectual dilemmas and problems of such a global warming history, it is not only necessary to accept that architectural histories have been hampered by the discipline’s aesthetic biases (among many others), but also to confront the comparable bias which has been at the very basis of environmentalism, namely that nature and the natural are inherently good, and consequently beautiful.

To position each and every human violation of nature’s pure, untouched pristine state, categorically on the ‘bad’ side and the allegedly unspoiled nature on the ‘good’ side, is certainly too simple, and too romantic as well. There is a striking analogy here between the Leon Battista Alberti’s definition of beauty of an artwork, which is still often referenced in architectural circles, and the common perception of nature’s beauty. According to Alberti beauty is achieved when nothing can be added, subtracted or changed without impairing the harmony of the whole. Implicitly, this is still a firmly held position in environmental circles. Yet to consider nature beautiful is in many respects an acquired taste, or a convention.

As Yuriko Saito has laid out in “Machines in the Ocean: The Aesthetics of Wind Farms,” there is an ethical obligation to reconcile this acquired aesthetic appreciation of unspoilt nature as being beautiful with an ethic validation of interventions which have a meaningful environmental significance. For this an ‘ecological literacy’ is required, to establish the inverse of the Tolstoyan connection between beauty and goodness and recognize the beauty of, in this case, wind farms through
their value as a sustainable, green technology.\(^9\)

In her text Saito seems to pragmatically accept that the everyday understanding of the environment is driven by the binary of the natural and the human-made. But as Steven Vogel has argued in *Thinking Like a Mall: Environmental Philosophy after the End of Nature* it is possible to see the environment differently, and not as limited to what is usually described as the natural world. Vogel’s view is that there is no ontological difference between natural ‘things’ and human-made things: “There’s one world, not two: the real one, in which humans, their natural artifacts, and their artifactual nature all exist together.”\(^10\)

This viewpoint reflects an intriguing anthropogenic reality, with a human-centric implication that whatever remains of the natural ‘things’ is a deliberate result of whatever humankind has decided to leave untouched. But even the parts of the planet which are not touched by human hands are directly affected by, for instance, air pollution or microplastics which are ubiquitous in the environment.

Therefore, according to Vogel, “…all building, and therefore all artifacts, inevitably escape our intentions, as there is always more to the building than was intended by the builder or than the builder can grasp. Global climate change, to choose the most obvious and currently most important example, is something we have built…”\(^11\) Vogel concludes that neither nature nor the human-made things are as humans would wish they were: “as a society we shape the world, but not in a way we have, as a society, chosen.”\(^12\)

This is, obviously, a more profound and consequential variation of Winston Churchill’s quote that “we shape our buildings and afterwards

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\(^11\) Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall*, 199-200.

\(^12\) Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall*, 203.
our buildings shape us.”¹³ By shaping our buildings they are not only shaping us, but we are also transforming the planet, and hence the planet transforms us. Architecture is the result of an act which is both creative and destructive, a tool to make the world a better place and simultaneously detrimental to the planet’s future. To use the notion of economist Joseph Schumpeter, in addition to what is gained in architecture’s ongoing process of creative destruction in a cultural sense, it is necessary to take stock of the losses caused by architecture’s destructive creativity.

DOME BEYOND ITS LIMITS OR HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE

Jelena Mitrović and Vladimir Milenković

Abstract

Unlike other archetypal figures, a dome (gr.: Θόλος / thólos) could never be understood as an object. This does not mean that in this specific case the relevant understanding of architecture has reached its limits. This is an absolute form, a typological category creating the shape par excellence. Symbolically, it describes and establishes the limit of the relevant world, the celestial sphere, outside of which the shapeless abundance of space appears in the blue depth. Thus, the impression of the dome as a symbolic form is no longer associated with the matter – delusion arising from the habits of everyday language.

1This text is a part of tripartite study on the dome – architectural term associated with spherical geometry and sublimity as ontological feature of the form that corresponds methodological instance of absolute space. Morphological capacity of the dome is exposed in its etymology, which transposes the architecture of the sky, taking this shape as part of the whole and the whole within. The first of three parts, The Architecture of Dome: Mapping the W/Hole, explores the architectural capacity for geometric materialization of the sky in the age of virtual decomposition of shape into function of endless exposure to the unknown. The second text, Architectural Sublime: Dome Above Dome includes symbolic processing of the sublime architectural place, which equally to geometric distribution of the dome and linear character of its path determines the universal character of things. The central position of the third part, Dome Beyond Its Limits or How Deep Is Your Love, is given to the sensibility of the shapes questioned from the perspective of archetype, and its radiance becomes the expression of inability to round things up. Instead of beauty and the universal law of proportion, the first becomes the place of eccentricity and tension of personal spatial feeling. Therefore, today, instead of concave feeling for the space above, where historically speaking the dome is its geometric paragon, the position outside of the borders of the projection of the dome is marked by distancing in space and time expressed in increasing numbers.
We have been forced to request, whenever we hear the word shape that it needs to be the shape of something, thus, the that material substrate requires to be exported into something. In case of the dome, which in both Greek and Latin languages signifies sky or hemisphere, celestial sphere, the possibility of the impression arising from the image of the object is lost, casting the doubt that we think of the shape, and not of its building material. The form as the limit of the highest rank brings us back to the repetitive observation of the distance where the idea of spatial depth is dematerialized. Outside of the range of the dome, on the other side of the border sometimes overstepped by architecture, there is the space that tries to escape from spherical geometry, offering chaos or endless transparency of the blue. Architecture achieves synthesis with all other forms once it is in antithesis with itself. It is confronts its main quality, reason, until security and geometric frozenness of the space start pealing, and the construction starts to show emotions and restlessness of the entire culture. Symbolically, the dome represents geometric border which melts with layers of color and light, and with occurrence of newly awaken love towards nature and structure of a period conscious of its own decline. The issue of lack of object is raised as the proposal of a new understanding of architecture, which cannot be separated from the subject, selecting the cases from the history of architecture where the space ceases to be a rational measure, transcending to the feeling that radiates arched surfaces. It is interesting how in its enigmatic immanence, the character of these compositions has remained permanently contemporary.

I Introduction to Beyond

In the context of the architecture oriented towards infinity, the Pyramid at the Grand Louvre in Paris, designed by I.M. Pei, 1983, represents the paradigmatic expression of unlimited opening of culture, as well as

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2 Θόλος / (thólos) m (plural θόλοι): (architecture) dome, vault; (astronomy) vault, sky; (anatomy) body cavity. (lat.): tholus, hemisphaerium, convexum; above the dome: ecce in firmamento.
an expression of internal aggregation - the symbol of integration and convergence. As per historical rule of repetition, the arts of the world are united in a common house, where the roof or the overhead sky, resembling the immense universe, can no longer be embraced. The simplest and perfect picture of synthesis such as the pyramid, designed to simultaneously represent both the structure and the sign - the shape and the moment of its decomposition, in the night sky against the dark arch, becomes the very shape of the light. It is not just a reflection of Egyptian eternal monuments that evoke geometric image of the constellations, reminding us that the Earth is also one of the stars. Construction of the first pyramids was an expression of the unconscious synthesis in humans, so it remains the symbol of unity in ascension. With civilization stepping forward to the new millennium, the optical figure of construction becomes the driving force of the construction of space - morphology that is not dynamic in itself - starting from the shape that symbolizes stability, but also takes on dynamic features by opposing everything traditionally perceived as static. The Museum Hall has been the scene of cultural treasure enclosed in gallery “boxes”, but as of now, it will play the role of a driving force that, as a symbol of individuality, inner outlook on the word, strengthens the ideas of development of personal and collective consciousness.

The transparent pyramid in the Louvre stands as a metaphor for mapping of the celestial depth, perceptually disjointed and heterogeneously represented, but mystically or metaphysically united arch, since the structure of the dome literally symbolized the mathematical or philosopher’s sky, and the best example of it in the old world was the Pantheon (Pantheon, Rome, 113–125 AD), by bringing all the gods together.

In the new era, Brunelleschi’s dome over the Florence Cathedral (Santa Maria del Fiore, 1420-1436) overtopped the hills around the city, much like the perspective machine depicting space as a whole and united. Its architect Pei insisted on removing the roof of this structural pyramid,
making it entirely from translucent glass, in order to make it seem more ephemeral, weightless, as the basic element of architecture entering the weightless state, revealing the modern gap between individual and civilization, the tension towards the personal and subjective experience, as opposed to the objective certainty of mathematical reason. At the same time, the loss of mass signifies the loss of the center, the decline of perspective, the escape of figures in space and time, the unstoppable opening and disappearing in the depth of the vault without objects. This is the iconic equivalent of the necessary eccentricity of the modern man’s place of existence. (Frame 1)

Frame 2. The Dreamers. Bernardo Bertolucci. 2003. 00:35:57

Refusing to make a precise choice between opposite values, Pei realizes its structure so that it lives eternally in duplicity and destabilizing of the effects. Metaphysical character of the Louvre pyramid reflects much like the art of Amarna, creating a connection between the “capital of modernity” and the new city built by Akhenaten, a pharaoh intoxicated by the love of God as a pure spirit. He believed the God to be radiating light and warmth in all beings, and his chose the artistic symbol of the sun that vertically casts its rays to represent it.
In a city ruled together by Akhenaten and Nefertiti, which, like the sight of dawn, was placed on untouched land that had not known another god before, unlike traditional Egyptian temples and their hypostyle halls, the spacious new sanctuaries were open to the sky and were lit by the sunlight. The civilization of Amarna lasted barely a hundred years. During this time, pharaoh, who called himself the servant of Aten, who was not only the first individualist but also the first modernist in the world history, made a Turn, thus the new art directly confronted the rigidity of the official style. He literally transformed naturalism into an art program, along with his personal struggle against the priests, the guardians of the gigantic edifice of the past and the entire religious tradition. The figures from this period reflect the assertion that the old approach towards the proportions is dead, because displaying and building in those proportions relied on their progress on separation from sensibility, while they (since) oscillate between the world of senses and thinking, never confronted with the analyzed object, but always in a self-contained movement, making entire wall surfaces radiant on their own and detached from the center. (Frame 2)

A newfound love for truth was discovered in the Thutmose Art Atelier (1350 BC) when the bust of Queen Nefertiti was found, as an unfinished and thus even more contemporary profile of a woman with the immanence of the gaze which, as a suggestion of a new anthropology, expressed the moment when the subjective experience of the reality became more real than the apocryphal truth of the eternity. This uncompromising sensitivity and intellectual tension of the portrait is equated with the smile of Mona Lisa, (the one who rules the Louvre), but the spatial sense of relief of the Akhenaten’s era is closer to the experience of the visual impressionist. In this instance, the language that can defeat the unstable state of reality transforms a character into an intellectual operation of artistic contours that fades under the superior

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3 The city was called Akhenaten (or Akhenaton - transliterations vary) which meant “the Aten’s (or solar) horizon”. Akhenaten intended to move the Pharaoh’s tombs to the royal Amarna valley on the east side of the Nile, as the symbol of dawn, instead of the west coast that used symbolize evening and sunset.
order of things. The glass pyramid, as it maps the celestial depth, sym-
bolizes the decay of the visible horizon - the temporal and spatial re-
lease of the building sinks with the loss of its ontological core and the
awareness that by glancing at the stars one may face its own finality.
Akhenaten’s migration to modern times, which ended with the dawn
and dusk of monotheism, is unmatched in a history marked by love
for the world, even if we can only see it from the position of eternal
beauty.

II  Dome, Inside the Beyond

In the time of decadence of the Renaissance artistic forms, English
Poet John Donne wrote: ”And, O, it can no more be questioned, that
beauty’s best proportion is dead”\textsuperscript{4}, thus approaching the beauty in a
Baudelaire way, recognizing it in the constructive and compositional
decomposition of the rational world. In architectural sense, the struc-
ture of that world was represented by a sphere. The art that reflected
the disharmonies of space, expressing the forms that contradicted their
own stability, contained the first account of its end. At that moment,
the allegory of the night sky came to life in the architecture of the
dome, and the design of space was dominated by the pictorial principle
of fresco painting, which in the medieval Serbian tradition was known
as \textit{biographical painting}. Painting space comes to life whenever a ra-
tional measure of architecture, achieved and organized by the laws of
perspective, loses its significance for historical reasons. It is replaced
by a decentralized art form, forced to slide in the world of metaphor,
and to move between two stylistic worlds, belief in a being and belief
in an illusion.

\textsuperscript{4}And, O, it can no more be questioned, / That beauty’s best proportion is dead, / Since
even grief itself, which now alone / Is left us, is without proportion. [An Anatomy of
the World: The First Anniversary (305), John Donne (1572–1631). The Poems of John
Donne. 1896.]}
Such a turn occurred in Manasija, the endowment of Despot Stefan Lazarevic, one of the last masterpieces of a long medieval construction tradition that ceased with the breakthrough of the Ottoman Empire. The more the forts of Manasija became stronger and harder, in comparison to its predecessors, and the more its exterior was reduced to stable, simple, rigorously treated walls, the more its interior became vividly sparkling and shimmering with golden-blue, linear fresco style, called ephemeral by many critics in relation to the traditional, Byzantine, archetypal way of portrayal. They are dominated by dark blue and gold, the colors that more than others facilitate, open and dissolve shapes. Surfaces cease to be surfaces (walls and vaults), dematerializing in the night blue revived by the stars, haloes and entanglements of moved figures.

Blue, which is the least material of all the colors, has the capacity to dematerialize everything it encloses, optically breaking down the opaque surface of the wall and transforming it into a pure effect of depth. In its night-dark blue, it symbolizes what the pyramids signified on Earth in their perfect geometry - the path to infinity, the transition to a dream, or the transposition from the real to the imaginary. As an immovable area, or the territory of the unreal, imagination and dream, the interior of Manasija in itself resolves the contradictions of the architecture of a distinctive construction style, born in a state that loses its power from the outside forces. Fearless and indeterminate everywhere but within, the space under the dome loses its architectural and structural features in the play with its golden and linear scenes, as the celestial cap loses its shape against the blue expanse of the night sky.

We are facing the denial of belonging to this conflicting world for the sake of a peaceful Eternity that is superhuman or inhuman. One can easily imagine the conceptual creator of this building under its vault,

5 Manasija or Resava (1407-1418), the despot of Stefan Lazarevic’s despot Sedan selected the most significant memories of the Serbian high school and determined the civic culture that remained called “Moravian Enterprise.”

6 Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art (Auckland, NZ: The Floating Press, 2008), 83.
and, as described by Kandinsky, “the power of profound meaning is found in blue, and first in its physical movements (1) of retreat from the spectator, (2) of turning in upon its own center. The inclination of blue to depth is so strong that its inner appeal is stronger when its shade is deeper.”

Golden light that penetrates this matrix is a symbol of knowledge, of truth, of earthly immortality. Instead of the natural penetration of moonlight, the golden color of the interior becomes the medium and weapon of light, which is the ambivalent preciousness of a lone subject, the artist on the shaky grounds, but his eyes raised to the stars.

Manasiija surpassed other churches of Morava School of Architecture in its height: its proportions are elongated in style, and the walls supporting the dome, representing, according to the symbolism of architectural forms in Orthodox monasteries, columns that “hold the sky above the earth”, lose the mass at the expense of the depth of color and pictoriality of moved figures, sinking into the simulation of new scenes instead of the archetypal roundness of form. In the fourteenth century, instead of forms radiating mystical immanence, the painting composition became a factor of the whole, due to which the principle of interior space presents the necessity to replace the illusion for what it is. Together with the certainty of rational perception of the world, the principle of the identity of spatial structure and static balance disappears, where each form had its place in the construction, and strict, geometric spatial form was the only substance where the sublime could be recognized and gifted to the world.

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7 Ibid.

8 The vault itself loses that golden wholeness of the world in which, according to the example of Hagia Sophia, even after Roman pantheistic times, the dome represented the sky and space as the only whole. Although this space was degeometrized, moving from rational to mystical treatment, the new immanence of gold fulfilled the game of symbols and made them even more interconnected. The dome of Hagia Sophia, which would become a distinguished model of the Orthodox temple, was the pinnacle of the volumetric unity of the radiant and composite space, which led Proclus Lycaeus to make a new definition of space as nothing but the finest light.
Manasija is dominated by the principle of similarity, duplication of the interior in itself, where former wholeness was transferred to the realm of imagination and separation - the principle of similarity, twice the separation of signs and reality, is used in biographical painting and poetry that encompasses it with its being.\(^9\) Manasija is not the lone case in the history of architecture when the painting took on the role of a formative element of the interior space of the dome, and instead of static construction created the effect of transparency of archetypal surfaces, negating their rational form, filling them with revived scenes. However, it is one of the most beautiful examples of this in the Serbian region, thanks to its patron and its chivalrous and poetic view of the world. The melancholy of this view is at the expense of the individual spirit, taking on the task of delaying the inevitability of the downfall of an empire.

Despot Stefan, who himself was a poet, seemed to have adopted a view of the troubled artist’s world and rid himself of the burden of great prospects. Decentralization of the state had already taken place, when the stability of the medieval space disappeared and the surfaces dematerialized with gold spoke of everything that could have been archived, such as the supply for the future objective moment of history, whether as a technique or religion, science, law or art. (Frame 3)

Could architecture really have been so free-spirited as to dare to disrupt its own order created by centuries of upgraded builders’ knowledge and everything that was perceived as rational? The architectural light of Manasija does not depend on realistic lighting, but on the structure that it produces in conjunction with the effect of the moving composition of the frescoes, reflections that gold, as the technique of light itself, leaves on the dark blue background. On the other hand, its facades do not shine white color due to the material as much as due

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\(^9\) Despot Stefan Lazarevic was a poet, and his most famous poem, *The Letter of Love* (1404 or 1409), is filled with motives of transposition, flight, and losing of weight that offer necessary elegance to the poetic text and provide secrecy to subtle feelings.
to the formal organization - elongated proportions, thin walls, almost curved garlands - that creates and radiates white light with a high frequency of flickers. Horizontals sink into the ground, while the dome and the bell tower merge with the sky inside, and the niches, the interlacings, reduced plastic and garlands evoke the vibrant luminism of the last Byzantine renaissance.

Frame 3. Game of Thrones “Dragonstone” (Season 07 Episode 01). Jeremy Podeswa. 2017. 00:50:08

Frame 4. Le Mépris. Jean-Luc Godard. 1963. 01:19:44

III Love, the Crisis of Beyond

There is something structurally unfinished in the towers with the bastions that formed the walls around the Manasija monastery, where each of them was supposed to continue in the next one, while still being different from the previous one. This unfinished and therefore modern feature is also reflected in the open perimeters of the forts, their dismantled bases and various volumetrics. They spontaneously integrate into the natural architecture of the park, matching the colorful geometry of the painted surfaces of the walls inside the monastery church. A similar turn in the means of form, one that could only provide unity between interior and exterior, is found in one of the most beautiful Houses of the last century, Casa Malaparte, designed by architect Adalberto Libera around 1937 for an eccentric writer, journalist and diplomat Jelena Mitrović and Vladimir Milenković
Curzio Malaparte. Permanent interruption, but also a permanent trace of the horizon framed in the composition of window openings, where, in the airy depths, the sky and the sea merge, as if it did not depend on the architectural will, but the continuity of this line was already marred by the picturesque rocks of Capri island, pre-applied by the trace of the geology of time. It was as if the house was envisioned so that it could be broken at any moment. Its owner and the client, who at one point took over the project from the hands of the architect, could not have wished for that break, but somehow anticipated it with a certain structural imperfection, the dimensions of windows that disturbed the harmony between the abundance of nature and calm, but inherently moved compactness of the shape, with its backbone which lowers and rises over Cape Punta Massullo without balance, achieving gravitational equilibrium through the willful disproportion of the entire composition.

There is something in common between the framed sequences of sea-celestial depth and the line of the house, where the flat roof rises pyramidically toward the garden, defying the structure to the horizon, creating the distance with the surrounding, which seems unfinished due to the interruption caused by the war. However, the house was designed so that it could be completed only by the interruption of that life which, in the grand parlor, by the panoramic windows facing the fireplace and the stone floor, so loftily expressed the tragedy of its own incompleteness: the building that was born as a piece of history.

It is, by all means, only a coincidence, as a sign of faith, that Libera’s late works, the only tragic ones in his life’s work, despite their exceptional quality, were left to decay.¹⁰

¹⁰ Despite its exceptional quality, Adalberto Libera’s Cinema Airone in Rome, has not escaped a sad fate - due to declining cinema ticket sales, the building was turned into nightclubs until its appearance was severely damaged. The original ceilings were first destroyed in a reckless adaptation, leading to the current state when the building is deserted, despite many attempts of structural recovery by a local political committees or cultural associations. A Forgotten Masterwork: Cinema Airone in Rome by Libera with Capogrossi (1952-56), socks-studio.com.
It took a genius such as Jean-Luc Godard to use the film to present the unity of form and life - that condition where mortar penetrates through cracked, deliberately stripped brick-color, like a living tissue through wounds on the skin. In doing so, he wanted to capture the beauty of the structure in a fragile state of decomposition caused simply passing of time, as if the great architectural monuments were not eternal but lived their natural life, just like everything else that exists in this world. Its theatricality, as entirely Italian feature of architecture, came to the fore through Godard’s specific artistic placement of criticism - if there is no continuity between the theoretical truth of modernism and operational practice, this gap should be overcome by abolishing the distinction between reality and illusion. It seems that the illusion does not exist by itself, but that it is something quite realistic. The stage for such a play is the nature, as Godard lavishly proves with the film (Le Mépris, 1963), in which this house, not so much incorporated into the landscape, as it is emphasized with it in the same way, and thus played a leading role.

The dome outside its own borders could be compared with the depth of blueness of that natural stage that connects separate positions, inside and out, that cannot be captured in a single view. There is not only one view, but the film reveals how much the authors of the house, thinking both of the architecture and the owners, took into account a psychological space that is not based solely on real vision, but also on the memory of what had been seen and the anticipation of what would be seen.

Here, the spatial continuity is only the pyramidal stream of thoughts that emerges at the same time connecting its differential sequences. In the film, they stand by the masks from the ancient theater, declaring the director’s verdict for the house, placing it side by side with the ancient Roman architecture. The idea was to create the unfinished building, just as the building damaged by time, as a piece of antiquity, like Propylaea as a temple that did not exist because it was never planned.
Stripping away its geological stratification, time has made it a broken history that has surfaced. It is the stage of a drama where the love of beauty comes to light, sensing an excessive cinematic sublime end, the end beyond reality. **(Frame 4)**

The symbolic role, assigned here to the architecture seems to describe the reverse reality of Pei’s pyramid creating the Louvre in its new synthesis. These are the monuments, but at the same time, they lose their monumentality to the erosion of the real life, focused on continuity of every kind. Just as from the dual architecturality of the pyramid, no distinction can be made between reality and the scene, the transparent vault or open sky, the shape and abundance of shapeless, transparent depth – and the entire area is overflown by bluish, the most material of all colors. Thus, it functions like the mirror of Napoleon’s idea, which united Egypt and Europe with final love, ancient and modern era, time and duration, classical forms and shapes of modern life.

**Frame 5.** Voyager 1 live position and data. Right Ascension: 17h 14m 33.3s Declination: 12°02’33.6” (J2000) Magnitude: N.A. (Estimated: JPL) Constellation: Ophiucus Sun Distance: 22,163,542,147 km [17.0 km/s] Earth Distance: 22,235,496,986 km [24.2 km/s]

**Frame 6.** Voyager 2 live position and data. Right Ascension: 20h 06m 41.0s Declination: -57°49’34.3” (J2000) Magnitude: N.A. (Estimated: JPL) Constellation: Pavo Sun Distance: 18,390,293,950 km [15.3 km/s] Earth Distance: 18,501,717,662 km [31.5 km/s]
IV The Beyond Number

Two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century made the Earth both unique and devastated. The strength of the machines was confirmed in the cruelest way as they moved the planet in another direction, so fast after that one fully modern Galilean event cast the shade on previous unbelievable experiences. The humankind was unable to follow the full intensity of numerous discoveries, and one of them is especially important for our subject. For the first time, due to the flight into the space, the sphericity of the Earth was seen through the human eyes. The latter departure to the Moon only confirmed the extraterritoriality of such an image. However, as if this event had not been seen as triumphant, people were still much more interested in the horizons on the Earth (Hannah Arendt, Conditio humana), despite the fact that the man would not remain attached to it forever. Even with the discovery of America, it seemed that all earthly trajectories had been proclaimed, and then another new age began with creation of its own paths. Through the intersection of the continents (the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal), all the seas were merged into one large sea, imaginary seas on the Moon were named as astronomical sceneries, ready for new Great Discoveries. Based on this, we can see that even after five hundred years, the real and symbolic capacity of travel on the Earth has not been exhausted, and the former dreams of going to the space have been replaced by an interest in creating a new picture of themselves.

In this sense, the truth that the discovery of the telescope has changed man’s view of the Earth much more than the Cosmos has been repeated for many times by the “nervous” expectation of new ideas about life. Unlike before, this time THOSE images are scattered polycentrically, aiming at the depths of darkness, unlike previous blueness of the atmosphere. The pulsating numbers in the digital infinity of computer screens count down the real distortion of the horizon projected on the former illusions about the geometry of the Earth and its vault. We are
facing (whenever we wish to face it) the real time coordinates of Voyager 1 and Voyager 2, which, after forty years of expected and unexpected navigation, left the solar system, moving into the interstellar space. Thus, the biggest of all travelers were able to stretch, not only their own time and the space of the system from which they originated, but further confirmed the incomprehensible depth of awareness of the view of the Third Stone from the Sun.

Today, it is no longer about the invisibility of the planet from a distance that has been reached, but the question is what human knowledge of the unknown could be compared to. The evidence of the uniqueness of earthly life, perpetuated in gold, has never been further from their creator. The idea that something made by a man finally in a space consisting of the stars can easily be replaced by the unfinished dreams of cosmic proportions, and the images that still manage to reach us for the same glittering thoughts that unfold the glimpse into all the domes he has ever created or wished to create. (Frame 5. Frame 6)
References

Dome beyond its limits or how deep is your love


Frames

Frame 1.
Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=only+lovers+left+alive+car+scene+gif&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjr9NzymffnAhWSkKQKKhYTEBG0Q2-cCegQ1ABAA&oq=only+lovers+left+alive+car+scene+gif&gs_l=img.3...6315.7210..7749...0..0.99.342.4......0....1..gws-wiz-img.9LjBsHQw6I&ei=GZRaXquEM5KhkgW2p5DoBg&bih=581&biw=782&client=safari#imgrc=2RZNDex8-NWIMM (Last Access 29.02.2020)

Frame 2.
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpFEYu6ScdI

Frame 3.
Source: https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/508977195379311743/?amp_client_id=CLIENT_ID()&mweb_unauth_id=%7B%7Bdefault.session%7D%7D&simplified=true (Last Access 29.02.2020)

Frame 4.
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pduQ4l6Jkjo (Last Access 29.02.2020)

Frame 5.
Source: https://theskylive.com/voyager1-tracker (Last Access 29.02.2020)

Frame 6.
Source: https://theskylive.com/voyager2-tracker (Last Access 29.02.2020)

Translation by Ljiljana Madžarević
I was born in Okurayama. It is a small station between Tokyo and Yokohama, to be exact, a bit closer to Yokohama, midway between Shibuya Station and Yokohama Station on the Tokyu Toyoko Line. I was very grateful that Okurayama had a “mountain”, as its name suggests. Between Shibuya and Yokohama, the only stations with “mountains” in their names are Okurayama and Daikanyama. Later I will explain the importance of this “mountain” to me. Okurayama at that time was a mysterious place that was neither urban nor rural. One might say it was suspended halfway between the city and the countryside.

Immediately after entering university, I learned about Max Weber’s concept of a “boundary person”, from a leftwing sociologist named Hiroshi Orihara. I was lucky to be able to spend a leisurely moratorium, called a liberal arts programme, which did not immediately begin with specialized education in architecture. I had some time to think about where I was born.

The Liberal Arts curriculum also allowed us to meet leftwing people. Architecture is a dangerous profession, which can easily turn you into a cog in the capitalist machine, if you do poorly. The Japanese economy, especially during its period of high economic growth, was driven by architecture and civil engineering. It was a great asset to me to meet people like Dr Orihara, who were critical of the trend.

Weber’s “boundary person” is a person who belongs neither to the city nor to the countryside, and therefore has a critical and balanced view of both (whether against the city or the countryside).
There is a view that being a “boundary person” enables one to stand on two opposing meta-levels (the upper level), but the reality of a young boundary person is that they just remain stuck near the boundary. It wasn’t cool or brilliant as the word suggests.

Merely being born near the border is not enough to qualify one as a “boundary person” or “boundary child”. To recognize a boundary as such, you must visit both sides of the boundary. The boundary will not be felt as a boundary unless you move beyond the boundary to find it again from the other side.

In other words, everywhere is a boundary in some way. There are people who can discover it and those who can’t. If you do not move, you will remain your self-evident and mediocre being, and your house will remain your boring house. You will never find it a thrilling place, like boundaries.

The movement for me was between Okurayama and Denenchofu. Since I went to kindergarten, I took the train from a countryside place called Okurayama to go to a Christian kindergarten, a kind of “elite garden”, in the middle of a high-class residential area.

That was when I was born as a “boundary person” suspended in the air. A clumsy self was born, one that could assimilate neither to the countryside nor to the city.

Max Weber

Professor Orihara also taught about Weber’s iconic book, *The Ethics of Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism*. It is the theory that Protestantism’s abstinence and hard work created the modern capitalist economy. My “criticism of private housing”, “criticism of capitalism”, and “criticism of diligence” originate from these Weber and Orihara experiences.
Perhaps I was attracted to Weber because of my rebellion against my father, who was a serious office worker and stubborn person who never touched drink. Weber’s theory that abstinence and diligence were the engine of capitalism was very persuasive and appealing to me at the time when I was opposed to my father’s seriousness.

After that, I started learning about architecture and was strongly convinced by the theory that Protestantism’s asceticism informed the non-decorative and ascetic designs of modernist architecture.

Le Corbusier, a leader in modernist architecture, was born to a Calvinist family, who are known as the most disciplined wing in Protestantism. His ancestors originally lived in the south of France, but after the suppression of Calvinism in France, they fled to La Chaux-de-Fonds in the mountains of Switzerland in the 16th century, where Le Corbusier was born as a son of a watchmaker.

Watchmaking is a profession that embodies the Calvinist ideals of diligence and abstinence. It is said that Le Corbusier’s ascetic modernist architecture, short of every ornament, came out of that background.

Mies van der Rohe, another master of Modernism, is certainly a connection between Protestantism and Modernist architecture, because he, too, came from a Protestant family.

It is said that in a proper Calvinist home, not even curtains on the windows were allowed. Curtains might enable people to perform perverted acts in the house, so a typical Calvinist house has windows as large as possible and no curtains at all. There is a compelling theory that the large, transparent glass windows characteristic of modernist architecture actually stem from this Calvinist belief.

However, Le Corbusier’s life, as well as that of Mies van der Rohe, were far from ascetic. The same could be said about my father. According to my mother, he was very strict with his children but no with himself.
Weber brilliantly dug up and rationalized the twist between Protestantism’s abstinence and the greed of capitalism. Similarly, there was a twist hidden in Modernist architecture. On the one hand, there is the thoroughly ascetic white wall with no decorations, and on the other, a dynamic, fluid space that may be called sensual.

The charm of Le Corbusier and Mies’s architecture derives from this twist. Modernist architecture wasn’t pure design, but twisted design. Learning from Max Weber that the age of modernity has twists was a great help for me in building my own architecture.

Illustrations:

A boundary person (Kyoukaibito)

EXPERIENCING ARCHITECTURE BEYOND ITS ACTUAL FORM: AESTHETIC ISSUES

Vladimir Mako

Abstract

The article discusses a few ideas related to qualities of perception experienced in contemporary architecture. These qualities are related to dynamic transformable aspects inherent to particular architectural concepts. They enable experiencing architecture beyond its actual forms by activating the observer’s intuitional creative capacity for producing a particular virtual context for developing new subjectively valuated aesthetic aspects.

Key Words: Architecture, perception, aesthetics, memory

The appearance of new architectural concepts during the last few decades and their particular reflection on essential principles of the materialization of building structures has by all means resulted in a consequential transformation of the perceptual values that rest on the experience of a building’s actual form. The concepts in focus compress and develop dynamic notions regarding aspects of time, flexibility, changeability, and ambiguity of surface, complexity, and strangeness. These newly emerging perceptual qualities are producing opportunities for experiencing architecture through modalities that challenge the observer’s subjective creative potential. In that context, Zaha Hadid’s notion that new architectural concepts are intended to give rise to the observer’s curiosity and wish to discover, highlights an essentially vital
aesthetic approach to communicating ideas immanent to contemporary building structures. At the same time, Bernard Tschumi has emphasized that the “concept – not form, as some would suggest – is what distinguishes architecture from mere building.”

All of these notions reveal the possibility of experiencing architecture as performance in space-time, activating dynamic subjective interpretations of actual forms and structures. However, such a process would be impossible without particular objective values inherent to architectural concepts enabling the observer to creatively generate new potential meanings. It can be identified as a process where objective conceptual aspects of actual architectural forms/structures merge with a subjective interpretation of values established by a creative individual. This merging process actualizes a complex aesthetic experience in space and time through a new cohesion of actual and subjective perception and expression. However, is such an attitude regarding the dynamic definition of perception and aesthetic experience possible in the realm of architectural form and structure? Are they fixed as non-transformable actuality, materialized and sealed as perceptual and aesthetic values, revealing only the meanings inherent to the author’s creative skill for communicating social and cultural ideas? One could not continue discussing these issues without addressing ideas related to the avant-garde aesthetic concepts developed at the beginning of the twentieth century. That is because, as it seems, contemporary ideas in architecture relate to a number of relevant aspects of perception and aesthetics developed a hundred years ago.

Reflecting on creativity as an essential aspect of perception itself, Bosanquet implemented a dynamic notion of object as an embodied feeling. In particular, this standpoint defines the activity of aesthetic

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apprehension and use of “associated significances, to compose the feeling of the object or the objects as an embodied feeling.” In that process, imagination as an aspect of subjective appreciation of an aesthetic object plays a significant role. More importantly, Bosanquet emphasizes that imagination “is in no way subordinated to the total structure of real fact and truth. It is an alternative world, framed no doubt, on the same ultimate basis, but with a method and purpose of its own…” With this assertion, Bosanquet was not only raising issues regarding the concept of an open work of art, whereby the observer becomes a creative subject who completes the meaningful nature of an aesthetic object. The observer creates an essentially new metaphorical world based on the process of valuing the “semblance above the reality…”

Actually, these ideas are equivocal with Bergson’s statement that “there is no perception without affection.” However, in Bergson’s understanding of the issue at hand, there appears another highly important aspect of perception as a subjective valuation of an actual object – memory. He emphasized that “our perceptions are undoubtedly interlaced with memories, and inversely, a memory only becomes actual by borrowing the body of some perceptions into which it slips.” Much more clearly, he explains that, after all, our subjectivity of sensible qualities, which in aesthetics could be appreciated as a creative potential, actually “consists above all else in a kind of contraction of the real, effected by our memory.” Such a process of aesthetic appreciation seems possible to identify mainly by exposing a real subjective, individual experience based on this imaginative contraction.


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Experiencing architecture is a dynamic process that occurs in space and time. However, in that context we should emphasize again that, as Bergson asserted, perception regulates our valuation of qualities as heterogeneous aspects, and action as the “master of time” reflects on motion, which is a homogenous quality. This provides us with complex sensations of an architectural structure, where “perception… involves an effort of memory which prolongs one into another a plurality of moments”, possibly into a plurality of experiences.

In this context, our prime interest in the issue under discussion relates to the phenomenon of an architectural experience transforming under essentially subjective processes of affection. Let us take an example.

We can argue that the perception of complex architectural structures, for instance the Olympic Stadium in Beijing designed by Herzog and De Meuron, reveals a highly dynamic activity of aesthetic valuation. It forms a part of experiencing an actual formal structure and potentially engages a particular capacity of memory correlated with the subjective interpretation of the structure’s meaning. If perception is related to a continuous flow of actual images, memory solidifies them into sensible qualities. However, memory as an aggregate of past experience and deposit of knowledge may interrupt the continual flow of images of the actual architectural structure, intersecting it with an association of a conceptually completely different aesthetic object.

The solidity of the geometrical formal structure of the Stadium’s exterior, after penetrating its interior, transforms into a number of sensations related to the three-dimensional abstracted quadrilateral trunks and branches like forms. However, our individually developed memories, according to our subjective aesthetic sensibilities and acquired knowledge, in the process of perceiving these actually represented structures, may draw parallels with, for instance, some of Mondrian’s pictorial abstractions.

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9 Ibid., 267.
10 Ibid., 25.
11 Ibid., 279.
It is important to emphasize that at such a moment of comparison, the actual structure merges with subjective recollections conjured by the observer’s memory, establishing a dynamic aesthetic sensation.

The continuous spatiotemporal flow of materialized actual images is, in a way, interrupted by the observer’s memory challenging the present actuality with the observer’s subjective, previously developed aesthetic experiences. At that moment, our consciousness condenses the real actual image, converting it into a kind of virtual presence of a subjective association. A new subjective meaning is attached to the actual structure, merging and consolidating it into the last experienced value of the architectural object deposited in our memory. After that moment, our future first recollections of this architectural object always appear to happen through this subjective modality of its aesthetic values.

It seems that such a process is enabled by the idea of abstracting natural forms, as the governing creative aspect of the three-dimensional inner architectural structure of the Stadium building, and also of Mondrian’s approach to two-dimensional pictorial representation. Consequently, this process, which we might name perceptual syncretism, effecting a virtual likeness between two conceptually different images, is objectified by a subjective interpretation of an actual formal structure. It indicates that an image can be present in memory and not be actually represented; it can be actualized through memory as an association turning into an interval between matter itself (as an aggregate of images in Bergson’s sense) and our conscious metaphorical interpretation of the perceived actual architectural structure. This memory interval can be thought as a consequence of pure knowledge related to the actual architectural structure, and remains in memory as a constantly active value – an actualized meaningful perception, a pure intersection of mind and matter.

12 Ibid., vii.
The second example to be discussed here enables a dynamic perception of an architectural object by experiencing a virtual dissolution of the solidity of its actual form by transforming it into a number of images revealing its actual inner structure. One’s perception of the Zara building in Tokyo, another design by Herzog and De Meuron, refers to the dynamism of the observer’s moving towards the building. During that process, as the perceiver is moving towards the object, and through the continuous flow of images of the actual form and its surface consisting of a structure made of transparent prisms, the value of the form, at one moment, changes into a series of continuous images revealing the building’s interior structure.

The building is conceptualized to merge images of its form and interior structure, questioning the expected solidity of our perception of its architectural body. At the moment when one’s perception of its actual, solid form transforms into a number of interior particles, it challenges not only the perceiver’s sense of scale, but also the logic of continuity expected in observing an architectural building. However, we should keep in mind that “real movement is rather the transference of a state than of a thing.” This notion indicates that the perceiver’s change of state in experiencing an architectural structure generates a particular aesthetic valuation.

Such a movement integrates the perceiver’s mental capacity with the given properties of the structure. This sensation differs from the modernist concept of glass façade where the envelope immediately reveals the interior, by not dissolving the essential value of the formal geometry of the building, which is still part of the observer’s continuous experience. In the example discussed above we are dealing with the process of perceptual transformation, where the observer’s final aesthetic experience, related to the externally revealed inner structure, is directly confronted with the exterior formal character of the building.

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The final experience of the architectural inner structure of Herzog and De Meuron’s design is not related to the usual process of crossing the exterior-interior line, consciously separating two aspects of an architectural object, but develops continuously as an ambivalent perceptual modality related only to an outdoor flow of images. It shows the properties of a moving continuity (in Bergson’s sense), in “which everything changes and yet remains.”

The dynamism of the perceptual process discussed above builds up a particular subjective sensation based on one’s personal feeling of interiority. It develops through images dislocated from one’s actual presence in the interior of the structure, challenging our personal orientation regarding the sense of being ‘in’ or ‘out’. Such perceived interior images accumulate new qualities, which one can sense only through previous experiences recollected from a memory deposit. They are virtual by the perceptual logic at the time of appearance, but real as a mental diagram consisting of previous experiences. All of these images are only virtual reflections of a possibly existing interior.

However, concretizing this perceptual experience as a new memory related to objects of aesthetic quality confronts the sense of real time and space. But that doesn’t mean that such a sense of time and space could not be homogeneous, exactly because they are not properties of things.

It breaks with the actual formal architectural value and generates aesthetic perception beyond it, as “mental diagrams of our eventual action upon matter” (as an aggregate of images). The two examples discussed above are certainly not the only ones that indicate particular aspects and aesthetic values in experiencing architecture beyond its actual form. Despite the limitations of analyzing such a small set of examples, we may be able to draw a few conclusions important for our topic.

15 Ibid., 260.
16 Ibid., 280.
From the first example we can extract the possibility of a dynamic sensation, where perception of an actual architectural form ends up as a continuous flow of images, when a subjective associative memory flash actualizes one of its aesthetic qualities. Now attached to the immanent aspects of the represented actual form, the associative image recollected from our memory permanently links two conceptually different aesthetic approaches – a three-dimensional architectural representation and a two-dimensional pictorial expression present in our memory. As an intuitional dynamic moment, this associative merging consolidates one’s personal cultural consciousness by replacing the actual architectural representation with an emphatic structure of images, truthfully placed in a virtual context. The presence of this emphatic structure of images will permanently remain virtual because it belongs to one’s personal perceptual and intuitional capacity. Even when one reveals it as a kind of intuitional knowledge, as a result of an accidental happening, it continues to be a fixed actuality of memory.

The second example indicates a slightly different capacity of memory involved in the process of aesthetic perception of architecture. In contrast to the first example where our perceptual experience beyond the actual form happens in the flash of a moment, here we are involved in a process of moving in time and changing our distance from the object. In that sense, memory, as an essential quality of perception as a temporal activity, converts our experience of a simple actual external form into a continuous aggregate of images of the object’s actual inner structure. The key to the new sensation lies in our displacement from the inner structure, transforming its serial images into a personal feeling of a possible interiority beyond its actual quality.

In that context, memory collects already experienced images into a continuous virtual sensation. This enables the observer to experience each new image as an unexpected aesthetic value. Thereby, the flow of images finally deposited in our memory cannot be entirely consolidated but remains as a transformable dynamic experience.
Sanford Kwinter calls a similar avant-garde experience ‘morphogenesis’. He defines the new quality as “a dynamic and uncertain process that characterizes the schema that links a virtual component to an actual one…”17 This notion indicates that the analyzed processes of perception beyond form depend on an intuitional relationship between the actual and virtual, which is objectified through the capacity of our memory. In that sense, aesthetic perception relates to consciousness as the essence of every virtual action.18 The process is uncertain because one’s intuitional capacity depends on a number of aesthetic variables as dynamic aspects related to one’s perception and memorized over time, becoming an integrated part of individual aesthetic experience.

Illustrations:

Herzog & De Meuron Olympic Stadium in Beijing, 2008.
Photo: author

Piet Mondrian, The Gray Tree, 1912, Hague, Gemmentemuseum
Herzog & De Meuron, Zara building, Tokyo
Photo: author
Experiencing architecture beyond its actual form: aesthetic issues

Herzog & De Meuron, Zara building, Tokyo
Photo: author
NOTES ON (AESTHETIC) JUDGMENT IN THE TIMES OF GLOBALISATION - BEYOND DESIRE TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER -

Darko Radović

We all live in an increasingly homogenised world. Due to proliferation and acceleration of all modes of communication, literally everything, from ideas to products, from people to viruses, almost instantaneously becomes global. This essay tables a single, but critical issue related to such, radical globalisation – the importance of cross-communication capable to celebrate diversity and treasure the cultural Other; or, to put it the other way round – it attempts to point at dangers associated with an evident lack of such sensibility and, consequently, of cultural diversity itself.

As early as 1967, in The Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord has foreseen the dangers. He pointed out that the modern spectacle was already in essence: “the autocratic reign of the market economy which had acceded to an irresponsible sovereignty, and the totality of new techniques of government which accompanied this reign.”¹ In 1988, not long before ending his own life, in Comments on the Society of the Spectacle the key Situationist has warned how “the spectacle has spread itself to the point where it […] permeates all reality. It was easy to predict in theory […] that the globalisation of the false was also the falsification of the globe (my italics).”²

Since then, “a false ideological universality, which masks and legiti-
mises a concrete politics of Western imperialism, military interven-
tions and neo-colonialism”\(^3\), the irresponsible sovereignty of which
has evolved into a fully-fledged reality. The perceived inevitability\(^4\)
of the new, neoliberal version of the flat World needs to be confronted.
The aim of this essay is to advance an awareness about an ultimate
(im)possibility of translation and universal equivalence\(^5\), the damag-
ing effects of reductionism\(^6\) in cross-cultural research and practice, and
the need to protect the complex, messy world of precious differences.\(^7\)

The discussion that follows presents three fragments of an ongoing re-
search into cultures which are profoundly different to that of my own,
and provides a brief Post Scriptum. First we establish the “Who” of
those investigations, thus pointing at the importance of subjectivity in
cross-cultural explorations in general. Then, we problematise the no-
tions of untranslatability and non-equivalence, the combined “What”
(urbanity and aesthetics, as two illustrative themes) and the “Where”
of our discussion (Japan and China). The third segment presents ele-
ments of “How”, the ways of working with(in) and for the Other, as
established during my immersions into the cultures of the East. The
P.S. explains the necessary sensibility in approaching, thinking, living
and, in particular, in efforts to judge the radical Other.

The essay is polemological, in hope to, in de Certeau’s tradition, help
“force theory to recognise its own limits.”\(^8\)

\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Evgeny Morozov, To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism (New York: Public Affairs, 2013).
\(^7\) John Low, After Method, Mess in social science research (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2004).
1 who (or – on 1st person singular)

I live, teach and conduct research in Tokyo. My perspective of Japan is, therefore, that of an unlikely insider – a non-Japanese architect and urbanist, academic and researcher with long lived experience, true vécu\(^9\) in the context where foreigners are rare. Inspired by Roland Barthes, since my earliest efforts to explore urbanities of Japan I sought to construct “a system which I shall call: Japan”\(^{10}\). In constructing such system, subjectivity is both necessary and unavoidable. My decision to deliver this text in the first person singular aims precisely at stressing that complex cultural themes, such as urbanity and aesthetics, demand decisive inclusion of the self\(^{11}\), as an embodiment of values. These investigations are qualitative and culture-specific, critically depending on both research rigour and intuitive, often intimate insights. When exploring sensitive (both natural or social)\(^{12}\) environments, we need to recognise ourselves within those concrete contexts. Our reflection in/on such immersions inevitably includes a sort of self-portraiture, our own foreignness of which we need to be aware, and critical. Only then, the use of the first person singular narration should not be seen as expression of arrogance. To the contrary, it highlights that encounters require responsibility - which has to be individual.

Essayistic format allows for synergies of rigorous and subjective thinking. It welcomes personal expression in dealing with the exactitude. One of the distinguishing qualities of essays is precisely that they do not segregate “the technician from the dreamer.”\(^{13}\) While we can share their contents, (the experience of) dreaming belongs only to the one who dreams.

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\(^{10}\) Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).


By shaping the communicable, dreams lend themselves to examination, making the “technical” possible. In explorations of complex, irreducible phenomena (such as aesthetics, urbanity, Lefebvorean oeuvre), only the technical and the poetic combined promise glimpses into the totality (such as the experience of being urban[e], being human[e]).

The system which I have decided to call Japan enables “flashes of insight into the complexity of representing the experience of reality, the reality of experience. Nothing more, nothing less.”

2 what and where (or – on [un]translatability)

One single insight triggered the project which informs this essay. That was unexpected and (to any Westerner, let alone an urbanist) shocking realisation that Japanese language has no words for concepts which are central to globally accepted understanding of urbanity. The lack of the key words for phenomena which I sought to explore here questioned the validity of the starting comparisons and their meaning. (I suddenly remembered a much earlier surprise that in Japan streets have no names!)

The “missing” terms included the foundational concept of “public”, which indicated an absence of, or at least a very unusual situation with the very concept of public in Japanese culture. Neither the transcribed paburiku, nor the indigenous kōkyō [公共] can encapsulate the intrinsic meaning of “public”. Paburiku パブリック, as rough phonetic approximation, only exposes limitations of the Japanese katakana syllabary script (used for adopted foreign terms), explicitly labelling the

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notion of “public” as foreign. In kōkyō, the key ideogram 公 refers to the official, governmental power, even the princely estate – the precise opposite of public and, thus, transparently wrong. That insight brought into question, or altogether denied application of standard, established theories and research methods – used in urbanistic inquiry by both foreign and Japanese researchers.

Besides public, other concepts of relevance for our discussion which are untranslatable to Japanese (and Chinese, and many other non-Western languages) include culture, rights, philosophy, logic, aesthetics and – beauty.¹⁷

From here, we will follow only beauty – one of these fundamental untranslatables – and words that stand for that concept. French philosopher and linguist François Jullien has dedicated a whole book to discussion of untranslatability of the Chinese term mei, 美 (and its Japanese equivalent び) into the languages of the West, and vice versa. The meanings of mei and beauty (or beauté, belezza, ljepota, Schönheit, kpacoma …) are never equivalent. Just a few of Jullien’s sharp formulations will suffice to frame our key argument. The very title of the book, This Strange Idea of the Beautiful (2016), points at an fundamental oddity of the very idea of beauty in the East (which, arguably, is more than capable to charm the West with what it chose to label as beautiful). That concept was, along with aesthetics and many other, imported from the West only at the end of 19th century, as part of broader colonialist and self-colonialisng drive – and never truly adopted. The Sinologist Jullien explains how “Chinese (language) does not morphologically distinguish between adjective and substantive – it does not say the ‘beautiful’ (or beauty), the beautiful as a notion of beauty and beauty as a quality. It does not isolate the beautiful as a purely aesthetic sense which thought can hypothesize.”¹⁸

In order to make his argument clear, the Hellenist Jullien now brings in “a beginner’s exercises in philosophy: I am not asking what ‘beautiful is’ but what is ‘the beautiful’ (ti esti to kalon)”\(^{19}\), and explains how in Platonic thought “if things are judged beautiful, it is because there exists ‘the beautiful’ which renders them beautiful. In ‘the beautiful’ as substantive, what is beautiful is no longer seen as relating to anything other but is withdrawn into what becomes its substance. [...] the beautiful is ‘in itself’ (auto), adding to all those various things.”\(^{20}\)

That enables the philosopher Jullien to make a truly powerful statement, that “from what ‘is beautiful’ to ‘the beautiful’ – (European) philosophy was born from this added article and is promoted in this displacement. A great shake-up is instituted, detaching the beautiful from what is beautiful. From now on, the thought will [...] construct itself in its own terms, above all by definition – as was settled by Plato for ever: working to render its unitary grip [...] and granting the sovereign overhang of the concept.”\(^{21}\) Jullien establishes there that “we will also better understand why other cultural traditions have been able not to isolate the beautiful: our interest in the beautiful does not initially depend on the fact that it could serve as a concept for art or would simply manage to express the emotion experienced in the face of nature – Plato himself limited the experience of the beautiful to the turmoil of desire when we are faced with a lover; but we would need the ‘beautiful’, in the metaphysical instigation of the Ideal, as a logical tool.”\(^{22}\)

It is important to note how, by saying that “other cultural traditions have been able not to isolate the beautiful”, François Jullien turns dominant power structure upside down. Here the West is unable to leave beauty intimately entangled with other dimensions of being, in the manner in which “[...] the Chinese thinker does not question but takes apart our antinomies in a casual way without reflecting on them.”

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
\(^{20}\) Ibid.
\(^{21}\) Ibid.
\(^{22}\) Ibid.
Chinese thought prefers the practices of ‘melting’, *rong*, 融. To “suddenly unveil of another possibility, this ideogram evoking warm vapours which rise and dissipate and, consequently, any form of fusion, liquefaction or conciliation? To ‘melt’ thus speaks of the *transition* where the physical (the opaque) dissolves and opens out, makes itself indistinct and becomes expansive. It opens itself up to the imperceptible and the unlimited – to ‘melt’ is the antidualist word par excellence.”

Unfortunately, here we have space only to point at one fundamental difference – that of thoughts expressed in alphabet and (Chinese) ideograms. That difference complements Jullien emphasis about “the Chinese, thinking not in terms of Being but of the process of things; not in terms of qualities but of capacities (*de*); not in terms of modelling and imitation but of circulation and viability (*tao*); effectively conceiving at the beginning only of a single and identical reality [...] If there is no ... ‘spirit and ‘matter’, as two separate entities, it is because we are in fact dealing only with operations: of spiritualization on the one hand and of materialization on the other, in continuous transition from one to the other and activating one another reciprocally. ‘Spirit’ is thus understood as when we speak of the ‘spirit of wine’: decanting, stabilizing and volatilizing to the point of imperceptibility ...” And, to stress yet again – that way is not better than the thought of the “West”. Those two cultural paradigms are simply (and, when one accepts such position – *beautifully*) different. They are incomparable. That above discussed lack of terms to signify some globally important concepts may sound damning only if one still needs to be reminded that those other, non-Western cultures of have their own, equally fundamental concepts, that remain untranslatable to languages of (not geographic, but the culturally domineering) “West”.

The bottom line is that, in many situations, important Western or Eastern concepts simply fall among those “in which other cultures have

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23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
shown hardly any interest, to the extent that often they do not even have name for it.” Historically, the (narrowly defined) “West” used to impose its ways. That should not be allowed to happen any more, not even in the spectacular guise of globalisation. Franco Ferrarotti wisely warned how, when facing irreducible complexities of the Other, it is better “not to understand, rather than to color and imprison the object of analysis with conceptions that are, in the final analysis, preconceptions.” Such absences highlight the possibility, inevitability and (to use that untranslatable term) the beauty of difference.

3 how (or – on mirrors, self-portraits and the cut-outs)

Over the last twenty years I explore various ways of encountering, experiencing and exploring the (enriching) cultures other than that of my own. Experiments are essays. As hinted above, essays which capture the experiments of cultural immersion are destined to become self-portraits, diverse expressions in/of the first person singular. I have found self-portrait analogy useful, both as a conceptual tool (for better understanding), and as a metaphor (to better communicate the hypotheses and findings).

Those exercises explored what happens when the pain-strikingly captured and communicated self deliberately gets cut out, in order to allow the focus at the background. An outline of the absented one continues to shape overall composition. Or, the other way round, a demand which seemingly contradicts the common purpose of portraiture: while seeking essence, the focus shifts to the rest – places, objects and connections – keeping the presence, denying domination of the subject.

The task is to explore how that commonly passive, taken for granted background shapes silhouette of the figure which figures in the title, taking power away from the one who speaks-writes in the first name singular. The focus is on an involved self, on an active or, at least, an entangled actor. His/her own existence without context is impossible, and (the re-making of) that context is also impossible without his/her active presence. The object gets simultaneously defined by, and it becomes an agent of change of the context. While exploring the context, one who explorers becomes open to (introspective) exploration. In critical encounters with the Other, every project should (be allowed to) generate ever new self-portraits. Exposing diverse dimensions of the same person might bring the dreamer and the technician in it closer to each other.  

Portraits usually aspire to grasp the world from the standpoint of the self. In his introduction to Nishida Kitaro’s *Inquiry into the Good* Abe Masao explains how, from subjectivist perspective, the self is understood to stand, as it were, outside the world. Johannes Vermeer van Delft’s marvelous *Allegory of Painting* (1666-68) is a good example of such practice. There we see a painter sitting in front of the young woman, as realistically depicted as one would expect from the seventeenth-century Dutch master. He hybridizes two traditional categories in painting – portrait and self-portrait. Abe would translate that into the realm of philosophy by stressing how “the world is not something that opposes the self but something that envelops it.”

In this portrait Vermeer has included the viewers, making them an extension of the field. We remain outside, extending the totality of the experience into Bakhtin’s “exotopy”, “outsidedness”, “which is not simply alienness, but a precondition for the ... ability to understand and

31 Ibid.
formulate a character, a precondition for dialogue itself.”  

In L’Angélus de Gala (1935) Salvador Dalí takes the same step back, he also focuses our attention on the observer, the observed and their relationships, but he represents my experience better than Vermeer did - because of the cynical depiction of himself. Such portrayal points out that in establishing reciprocal relations the self-critique is an absolute necessity. After entering the expanded field of the Other, our existence becomes relational. Such direct experiences are fundamentally trans-individual. As Nishida would say, “knowledge, feeling, and volition are undifferentiated . . . The unity of intellectual knowledge and practical emotion-volition is the deepest demand of human beings, and it indicates the living ultimate reality”  

From my architectural and urban design ventures into the fabric of Tokyo I wanted precisely such moments of “pure experience” to occur and facilitate encounters with the Other. That is a tough ask.

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33 Kitaro Nishida, An Inquiry Into the Good, op. cit.
Thanks to Jean-Luc Nancy, my more recent explorations brought in Johannes Gumpp. In his *Portrait* Nancy addresses the complexity of Gumpp’s self-portrait (cca. 1646), an unusual composition which could be used to explain and further problematize encounters in the most radical form – *the self as the multiple other*. Gumpp has painted himself painting, “a scene that involves two different representations of the painter’s face, the face in the mirror in which he becomes his own model, and the face on the canvas that he is in the process of painting” and his own back, as in Vermeer and Dalí. The complexity of composition explains accurately how the encounters with *the Other* demand honest acknowledgement of our own otherness. In Gumpp’s painting, “the look of the portrait no longer looks at *itself*, but looks instead at the one who is looking at the canvas and so at the painter in the process of painting; the “same” who becomes thus the ‘other’. The one who looks gets contextually engaged, mediated and (re)defined.

**P.S.**

In my investigations of the processes of immersion-as-collaboration (with*in* *the Other*), I am interested in temporary, fleeting moments of be(com)ing the “Other”, and possible openings of the fragile glimpses to scrutiny of “the technician”. What is necessary there is less “them”, but a glimpse into an accidental “me”, an (a)contextual, situated, temporary “myself”, produced by the moment of entering. The one who (impassioned) ceaselessly keeps on re-entering, keeps on trying to re-enter. Culturally responsible work demands an ethically alert sensibility. Immersed into situations other that those familiar to us (other than those which we [can] comprehend, which we are entitled to know, or which we are capable of knowing) we only mirror, and get “mirrored”.

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35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
We need both what Nancy\textsuperscript{38} identifies as the “look in the mirror” and “the look of the portrait”, the “technical” and the look directed elsewhere, “looking out for an undefined possibility of attention or encounter”\textsuperscript{39}, “the dreamer”. That is what such encounters seek, why we desire and initiate them.

Such encounters are both closing (the possibility of) “knowledge” and opening (the possibility of) experience (as sapience). As such, they are open, generalisable, while they remain (en)closed, unique, authentic. In Gumpp’s painting, “the mirror shows an object (my italics) of representation” while “the painting shows a subject (my italics) pointing at work”\textsuperscript{40}. In my cross-cultural fieldworks, we are (I am) an opus at work, an \textit{oeuvre} in the making, in the process of becoming.

DR
28 October 2020
Midorigaoka, Tokyo

\textsuperscript{38} Jean-Luc Nancy, \textit{Portrait}, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}
FROM TODAY’S URBAN ANONYMITY TO A NEW BEAUTY OF THE CITY

Franco Purini and Luca Ribichini

Any discussion concerning ideas and considerations about the city should start by asking three rather important questions, to which, however, we still cannot provide answers. The first involves the dilemma between the existence of a goal behind the evolution and history of cities and the haphazardness of their actual evolution and history. In short, I always ask myself whether urban historiography imposes a rational organisation on events and people *a posteriori*, conferring on them a sense of what has happened and the personality of the figures who played a role in the city’s history, or whether the city’s objectives reflect a pre-established plan, a long-term *a priori*. The second question is whether cities, especially after the advent of globalisation, can be understood on the basis of the many interpretations that reveal them as texts of texts, plural texts and therefore infinite, a type of text to which Claude Lévi-Strauss had already implicitly referred in his definition of the city as “the human thing par excellence”. The multiple visions of the city produced by various fields of learning – legal science, written and oral history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, geography, human geography, climatology, environmentalism, economics, psychoanalysis, psycho-geography, statistics, medicine, urban planning, architecture, painting, film, theatre, and literature – have given rise to a cognitive labyrinth consisting of unavoidable narrative superimpositions, thematic stratifications, and descriptive contradictions. A labyrinth that allows us to formulate limited, changeable, and experimental interpretative hypotheses, rather than achieving theoretical synthesis and long-lasting, comprehensible operational strategies.
From today's urban anonymity to a new beauty of the city

If we then add to this the duplication of the city between reality and virtual reality (which seemingly ensures that the latter be considered true and the former as its sub-product), a mitigated duplication, plus the loss of every city’s identity in a globalised world due to growing homologation and the contemporary and contradictory glorification of the uniqueness of every urban settlement, we can easily understand how knowledge of the city – now more than ever – can only be partial, transitory, and hypothetical.

The incomplete and temporary nature of our knowledge of cities is also due to the speed (inspired by the Futurists) with which they are changing; to a rupture in the historical congruence between layout and fabric in favour of an incoherent and unregulated distribution of buildings competing with each other; to the abandonment of the structural relationship between typology and morphology and the loss of the concept of forma urbis; and to the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of grounding proposals regarding urban evolution on absolutely predictable scenarios. The third question involves asking ourselves exactly how the size of cities creates the differences between them, on a scale ranging from small hamlets to metropolises. On the one hand, thanks to the Internet, every hub, however small, has the same possibilities of communication as a metropolis does; on the other hand, the presence of local features increases if there are fewer cities. It’s no accident that cities of art are notoriously small- or medium-sized urban organisms. Understanding the role of differences in the study of cities seems to be increasingly important for capturing some of their authentic features as accurately as possible. In addition, the extremely contradictory media system tends to harmonise every settlement and yet also enhance it in order to create a sort of exciting urban mythology.

Having posed these three questions, which I do not intend to answer in this contribution but simply wanted to highlight as a premise to what I will say later, I would like to mention that in modern Italian architecture the centre was the organic relationship between city and architecture. The protagonists of Italian research in this field – Gustavo
Franco Purini and Luca Ribichini

Giovannoni, Marcello Piacentini, Giuseppe Samonà, Luigi Piccinato, Saverio Muratori, Ludovico Quaroni, Giancarlo De Carlo, Carlo Aymonino, Vittorio Gregotti, Aldo Rossi, Paolo Portoghesi, and Bernardo Secchi, amongst others, and historians Bruno Zevi, Leonardo Benevolo, and Manfredo Tafuri – reintroduced a working symbiosis between the two terms into the modern theories of the avant-garde movements. It involved a twentieth-century reinterpretation – an alternative to the way in which the avant-garde pitted architecture against urban structure – of the concept present in the humanist treatises of Leon Battista Alberti and his famous definition of the city as a “big house” and the house as a “small city”. As regards the relationship mentioned above, we should not forget that we must move beyond the generic concept of suburbs by introducing important distinctions concerning settlement and type. Suburbs are not homogeneous, each one is different. There are old suburbs that have merged with the city centre; middle-class suburbs and suburbs that developed as working-class residential structures; suburbs planned as part of the development of a city envisaged by Town Planning Schemes, and urgent interventions, for example the borgate in Rome built to provide accommodation for people whose houses had been demolished; isolated suburbs and peripheral areas that are well-connected; atypical suburbs equipped with services and therefore able to provide urban living conditions and suburbs without the facilities that allow a community to call itself a community; legal suburbs and suburbs that initially were illegal but were later legalised and absorbed by the city, whilst many others are still semi-rural. If you look at a map of any Italian city, you will easily see that suburbs occupy almost 90% of every urban settlement in Italy.

I should explain that when we study suburbs, we tend to think that they were built in areas with no sign of the past, thereby increasing their anonymity. In actual fact, every peripheral project is spread over a palimpsest of remains that are often very important; the new buildings are frequently in a dialogue either consciously or unconsciously with these remains (e.g., the Quadraro district in Rome); they produce striking, captivating results and underscore lively urban dialectics between
continuity and discontinuity. These amazing ruins – aqueducts, monumental tombs, old roads, buildings from every era, main streets, and secondary roads – generate a complex infrastructure network narrating how the city has evolved over the years; as an ensemble, this network generates a “scattered” monument, which also bestows an implicit but crucial morphological essence on a suburb, once its existence has come to light. Pier Paolo Pasolini was one of the major narrators of popular suburbs; he depicted them as places of poetic dwelling where exclusion from the city centre was redeemed by an innocent sense of existence dominated by primary needs. In Rome, all the popular suburbs create a universe unto themselves. These suburbs – unlike those of the lower middle and middle class – have been portrayed not only in films, but also in Pasolini’s novels The Hustlers and A Violent Life; they became a monument to neorealism in Rome at a time when the capital sought to establish a new model of community after the World War II. Although this interpretation was inspired by the Roman borgata, it is true of every city in Italy.

What these multiple suburbs suffer from, not only in Rome, is caused by three factors. The first is the almost generalised lack of social architectures in popular districts, i.e., services the inhabitants need in order to feel they are an active part of an urban community. One noteworthy example is the unfinished church in Piazzale Spartaco, designed by Saverio Muratori who, together with Mario De Renzi, designed the Tuscolano district. On paper, the church had a huge dome crowned by a lantern but, after construction was suspended, only the crypt was actually built and later used to celebrate Mass. Lack of maintenance is the second factor that has escalated the deterioration of many suburbs. A work of architecture will deteriorate physically unless work is frequently performed on it to stop the natural decay triggered by multiple causes; this may also affect the load-bearing structures of the building and cause irreversible damage. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that very often people do not really respect their homes; they add all kinds of supplementary features. For example, they add new windows or place different protective grilles on the windows of each apartment.
Other actions involve vandalism in the communal areas such as hallways and staircases. The third factor is a single-class makeup of the population, which inevitably produces a sense of reclusion and exclusion. We should not forget that before modernism, different social classes lived in cities side by side, resulting in strong urban cohesion. The inhabitants of suburbs lack spaces where they could meet and create a new sociality; in addition, their digital relationships on the Internet do not lead to strong, physical relations, so they tend to become radicalised in a private environment negatively considered as voluntary segregation, where everything is self-referential. This produces unusual forms of hostility, which, in turn, further separates individuals from the community. It triggers resorting in vain to the type of sociality offered by shopping centres, a refuge for people and families in search of social exchange which, in actual fact, is only a monadic pilgrimage to the deceptive paradise of consumption.

The same is true of multiplex cinemas, the solitary fragmentation of a rite which in past decades had an inspiring collective meaning. During a meeting entitled The Ills of Rome, convened in 1974 by Cardinal Ugo Poletti, Vicar-general of Rome, the discussion focused on the fact that the suburbs had no spaces for the social and cultural life of the community; this meant that families lived in a solitary dimension, without exchange, agreement, or conflict. Moreover, in the last thirty years, the presence of immigrants in the city – resulting from events triggered by globalisation as well as an inadequately governed decolonisation – has created additional problems regarding hospitality. It has prevented these new Romans from fully integrating into the community. Then there is the issue of the hardships endured in the suburbs, or rather in some suburbs; I believe that Rome has not experienced the same kind of revolt as the banlieues did in Paris in 2008 (even if conditions were ripe for such action) thanks to the hundreds of churches and parish centres in areas outside the city centre; they acted as an outer wall against a potential rebellion by those who feel, and often are, outsiders vis-à-vis the places they inhabit. The work that the Roman Diocese does in the peripheral desert is what maintains a residual
amount of functioning sociality and allows the capital to remain a city. The genesis of important projects in the suburbs was governed by Law 167; it was promulgated during the 1960s and 70s season of international utopia, when several design cultures proposed neo-futuristic urban scenarios. These visionary projects, based on greatness, were part of a neo-avant-garde trend that envisaged the advent of endless megacities dotted with fantastic architectures. Some of these ideas were transformed, others remained on paper. Greatness undoubtedly helped in the design of several buildings, for example Corviale, Laurentino 38, and Tor Bella Monaca in Rome, the colossal Rozzol Melara fortress in Trieste, and the Zen district in Palermo, where I was one of the designers. Due to the provisions of Law 167, these projects envisaged the construction of settlements for far too many people; this resulted in extremely repetitive districts that inspired a housing model that was, in a sense, tested too late, when the social class for which the model was designed had fragmented into classes with the same level of income but with different expectations; thus the model was increasingly ineffective and did not have the right features required for community life.

In recent years, the word *regeneration*, used in the discourse on cities, has been intended to trigger an evolution to improve their physical, productive, and cultural conditions. Regeneration has replaced the previously used *requalification* and *restructuring*. More precisely, regeneration indicates using a city’s native energy to generate change, now and in the future. A change that involves everything. For many reasons that, due to the limitations of space, I will not discuss here, this regeneration has involved only the functional side of the city, without providing solutions to the more important needs and values that are crucial for the city, for example, the relationships between old and new, permanence and mutations, the city of the individual and that of the community. Nor should we forget the need for an urgent critique of the ancestral notion of territoriality. This neo-functionalist orientation has found its centre in the digital universe and its symbol and programme in the English word *smart*, which I dislike because it recalls Mercury rather than Minerva.
In fact, the city needs not only more efficient and convenient services, but more importantly, it needs re-founding again and again, age after age, based on all of the many topics discussed above. The year 1968 was a watershed for our generation. The renowned philosopher Galvano Della Volpe had been invited to an important meeting in the lecture hall of the Faculty of Architecture in Valle Giulia. At the time, his most famous book, *The Critique of Taste*, had profoundly influenced the education of most of us students, especially the difference he posited between the independence of artistic languages and the heteronomy of scientific languages. That distinction prompted us to reconsider all aspects of architecture within the framework of a reaffirmed semantic organicity of construction, in which the technically oriented simplification imposed by modernity was negated in favour of a comprehensive reconsideration of the entire system of values of our chosen profession. At the end of his presentation, someone asked him to define architecture. He said: “Beautiful houses for as many people as possible”. I have never forgotten that short, concise sentence, because it linked beauty to the need for a place of dwelling, stating a concept very similar to the one expressed by Friedrich Hölderlin: “poetically man dwells”.

Function in architecture is undoubtedly crucial, but construction should not only involve producing cities and buildings, landscapes and territories – words that incidentally indicate two different aspects of the same part of the earth’s surface; although their use has to be effective, there must be a more complex outcome: the quest for beauty. The latter should not be construed as the imitation of paintings or sculptures in figurative art – for example Germano Celant’s “archisculpture” – or neo-naturalistic forms, ranging from vegetal to mineral and on to the mimesis of biological tissues and configurations between the microcosm and macrocosm. Bearing in mind Vitruvius and his *venustas*, today we have to reformulate this concept, just like it was reformulated when Vitruvius’ treatise was rediscovered: beauty must render the relationship between tectonics and architecture artistic.
The task of construction is to transform beauty into a specific entity based on the expression of the rationale and poetics of a composition. An expression that requires measure, excess, and the modelling of volumes, which must never coerce building logic and its archetypical relationship with space. All of this has to be achieved by implementing the best possible organisation of the objectives and means of attaining them. In the three questions I posed at the outset of this essay – to which I am trying to find, if possible, an answer – I maintained that our knowledge of the city can only be partial, transitory, and hypothetical. Coming to the end of these considerations, I’d like to add another word indicating the dynamic quality of this knowledge: that it must be not only relative, but also passionate. Reason is the best tool we can use to think about ourselves, others, and the world, but reason without passion remains inert like a cold fire. Only passion can confer on reason a genuine, ideal goal by coupling it with an emotional vector. Without emotions, reason would not be able to turn our ideas about the city into something more than just necessary abstractions, i.e., into essential expressions of our body, our memories, and the expectations we wish to see fulfilled. With this in mind, all the suburbs mentioned above are currently an aspect we need to interpret, but without the mechanicism of zoned cities, proposed and implemented by modern architecture, and their resulting social divisions. If we imagine a unitary city with its potential evenly distributed in all its districts, then the exclusion of the suburbs can be replaced by inclusive strategies that fully acknowledge the fact we are living at a time of epochal changes – the richest sources of urban energy. Given the aforementioned conditions, one possible strategy could be to avoid starting from the centre and working out towards the suburbs (a twentieth-century strategy) and instead work from the suburbs to the centre. In short, we should pass from inner to outer and from outer to inner. I am convinced that such a reversal could generate a new kind of beauty, the opposite of occasional, ephemeral beauty; an unusual urban aesthetics representing a fusion of the past, present, and future. This would give citizens back their uniqueness in an active and continuing re-discovery of truly being a community.
Abstract

A diagram is posited in line with the chosen construction of the appearance and legibility of an imagined or discovered reality by means of elements (graphs, words, signs, images, drawings, photographs) that do not imitate the form of that reality, but are rather meant to develop it further away from that form, toward processings through, above, or beyond form. A diagram is not a project pertaining to form, but an indexation of a path toward form, a path toward transcending or abandoning form, or merely a testimony about thinking about form in process. My intent is to develop a primary theory of diagrams as a basis for discussing the relationship between the sensory and conceptual performing of knowledge. My term for the production of sensory and conceptual knowledge related to and shown in the diagram model is “diagram aesthesis”. For instance, the primary function of diagrams in architecture and urban planning is to process an imaginative and conceptual sample, which is then elaborated and realised in architectural projects and organisational models for constructing objects, interiors, exteriors, buildings, urban districts, or entire cities. By means of project design and planning, a diagram is transformed from an imagined sample i.e. vision or expression of a mental representation into an applicable design for a building or anything else. The diagram is thus an instrument in architectural thinking: in imagining, conjuring up, in fantastic presentations, pragmatic and speculative thought. Already

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in the late 19th century, Henri Bergson had anticipated the notion of *thinking in space* and, more precisely, thinking based on terms and representations pertaining to space.

**Key Words:** Aesthetic theory, architecture, body of knowledge, diagram aesthesis, Frank O. Gehry’s work, mental image, tactical epistemologies

My intent is to develop a primary theory of *diagrams* as a basis for discussing the relationship between the sensory and conceptual performing of knowledge. My term for the production of sensory and conceptual knowledge related to and shown in the diagram model is “diagram aesthesis”. In other words, diagram models form the basis on which I posit aesthetic theory as an important initial instrument of epistemological theory concerning art and architecture. I am taking the notion of diagram from different artistic, architectural, and cultural practices, modifying it according to contemporary pragmatic theories of visualisation, as well as to Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Michel Foucault’s theories of the diagram, which are by now already *classic*. Unlike Deleuze, Guattari, and Foucault, for whom the diagram is an “abstract machine”, I interpret the diagram as an opportunity to concretise and visualise abstract knowledge through sensory representations, like in the work of painters such as Paul Klee, or numerous Fluxus, conceptual, and post-conceptual artists.

I am interested in the ways in which points, lines, figures, and assemblages of points, lines, and figures are distributed in relation to concepts and representations of concepts in discourses and formats in which discourses are ordered into dispositives. Observing and interpreting “distributions” of points, lines, figures, and assemblages of points, lines, and figures in relation to concepts and their representations in discourses and formats in which discourses are ordered into

dispositives is an aesthetic task. Observing those “distributions” is an aesthetic task because it shows how an epistemological possibility is derived from the visibility and legibility of a diagram, with visual and linguistic consequences for thought. It concerns the possibility of indexing and interpreting specific knowledge in a demonstrative way. The function of a diagram is not to name what is visible, but to bind together the visible and the conceptual with a view of interpreting its epistemological referent, for instance, a building, a block of buildings, or a city. The purpose of a diagram is to look for a body of knowledge for its epistemological referent so as to render it visible and not just conceptually and linguistically mediated.

The potentiality of knowledge that one may simultaneously view and read is diagrammatic knowledge. A diagram enables one to view and read simultaneously, which leads to understanding, by means of a construction using mixed-media materials – hybridity – consisting of variant relations between graphs and linguistic records; photographs and linguistic records; graphs, photographs, and linguistic or numeric records. Graphs are recordings or linear drawings that represent a relation or process. Graphs consist of lines setting out from a given point and generating a figure in space or time. A photograph may be used like a graph. In such an instance, it becomes an insertion in lieu of a graph or a figurative agent performing the function of a graph as an element of a diagram. In every diagram, visible and legible indices serve to suggest the uncertain inter-space between a linguistic expression and image: between the literal and metaphorical communication of epistemological contents. Moreover, a diagram does not show realised forms of knowledge, but processes involving knowledge, more accurately, processings of knowledge that are simultaneously conceptual and sensory: epistemological and aesthetic positions, practices and stances. The function of a diagram is not to establish the form of an object or knowledge thereof, but to point to an excess of différAuce.

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between forms in time and space, which is nothing but processing that
the diagram renders as a mixed-media epistemological body that is vi-
sual and linguistic in character. A diagram is an expression of process-
ing whereby knowledge as form is replaced with knowledge as event.

For example, the function of a diagram is to perform the movement of
thought in space, although its function may also be to make the de-
monstrative – rhetorical – argument that thought exists as a process of
discovering the visible world. But a diagram’s function may also be to
make the projective – anticipatory – argument that that which is invis-
ible, constructed on the conceptual cores of thought, may be viewed,
that is, demonstratively sensed and promised. A diagram has the im-
portant function of a complex promise of visible knowledge, which de-
termines the diagram as an instrument of thought linked to the effect of
aesthesis. In the most traditional Western sense, visible knowledge has
been called “theory” (theoria, θεωρία), meaning: to look, see, observe.
To desire the visibility of invisible concepts. It wasn’t for no reason
that Ludwig Wittgenstein insisted that “an inner process stands in need
of outward criteria.”

That is why the notion of diagram aesthesis is so important to me.

For instance, the primary function of diagrams in architecture and
urban planing is to process an imaginative and conceptua sample,
which is then elaborated and realised in architectural projects and organ-
isational models for constructing objects, interiors, exteriors, build-
ings, urban districts, or entire cities.

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By means of project design and planning, a diagram is transformed from an imagined sample i.e. vision or expression of a mental representation into an applicable design for a building or anything else:

Unlike classical theories based on imitation, diagrams do not map or represent already existing objects or systems but anticipate new organisations and specify yet to be realized relationships.\(^7\)

Therefore, a diagram does not show an ideal architectural object, but a way of approaching an ideal or applicative architectural object. This way of approaching is an epistemological formation. The diagram is thus an instrument in architectural thinking: in imagining, conjuring up, in fantastic presentations, pragmatic and speculative thought. Already in the late 19\(^{th}\) century, Henri Bergson had anticipated the notion of thinking in space and, more precisely, thinking based on terms and representations pertaining to space:

We necessarily express ourselves by means of words and we usually think in terms of space. That is to say, language requires us to establish between our ideas the same sharp and precise distinctions, the same discontinuity, as between material objects.\(^8\)

A diagram seems to lead from a non-concept, an optical image of space, to a concept, i.e. notion expressed in the “internal language” of spatial attributes. A diagram is the processing of abstract hints or ideas that have yet to find their concrete object, building, or order of assemblage, i.e. that have yet to find their concept that might be exactly realised. Processing abstract ideas sometimes leads to utopian architecture, for

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instance, Constant’s *New Babylon* (*Dériville*, 1959–1974) or El Lissitzky’s skyscrapers (*Wolkenbügel*, 1924). But typically, it leads to the concrete architecture of producing new buildings, districts, and cities – e.g. Walter Gropius’s diagrams and designs for the Törten housing estate in Dessau (1926–1928).

For example, in Frank O. Gehry’s work, a diagram is an assemblage of expressive graphs, i.e. lines that subsequently enable a rational and pragmatic establishment of relations between construction activities and the anticipated forms or sequences of forms in the processing of an imaginative expression in a material building occupying a concrete space.

Today, when I read Gilles Deleuze’s interpretation of Paul Klee’s diagrams in comparison to Leibniz’s baroque philosophical constructs, I start thinking of Gehry’s “non-conceptual concepts” in drawing, made in preparation for diagrammatic processings and, later, architectural designs. The diagrammatic processings of Gehry’s distortions of lines in his drawings, their tangles and unexpected points of contact make the geometry of his designs less hard and enable it to acquire softness for touching (inflexions, as well as tactility). Working diagrammatically, he enables the transition from the curvature of a potential surface to that of another potential or future surface that define the architectural space of the building. Therefore, Frank O. Gehry comes closer to the baroque imagination of curvy and rhetorically motivated surfaces, than the pragmatic and analytical modernist Paul Klee.

The expressivity of Gehry’s drawings is not the personalised expression of frantic introspection of the part of their author, but the expressivity of a processed line, processed tangle of lines, and processed anticipations of surfaces that may and must form between the lines as

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their boundaries. His constructive expressivity is not an expression of
an architectural emotion, but a draughtsman’s highlighting of a graph
forming a diagram in order to cause an affect that relays from the
drawing to the building and from the building to the body of the user,
i.e. viewer, reader, or listener who is in it.

Just as the film director Peter Greenaway constructed viewing graphs
in his film The Draughtsman’s Contract (1982), so Frank O. Gehry
constructs his own draughtsman’s contract with architectonic effects.
The surfaces that arise from his drawings and their curvy organic lines
are not neutral. At stake here is not the vector orientation of the result-
ing architectonic surface, but its diagrammatic effect and intensity, in
other words, its diagram aesthesis that results in an affect that osten-
sibly seems abstract, but has a concrete effect, leading to a concrete
understanding of an architectural object – for instance, a building.

In Gehry’s buildings, this pragmatic intensity of affect is attained by
confronting the advanced technology employed in the construction of
the building and a diagrammatic interlocking of lines promising the
intensity of thrust beyond the type of thought canonised on the basis
of modernist poetics, predicated on vertical and horizontal lines. Cur-
vatures leading to dynamically and ostensibly unstable forms are the
purpose of this materialisation of the architect/artist’s fantasy, i.e. non-
conceptual concept, i.e. thinking in terms and images of space.

His drawings record the imaginative form of the building in a way that
promises to set the “mental image” moving from a static to a dynamic
flow and interlocking of lines. Moving from a static form into a dy-
amic interlocking of lines promises a diagrammatic processing of the
building’s surfaces. And that is the potential impulse for moving on the
part of the material used for construction and spatial encompassing of
the surfaces (shells, curtains, folds, construction surfaces analogous to
the skin of a body or the outer shell of a robot, android, spaceship, or
ocean liner).
The surface is the impact target of these dynamic drawings subjected to transformations in the lines of sight and forces in these imagined architectural spaces that have yet to be appropriated and transformed from a non-place into a place. Gehry’s drawings function not as images of the designed forms but as diagrams because they show the movement of the gaze along with imagined dynamic or fluid surfaces across the fictional space of the drawing paper. They lead from an imagined space – the space of imagining a processed relation between lines – to a surface. At the same time, they anticipate references to the real space of constructing a concrete and functional building, for example: the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (1997), the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles (2003), or Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago’s Millennium Park (2004).

These are materialisations of diagrammatic processings of the lines of a drawing that promise curved surfaces. These diagrammatic lines generate dynamic and expressive linear trajectories toward a surface that encompasses the gaze and thereby the body of the visitor, spectator, or listener. Their important characteristic is the expressivity of their lines, which turns into the expressivity of surfaces anticipating forms – impacts of expression that transform into an edifice, which is simultaneously a piece of urban stage set design and an idealised functional space designed for public performances, exhibitions, or habitation.

**Diagram Aesthesis: Interpreting Diagrammatic Knowledge**

*Diagram aesthesis* is the uncertain promise of a visible *body* of knowledge – leading from *knowledge as being*\(^\text{11}\) to knowledge as a visible body. That is the purpose of a diagram: to enable tactical approaches to the visibility of a *body of knowledge*.

It concerns the sensory objectification of knowledge: a concept acquiring a visible and concretised body. Like all visibility, the visibility of knowledge is not direct, but complex, contradictory, and often brought to the edge, between the empirically verifiable, abstractly thought, and illusionistically deceptive.

I am interested in tactical epistemologies, i.e. “diagrammatic aesthe-ses”. That means that I am interested in open and variable graphic-textual models of epistemology concerning current, localised, and transient connections between the effects of conceptual and visual processes; at the same time, these models must also have an interventional intent. In other words, I am interested in the aesthetic and, arising from it, epistemological potential of diagrams. I am interested in the visibility of knowledge.

Interpreting the paragraphs above!

*Tactical epistemologies* are performable, fast-moving, and intentionally-interventionally oriented representations of subjectivation events in relation to current sequences or effects of revealing, establishing, indexing, archiving, or transmitting knowledge of processes in the world, in media technologies, in the relations between the world and media. That means that the world, techniques/technologies, or media cannot be understood or, consequently, applied unless one is familiar with already applied or potentially applicable instructions pertaining to acting, as well as with the individual and general concepts under-lying every approach to the world, to media technologies, and to the relations between the world and media. It concerns the technologies whereby a drawing gesture is subjectivated into a *body of knowledge* by means of linguistic expressions of concepts. For instance, Frank O. Gehry brings a rather intimate recording\(^{12}\) in a mutating form to the

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concept of a building, whereby the form’s mutation through a diagram shows the way the concept becomes visible for future constellations of objects in the world. The term “subjectivation” signifies here the derivation of a subject in an interventional as well as epistemological act concerning the world and knowledge about the world. A subject is not “someone” who precedes the intervention, but someone who becomes a subject through the intervention performed in concrete conditions and circumstances of the objectification of knowledge.

“Tactical”, which is then entirely specific in epistemological terms, signifies a carefully pre-planned concrete performance of an intervention and acting in various disciplines, expert epistemologies, types of experiential beings (cross-species), and found forms of life. In the context of my research, “tactical” signifies the modalities of performing and coordinating a possible process of cognition and subjectivation by acquiring knowledge. Moreover, the tactical refers to the objects, situations, and events at the edges of positing any kind of impact into the world (ge-stell) and deriving its conditions of control (contrôle) within or with the world. Therefore, tactical epistemologies signify moving in a planned and fast manner over the edges of ordered and indexed bodies of knowledge in the disciplines. Even more importantly, tactical epistemologies signify interactive learning by and through them about the politics of the production, storing, distribution, division, exchange, and consumption of media knowledge about media matters and whatever they refer to: painting, architecture, music, artists’ behaviour. This double quality is important because it enables one to compare self-referential and referential knowledge in a specific epistemological practice and, certainly, domain of activity.

“Diagram aestheses” are constructs of *aesthetic theory* about *tactical epistemologies* represented in *diagrams*, i.e. epistemologically motivated recordings of relations between visual graphs, as well as drawings and photographs, and written recordings in linguistic languages pertaining to the case studies under exploration. Those case studies may be technical and technological set-ups, media impacts, art practices and works, cultural productions, ecological, urbanist, and architectural entities, and the world as a whole or in fragments. Aesthetic theory in reconsiderations of *itself* as a discipline, i.e. interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary link between various sub-disciplines or disciplines, entails reconsidering the paradigmatic traits of aesthetics as an epistemological practice within viewing and thinking, as well as media labour whereby thought is shaped between linguistic and visual expression, representation, and interpretation. Concerning “diagram aesthesis”: it means reconsidering the concept of “aesthesis” (gr. *αἴσθησῐς*) in relation to the difference between the aesthetic and perceptive, and in relation to new meanings of *aesthetic experience* and *aesthetic attitude* pertaining to a diagrammatic record. In the context that I am presently trying to build – *aesthetic experience* and *aesthetic attitude* are not idealities derived from Kantian “disinterestedness”, that is, an approach free of practical interests; rather, they constitute modalities derived from a *tense* situation where there is no distance between an individual and a group of individuals in the political subjectivation of the visible and the thought.

The perceptive and aesthetic differ in relation to the contexts of the usage and derived meanings of the faculty and activity of sensory *collection* of data and information, as well as their processing, regarding the widest possible range of perceived world phenomena: Australian wildfires, New Year’s parties, car races, elephant herds walking, or Gehry’s edifices housing global museums, etc.

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Originally, the perceptive (lat. *perception*) is a concept that was developed in psychology, where it signifies the physiological, that is, bodily, that is, intellectual *processing of data* generated by the sensory perception of objects, situations, and events in the “outside” world, that is, information about *them*. Psychological theories have constructed extremely diverse scientific *platforms* for interpreting perception as an individual’s capability of keeping in touch with the world through their senses. For example, those differences may be indexed from a Darwinist “experiencing of things rather than a having of experiences”\(^\text{17}\) to the postulation of the intelligibility of perception, i.e. understanding perception as an activity similar to thinking (thought-like processes), i.e. an activity akin to higher-level mental processes.\(^\text{18}\)

By contrast, in cultural studies perception signifies the cultural, which means social and socio-historical contingency of the faculty, feasibility, and efficiency of *semiological* reacting to, registering, identifying, and processing the sensory-bodily perception of objects, situations, and events in the “outside” world. Frequently, cultural perception is to a large extent determined by propositions from cultural relativism and cultural constructivism, which means conceptions about processing sensory materials or sensory information based on the modalities and models that a specific culture imposes on an individual concerning the sensory accumulation and processing of data.

Cultural perception is guided by notions pertaining to the semiological and textual processing of sensory information and rests on understanding perception as the reception of information. Sensory data are treated as “sensory information” organised the way meaning is discursively organised in the cultural order. At the same time, the intelligible processing of “sensory information” is viewed as a specific practice of

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of reading, i.e. coding and decoding information that is registered through the senses.\textsuperscript{19}

In aesthetic theory,\textsuperscript{20} \textit{aesthesis} is interpreted in two ways: (I) as primary perception geared toward sensory phenomenalities and perceived qualities of phenomenality that may be seen, heard, touched, smelled, etc., i.e. to one’s sensory primary knowledge of external phenomena and (II) as an individual body’s ability to feel something as pleasant or unpleasant etc., i.e. as primary reception geared toward making a “sensory judgement” or, conversely, to a specific individual or collective \textit{sensitivity} in and for the world.

At this time, I will ignore the long evolution history of the different ways that “aesthesis” has been interpreted, which have led to theories of judgement and taste based on sensory experience, that is, to theories of sensory perception and feeling as something exceptional that differs from everyday perception in relation to the differences between nature and art, art and culture, culture and society.

\textit{Aesthesis} may be defined, then, as a specific “tactical epistemology”. \textit{Aesthesis} is a kind of risky and provocative reflection on the world in which we actively are, with visible and sensible consequences. That means that \textit{aesthesis} is identified as a type of performative and interventional knowledge that is linked to individual and collective reflexive participation in \textit{forms of life} that are diverse in character and have various kinds of relations to me/us, from nature to technology, from art, media, and culture to various intersections of social antagonisms and emancipatory potentialities.


Thus posited, my concept of *aesthesis* is indebted to my appropriative as well as revisionist readings of Marcuse’s “new sensibility”,21 Eagleton’s critical “ideology of the aesthetic”,22 Welsch’s speculative “codex of aesthetic awareness”,23 and Rancière’s emancipatory “aesthetic revolution”.24 While Marcuse, Eagleton, and, to be sure, Rancière revised “aesthesis” and then “aesthetics”, confronting it with the social, political, and ethical contingencies of sensuality and the body as a discourse or dispositive, Welsch pursued the more treacherous field flanked by the immanence and transcendence of aesthetics, i.e. *aesthetics as aesthetics* and aesthetics in the field of uncertain contemporary cultural and artistic practices oriented toward the almost invisible conditions of media and information politics and ethics. That is why Welsch underscores that “there is no seeing without a blind spot”.25 This is the risk that *aesthesis* in the contemporary sense must undertake in order to differ from literal perception diverging from new sensibility, expressive of a rise in life instinct (Marcuse), in relation to the social as a discursive body (Eagleton), in relation to the aggregate of relations between what may be seen and what may be uttered, between knowledge and action, activity and passivity (Rancière), and in relation to the edges of aesthetic leading via sensory indifference toward anaesthesia (Welsch). In that regard, “anaesthesia” is the inversion of “aesthesis”.

*Diagram aesthesis* then signify models of locating, indexing, recording, describing, and interpreting, by graphic and textual means, the risks that bring about *aesthesis* in relation to different epistemological

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agents in the world, from media to architecture and from urbanism to ecology.

A diagram is a recording of a processing of the relationship between an image and a word according to aesthetic demands and epistemological effects. Diagrams serve to posit any type of knowledge, including aesthetic knowledge, as visible and legible, with all the limitations that the visible and legible have in relation to the thought. But a diagram is also something that is an interventional agent of aesthetic knowledge and that in itself emerges as aesthetic knowledge, which means as visible and legible. The term “diagram” is linked to the procedures of visualisation and textualisation. Visualisation signifies the procedure whereby the non-visual or visual of the world is rendered visible in a contextualised and thereby formalised way. Textualisation signifies adjusting a visual and linguistic recording to our faculties of understanding. Visualisation and textualisation present a body of knowledge, its objectification in specific disciplines and their surrounding cultures.

Therefore, a diagram is the complex and variant relationship between the phenomenal and textual – the presenced and the mediated. It wasn’t for no reason that Gilles Deleuze pointed out, writing about Michel Foucault’s notion of diagram:

> If there are many diagrammatic functions and even matters, it is because every diagram is a spatio-temporal multiplicity. But it is also because there are as many diagrams as there are social fields in history.²⁶

Every society has its diagram(s).²⁷ Every hybrid disciplinary field opens potential possibilities for more specific diagrams, from content to appearance to function. Mystical diagrams were an effect of the imagination being formalised to an extent that exceeded the experiential world confronted with what was absent, past, future, or beyond.

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Scientific diagrams serve the function of rendering visible complex mathematical images or images of experimental impacts in relation to a given reality that is the object of study. In physics, diagrams show the processing of matter in the real or a modelled world in line with mathematical infrastructures. In economics, diagrams show the processing of capital.

Political diagrams are rhetorical constructions that are meant to supply certainty and cogency to an interpreter or representative of a certain political platform or to a representation of an ideological and political undertaking. In media, diagrams are tactical derivations of the relativity of relations and functions between information and its structural presentation by managing the effects of words and images. Media diagram theory speaks of “design for information” or the “politics of data” in relation to hierarchical structures (tree models), relational structures (network models), temporal structures (time coordinates and flow-line models), spatial structures (maps), spatiotemporal structures (trajectories, simulations of lines of movement), and textual structures (semioses of text and image in relation to a referent). Artists’ diagrams are either poetic formalisations of their reflections on their own work; or, by contrast, representations of different explorations of the relationship of art and what is beyond art in relation to art or the artist’s intentions: from the character of their formative material (pictorial, sonic, architectonic, screen) to appropriative and participatory potentialities in contemporary art and architecture. Artists’ diagrams indirectly formalise intuitions, imaginary projections, intuitive insights, or pragmatic decisions about acting or pro-scientific or pseudo-scientific reflexive recording of research.

A diagram is posited in line with the chosen construction of the appearance and legibility of an imagined or discovered reality by means of elements (graphs, words, signs, images, drawings, photographs) that do

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not imitate the form of that reality, but are rather meant to develop it further away from that form, toward processings through, above, or beyond form. A diagram is not a project pertaining to form, but an indexation of a path toward form, a path toward transcending or abandoning form, or merely a testimony about thinking about form in process.
AESTHETICS AND ARCHITECTURE
FACING A CHANGING SOCIETY

Stefano Catucci

Abstract

Since the nineteenth century, architecture has often been conceived as an engine of social change, an enterprise capable of assuring a better life, improving hygiene, morality, well-being and social exchange. Today, this confidence in architecture’s social skills has consistently weakened and instead architecture seems to belong to the global system of communication. Historically, concerns of form have accompanied architecture’s social vocation, but today they seem to accommodate its transformation into a big medium, whose task is to conceive new markers for urban spectacle and tourism. Aesthetics has been at the centre of modern architecture’s concerns, but if we return to the original meaning of that term, its origin in the Greek word *aesthesis* and its relationship with sensibility and perception, we may realize that today’s formal concerns aren’t as important as they have been in the past. The main challenge of architecture today is to recover its social function while avoiding any revival of its past illusions and any temptation to pursue new ideologies. The problem of architecture, in this perspective, consists in defining a new view of urban forms of life and interpreting not only the practical needs of people, but also their feelings and longing to be part of new communities. This is all the more sensitive, and all the more true, in an era in which major transformations in the social composition of populations are still far from consolidated and the crisis of urban planning has compromised the traditional vocation of architecture of providing order to the city and to life. The aesthetics of architecture must therefore overcome the
question of form and try to help people to find places or moments to feel, once again, part of a real community, despite the difficulties posed by politics, economy and, currently, by global health emergencies as well.

Faced with the impressive growth of industrial settlements and rapid increase of new housing areas marked by profound decay, in 1836 the British architect Augustus Pugin wrote Contrasts, a controversial book in which he argued that a moral and egalitarian society could be achieved by reviving the medieval Gothic style.\textsuperscript{1} It is well known that Pugin designed the new Palace of Westminster – although due to his fervent adherence to Catholicism he figured only as a collaborator of another architect, Charles Berry – and that his attention never turned to residential architecture, but mainly to churches and cathedrals. Nevertheless, his belief that a return to the Gothic style could favour a better expression of faith, and consequently an improvement in social relations and people’s living conditions, remained a central argument to which most architectural utopias would return in the late nineteenth century. Pugin’s ambivalence, strengthened by his intertwining of religion and aesthetics, remained intact even when themes of faith were combined, and more frequently replaced, with those of politics, and when interest in cathedrals was supplanted by working-class housing. As Joseph Rykwert writes, “it was not clear whether it would be a different architecture that would produce the social change, or if change was the necessary condition for the renewal of the architectural context”.\textsuperscript{2}

It was architectural rationalism, in the twentieth century, that dispelled any doubt by considering building projects and urban planning work as the very engine of social change. Architecture was then considered able

\textsuperscript{1} Augustus Pugin, \textit{Contrasts; or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day} (London, 1841); available at The Internet Archive (https://archive.org).

to improve society by establishing a new sense of order, cleanliness and efficiency. In fact, the many versions of architectural rationalism shared the idea of improving society by promoting hygienic standards that are still lacking in many of the largest urban conglomerations around the world and by combining construction techniques with a new aesthetic that could yield a higher degree of mental balance and better morals. Therefore, the problem of form in architecture was linked to the need for a wider change in social relations, but was conceived as the very instrument for achieving that change.

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This is not the place to examine the meagre successes and more blatant failures of this approach. Rather, it should be noted that the situation has changed radically over the last 50 years and that aesthetic issues are not outside this historical transformation, but are an eloquent sign of it. The loss of confidence in the demiurgic role of architecture coincided with a considerable evolution of technology and globalization of taste that has enabled the coexistence of any style and any language: from the most imaginative to the most traditional, from the most eclectic to the most dogmatic and, of course, from the most trivial to the most banal. The age of the archistars, with their strong authorial attitude, has conditioned the growth of subjectivism in matters of form. The same architects have imprinted their signatures on new buildings in cities across the world, simply transforming them into aesthetic objects, new aesthetic markers, as if those cities had turned into a global museum of contemporary “architecturability”. At the same time, the lack of a hegemonic language has made our age not only eclectic, but fundamentally schizophrenic. Financiers decide what can attract investors and the market, while architects are called to manage the obvious or to overcome their own imagination, if not to give a touch of fashionable-
well described by Rem Koolhaas in his book titled *Junkspace*.³

Whereas cities used to grow, age after age, in line with a certain stylistic unity, or at most by contrasting a few competing formal choices, today heterogeneity dominates. The development of London over the last two decades is a good example of this situation, but the birth of cities that were previously almost non-existent, such as Dubai or the current capital of Kazakhstan – recently renamed Nur-Sultan after Nursultan Nazarbaev, the president of that country from 1991 to 2019 – and the competitive skylines of Chinese or other cities in the Emirates, show that the combination of finance, power and architecture has produced interchangeable objects whose function is more to dazzle than to serve. However, architecture hasn’t lost, and perhaps will never lose, its vocation for order, and this becomes a major problem when politics and economics seem unprepared to face increasing social disorder.

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On the other hand, the architect is less and less alone in his design work. The growing complexity of administrative and security requirements demand the cooperation of specialists. Highly specialized engineering companies help architects to turn their visions into reality. The techniques of digital design, from BIM to algorithms, delegate some of the work to automation. Often the choice of form remains the only decision left to designers, bringing their work closer to that of sculptors. György Lukács wrote that architecture could equally fulfil its social task – building for people and the community – without addressing aesthetic problems and values, distinguishing itself in this way from the horizon of art.⁴

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Nowadays, alongside the type of architecture that follows the markets, there is an architecture that raises primarily aesthetic problems and is a branch of our general communication system. Urban planning, in turn, is going back to what has grown in the past, trying to rationalize and reclaim: sustainability, ecology, green and urban agriculture are often its watchwords, especially in post-industrial areas. But precisely in urban planning we can still find the echo of a weakened utopia, the idea that a project can undertake or facilitate social change, which is difficult to understand due to the new fractures and aggregations that occur in local communities facing a globalized economy and the rise of multicultural societies.

The situation generated by the 2020 pandemic has only reinforced these difficulties. Hannah Arendt wrote in 1957 that the production of loneliness is one of the constitutive aspects of modern capitalist organization. How can architecture take charge of the extreme loneliness experienced with the spread of the new corona virus, and how can articulation of spaces try to contrast this drift while assuring not only safety and hygiene, but also sociality? If we believe that architecture can provide answers to a social upheaval, for which we have, so far, only questions, we are still facing Pugin’s dilemma. If all styles are possible, none are necessary, and it is exactly the lack of necessity that poses the greatest problems for today’s architecture.

Technological innovations have yet to find an aesthetic of their own. At the beginning of the twentieth century, looking at the shape of the first airplanes, the Hungarian art critic Leó Popper – a friend from Lukács’s youth who died of tuberculosis at the age of 25 – wrote that they had to become “technologically ugly” to become aesthetically acceptable.

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It was a severe judgement directed at functionalism and probably too radical, or simply wrong. Yet it is certain that, to give just one example, the installation of solar panels or new ecological solutions for the thermal behaviour of buildings has seldom tried to find its own aesthetic quality, a formal dimension able to balance innovation with perception. Walter Benjamin said that to make new materials and construction techniques acceptable, architects and engineers often turn to an old aesthetic: people have the tendency to trust and approve of what they already know and this is the reason why, according to Benjamin, the introduction of glass and cast iron in large edifices, such as the Passages in Paris, began with a revival of the classical style, resorting to the use of columns, arches and so on.7

Today, the lack of a style of reference places technical innovation in an ideal condition to create a new aesthetic without resorting to examples from the past. Yet there is still no solid connection between engineering research and architecture and, going back to what Koolhaas wrote, architects often limit themselves to implementing what has already been decided by technicians, as if it were a question of putting a mask on something that is meant to remain invisible. The reason why the Centre Pompidou, in Paris, has become a cult object is precisely the aesthetic form given to its plant equipment, trying not to dissemble, but to enhance the appearance of technology itself. In more recent times, I could mention in Rome – my city – the instalment of solar panels on the roof of the Aula Nervi in the Vatican, a project designed by Livio De Santoli, which had to follow the original, elaborate, undulating shape conceived by Pier Luigi Nervi. Or, going further back in time in the same city, still an example of great interest is the astonishing Faculty of Chemistry building designed by Giuseppe Pagano in the Città Universitaria of Sapienza, a visionary building unfortunately compromised by subsequent technical pseudo-maintenance interventions. But examples remain exceptions and don’t have the force of a rule yet.

More generally speaking, if we are still waiting to see genuine cooperation between technology and architecture, only architects can answer the question “What is to be done?” and only their work in designing can make new ideas flourish. As Gilles Deleuze said in another context, having ideas is a “rare event”, but ideas are something specific, inseparable from the field in which they emerge. Architects don’t need philosophy to think for them, because “the only people capable of thinking effectively” about architecture are architects, architecture critics or “those who love” architecture. Nevertheless, if we’re not trying to avoid the task of saying at least “where we are now”, “what is happening today”, and if we want to say what philosophical aesthetics thinks about the problem of form at this time, something must be added, even if it is only a few notes.

If we compare the present situation with the recent past, the greatest difficulty is that there are no common guidelines, movements or poetics that might unify architects by involving them in similar social intentions and formal choices. Since all styles are possible, we are obliged to consider the experiences of contemporary architecture one by one, individually, as is also the case in the field of the arts in general. An extraordinary fragmentation of architectural work is the main consequence of this tendency to personalize styles, and, of course, the lack of a shared aesthetic encourages the growth of an architecture without quality, the one which is preferred by the construction industry and the real estate market, not to mention emergency conditions where there is no access to any kind of architecture. There is also another consequence, probably less visible but not for that reason any less important: architects today can change their language and skin according to the context of their work, the time and space of their activity, without the obligation to always remain the same. This might seem somewhat inconsistent: we know and love especially architects whose formal signatures are easy to identify and the major archistars usually
design in different places buildings that look a bit similar to each other, or that at least have a “family resemblance”. But the ability to change according to context, so different in every part of the world, is not a mark of inconsistency. On the contrary, it is a sign of thinking architecture in a given situation, of adapting one’s style to the context in which one is called to operate and not considering architecture exclusively as an authorial pursuit.

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We have to remember that architecture is not a science, but a practice. The ancient Greeks used two words to describe its role: one was techne, the same term they applied to what we call “the arts”; the other was praxis. Both words indicated activities governed by reason. Unlike science, techne involves “production”, not just knowledge, while praxis can’t rely on stable truths, but must always take into account the context of action. If we go back to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, we find some interesting remarks on what is required by practice, and not by science. First, a good praxis requires phronesis, a kind of rationality that knows how to judge every single situation without abstractly imposing everywhere the same course of action. Second, a good praxis requires a sense for kairos, the right moment for using your knowledge or displaying your visions. Then, a good praxis has to choose its orthos logos, the right type of rationality and knowledge to apply in different concrete situations and moments. Finally, it has to take into account the endoxa, i.e. the opinions of the community. Slightly forcing Aristotle’s words, we can transfer these features to the present condition of architecture. Knowing how to recognize a context and how to decide what is appropriate in that place and moment, choosing the appropriate technical knowledge for the concrete, local situation wherein one operates, listening to what the community has to say not only about its

needs, but also about its expectations, feelings, desires, hopes and so on – these are the qualities that define aesthetics, that is the sensitivity of an architecture capable of thinking about its own sense and focusing on real forms of life, not on the repetition of a style.

The most striking types of architecture, of course, remain the most authorial ones, which nevertheless pay a high tribute to the culture of industrial design. The idea of the building as an aesthetic object, as an urban marker, undoubtedly has a special charm, but at the same time it spreads its influence on many other types of architecture that do not need to follow the same path. According to the classical analysis of Waldemar Conrad, the aesthetic object is a special thing you can easily separate from any context. It is a perfect model of the phenomenological “reduction”, i.e. the philosophical epoché by which Edmund Husserl put into parentheses any factual data to reach the eidos and the transcendental level of conscience and thought. In this perspective, the aesthetic object is spontaneously “reduced” because its value rests exclusively on itself, independently from its environment. The modern museum has been the best machine for producing aesthetic objects, effacing their contexts, putting works of art by different authors and from different ages side by side, and we all know that a part of the challenging effect of Marcel Duchamp’s ready-mades stems precisely from its highlighting how the museum can transform anything into a work of art – or, more precisely, how it can confuse the threshold between art and common objects. The architecture of aesthetic objects converts cities into museums where new formal values are exhibited. Buildings become landmarks, useful both as identifiers and tourist attractions.

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Very often, however, those buildings could be placed in any city and they begin to establish a relationship with their context only later, once their presence starts to change the urban landscape surrounding them. It is possible that the rise of this kind of architecture finds its reasons in the crisis of urban shaping and perception, even before the crisis of urban planning. To design a landmark then becomes a way to restore a perception of cities or landscapes that have lost their sense of identity – or, in the case of new cities, that need to establish their identity from scratch. Despite the inevitable but residual attention to the existing context, they are fundamentally atopic buildings, and precisely for this reason they resemble industrial design products. They are aesthetic attractors, whose task is to renew the image of places rather than to integrate with them.

One of the most prominent Italian architects, Michele De Lucchi, is also active in industrial design and has dealt with this issue very clearly. Addressing an audience of architecture students in Rome, in 2012, he talked about “shelf architecture”, that is a type of architecture conceived in the form of models arranged on a shelf and displayed in his studio, wherefrom a client – in his talk the already mentioned President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev – can choose what to build. The sweet irony of this clever definition can be extended to various types of architecture conceived as yielding aesthetic objects. Their quality and inventiveness can’t be denied, but at the same time they show that focusing on formal aspects of architecture is not the way to face the problems of an urban community and – in short – of a city.

The real challenge of architectural aesthetics today is to find an answer for new forms of urban life and, in the midst of a process of social remodelling that has yet to attain stability, to interpret the situation with a view of the flexibility, openness and quality of life. Therefore, architectural aesthetics must assume a political awareness without thinking it is able to replace politics, breaking free from Pugin’s dilemma and beginning from local, contextual needs, without looking exclusively at a global audience. In his studies of social transformations that have
marked the past few decades, Christophe Guilluy has clearly identified what is happening today: the problem of migratory flows, the formation of multicultural neighbourhoods, the decline of the middle class and the formation of a socio-cultural continuum between categories that until recently were quite distinct, such as young people, retirees, workers, employees, artisans, small farmers, small independent workers, the unemployed. All of these processes are still in motion and have drawn a sharp dividing line between large cities, where even the most marginalized areas are partially affected by the positive effects of globalization, and smaller cities, which instead feel excluded by the new global economy and where a transversal popular class is born, often invisible or obliterated. A good aesthetic, coherent with the Aristotelian principles of praxis, can be a vector of coexistence and mutual recognition, but it is necessary to contain subjectivism, authorial personalization, and to think more closely in terms of social life, feelings and urban atmospheres.

On the fringes of a conference held in 1995 at The Cooper Union in New York, John Hejduk said that architecture has only two dimensions and that the third one is always politics. This was probably his way of cutting the knot of Pugin’s dilemma and preserving the autonomy of research in architecture. Today, architecture needs to find its own politics – that is, its understanding of contemporary urban life – without replacing politics or creating new ideologies, but negotiating its responses both with social reality, economics and, of course, politics itself. Aesthetics remains the way for architecture to express its thoughts, its architectural ideas. But moving away from the logic of aesthetic objects, architecture must immerse itself in the life of communities, or the aggregates that still await their opportunity to build a common feeling even through initiatives from architects. These may not necessarily translate into new buildings.

In fact, it is possible to work on existing buildings, or undertake temporary actions that have, for communities that are still undefined or degraded, the meaning of a ritual for their own identification and recognition. An aesthetic for forms of life, a sensibility able to connect architectural research with the perception and use of places: this is in any case more important than the process of aestheticization and that which architects, as well as critics and those who love architecture, are called upon to think today.
THE MYTH OF FORM

Boško Drobnjak and Zoran Đukanović

“Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it.”

Bertolt Brecht

The myth of form contains an architectural paradox. Without form, there is no architecture. The hypothetical question of form vs. thanatos justifies the myth of form in architecture. The autonomy project of architecture is a myth that has its different fields: cognitive, practical, and, ultimately, subjective. The subjective is inseparable from the field of architecture, both in terms of creation and perception. If there is no form in architecture, architecture disappears as a field. A formal approach to architecture uses proportional analysis to find repetitiveness in intensity. The tip of the iceberg is the autonomy of architecture. In architecture, the formal has its own strict rules; by contrast, avant-garde practices questioned the rules. Nathaniel Coleman confronts the universal and individual mythology of architecture by arguing: “Couched as a form of resistance to the dominance of capitalist production, autonomy in architecture is more convincingly a symptom of the very condition it purports to resist. In point of fact, autonomy in architecture constructs an apologia for solipsism, radical individualism, self-indulgence, and a negation of the social and other external forces that shape architecture and which it shelters.”

That said, Coleman attacks the so-called “autonomy project in architecture”, emphasizing that this vision only serves to further separate architecture from everyday life, while contributing to the transformation of cities into predetermined environments shaped by capitalist production.


The following text aims to observe the city in its totality through the cracks of the narrative myth of form.
The myth of form

An urban environment is a direct sensuous cognition of a constructed environment as a formal practice of articulating and producing space. The urban environment belongs in the domain of social practices, connected to the relationship between social and discursive practices (according to Michel Foucault, discourse is the way in which human knowledge is transmitted through representational formats), whereby the urban appears as perceivable. However, being perceivable does not imply excluding its discursive aspects. Therefore, urban poetics is a pathway to the analysis of the sensory representation of an urban environment for the sake of understanding the form (architecture), landscape (landscape architecture), social (sociology), textual (post-structuralism), and cultural models (cultural studies) of a city.

Richard Wagner was among the first to use the term Gesamtkunstwerk, denoting his own conception of opera and the way it affects the viewer. In his operas, Wagner wanted to combine music, text, scenography, and acting into a total work of art – one able to absorb the spectator.

Seventy years later, Walter Gropius, an architect, founder, and first director of the Bauhaus, wanted to establish the ideality of a new architecture in the activities of that art school, as a new architectural order whereby life would be governed by the unity of art, science, and technology. Gropius believed that the arts should all come together under the auspices of the architectural project.

He wanted to integrate and create a new unity for a new modern society through a new type of architecture. Connecting the aesthetic field and architectural activity, Roger Sruton discussed the Gesamtkunstwerk as “aesthetically serious only if the total conception remains within the architect’s control.” The idea of a city as a total work of art (Gesamtkunstwerk) can be identified in the connections between: a) different arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, theatre, performance, music and b) different phenomena: space, place, body movement, landscape, sound, atmospheric changes.

Henri Lefebvre sees the totality of the city (œuvre) as the ideal city of the highest degree, as an overall work of art involving social, symbolic, and material processes. Lefebvre connects the idea of “œuvre” with the Greek term poïesis, which signifies creation in the most general sense. As Martin Heidegger put it: “We must observe two things with respect to the meaning of this word. One is that techne is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts.

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6 Ibid., 87.
Techne belongs to bringing-forth, to poïesis; it is something poietic.”⁷ Therefore, poïesis is the basis in the creation of art (technē). Here Lefebvre makes a significant point: “art can become praxis and poiesis on a social scale: the art of living in the city as work of art.”⁸

Thus, Aldo Rossi’s concept of “urban artifact” does not use the urban environment as a passive vessel that provides a material frame for human existence in the world, but treats the urban environment as an integral and essential part of the work of art: “We should initially state that there is something in the nature of urban artifacts that renders them very similar – and not only metaphorically – to a work of art.”⁹

Tadao Ando, Church of the Light (full-scale model), Tokyo, Japan, 2017. Photo: authors, 2017.

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For the Yugoslav architect, professor and essayist Bogdan Bogdanović (1922–2010), the concept of “small-scale urbanism” envisioned a more intimate, literal, graphic, painting-related, and even scenographic approach to designing urban environments, aiming to instill, preserve, or later discover the living values of city life, which might enable those sensory perceptions of a pleasant, exceptional, instructive, different, and exotic type of city. In this way, “small-scale urbanism” advocates a kind of direct and immediate action.¹⁰


¹⁰ Bogdan Bogdanović, Mali urbanizam [Small-scale urbanism] (Sarajevo: Narodna prosvjeta, 1958), 7. See also: https://publicart-publicspace.org/edu/bogdan-bogdanovic-death-and-the-city
For Lefebvre, the work of art is not artistic, but urban. Walking constitutes the realization of everyday urban life. Walking is a clash between the urban environment, art and the body performing the act of walking within a specific historical and geographical society. The urban environment is a certain material order that appears before the body. Urban reflects and displays the continuity of surface, volume, and space. A body walking down the street is immersed in a multitude of sounds, murmurs, different and diverse rhythms and impulses. This is a completely personal perception of the urban environment, followed by searching for concepts that will connect one’s personal impression of the perceived with a vague general knowledge of architecture. The constructed environment, which is the subject of the observer’s attention, becomes an aesthetically active part in the continuous process of changing the visual values of an urban environment.

Every observer, with their creative potentials, establishes their visual communication with space by participating in what the German philosopher, cultural theorist, and aesthetician Wolfgang Welsch refers to as active experience. Aesthetic communication becomes multidirectional, constantly providing new opportunities for developing creative thinking and action.

The focus is on the importance of individual creative games as a potential force for overcoming the established aesthetic values of a particular artistic expression. In this way, a new visual communication is established on the basis of a system of constant change, in which the observer’s actions make these objects aesthetically active, or, more precisely, place them at the center of aesthetic thinking. Individual distant elements of an urban environment are certainly formed with a specific intention that one implements in the bodily act of walking.

11 Henri Lefebvre, Writings on Cities, op. cit., 173.
through the urban tissue of the city, actively experiencing it. By walking, one becomes the initiated subject of a concrete corporeal-sensual and corporeal-behavioural situation inside the urban membrane of a city.

Walking is an action consisting of bodily movements, whose relationship with the urban environment can be contextual or completely capricious. It is this kind of intensive field and poetic research that may be linked to the Situationalist International (SI) and their main strategy concerning the construction of situations: the dérive. The focus of this methodological radical experiment is the perception, recognition, identification, and exchange of different spatial expressions of the urban, for the sake of creating an emotional, intuitive and rational field of developing and evaluating creative thinking about the city and urban environment.\(^\text{15}\)

The dérive is “a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances.”\(^\text{16}\) The act of walking rejects the invitation to work, in the name of working without yielding a product. The act of walking negates work in the name of working without supplying a product. This establishes the reason for choosing urban drifting as the main method in the study of poetic attempts to capture the urban through the plurality and coexistence of urban patterns and ways of life in the urban environment. Such spatial action could be posited as a search for phenomena that shape the urban on an everyday level.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{14}\) The Situationist International (1957–1972) was an international group of activists, artists, and theorists rooted in Marxism and anarchism, who emphasised the connection with the avant-garde art movements of the early 20th century (particularly Dadaism and early Surrealism) and saw the construction of situations as a tool for liberating everyday life.


Situationist urban practices relate to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s language-game (*Sprachspiel*), which means that the “game” is determined by a set of rules. This concept hinges on an unpredicted situation that would require changes in its comprehension. Changing some of the rules also changes the nature of the language game. This means creating ephemeral situations that explore the quality of every moment of life and are organized according to the principles of a poetic game, which is distinguished
from the usual notion of “game” in its negation of any element of competition and of separating the game itself from everyday life. That said, different games are not connected by any shared rules, but by the “rule” that the rules are subject to change, even during the game itself. In 1957, Guy Debord (a founding member of the Situationist International) and Asger Jorn created several psychogeographic maps. These maps were made by cutting up a map of Paris and re-assembling the pieces based on their drifts through the city; in another example, they used a map of London to explore a part of Germany. That said, the question isn’t whether the urban practices of the Situationists belong to the domain of urbanism, but how to change the rules of the language game (Wittgenstein) of urban design and urban planning so as to acknowledge Situationist spatial practices as urbanistic. Using their urban conceptions, the SI tried to synthesize the need for absolute creation in a spectacle-infused urban space with the need to play with architecture, time, and space.

The practice creating situations gives rise to an effective political battle in which art, creativity, play, and politics combine into one. For this reason, SI practices can be called “artivism”, whereby artistic practices shift from the field of authentic creation to activism in the specific living conditions of a given culture and society. In this regard, Rancière speaks of the “distribution of the sensible”, which “reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed.”

18 Nikola Dedić, Utopijski prostori umetnosti i teorije posle 1960. (Beograd: Vujičić kolekcija, 2009), 140.
19 Gerald Raunig, Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 173.
The Situationists are close to this, because according to them, the dynamics of the urban environment easily leads to recognizable games arising from human activities that take place in everyday environments. In other words, the city is understood as an environment that is subject to change and that involves interaction between people and other elements in various forms of creating situations wherein the dérive privileges the intuitive capacity of the participants; in that way, the process of creative research is established as a tool of knowledge, namely the “complex array moving from one transformation to another.”

Let us end here with a quote from Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*:

“Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.”

To conclude: great art is by definition universal, with emancipatory potential addressing all of us. As with all great works of art, cities are not only for thinking about them, but also for thinking with them.

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The Museum and the Novel

The Museum of Innocence is a both novel and a museum. The novel was written by Orhan Pamuk and published in 2008, while the museum of the same name opened its doors to the public in Istanbul in Spring 2012. The novel describes a tragic fictional love story unfolding in that city over three decades of the 20th century. In the 1990s, Pamuk simultaneously conceived the museum. While writing a novel he needed “real” objects to inform a fictional story, and he planned to exhibit them in a real museum. Pamuk started collecting objects from visiting junk dealer shops and selecting items from his family’s possessions. He surrounded himself with these objects in order to get support for his imaginary world based in real past.

… There is, of course, a strong bond that holds the novel and the museum together: both are products of my imagination, dreamed up word by word, object by object, and picture by picture over a long period of time. This is perhaps also why [the] novel and the museum each tell a story. The objects exhibited in the museum are described in the novel. Still, words are one thing, objects another. The

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images that words generate in our minds are one thing; [the] memory of an old object used once upon a time is another. But imagination and memory have a strong affinity, and this is the basis of the affinity between the novel and the museum. And yet just as [the] novel is entirely comprehensible without a visit to the museum, so [too] is the museum a place that can be visited and experienced on its own. The museum is not an illustration of the novel, and the novel is not an explanation of the museum.

The novel portrays a long love story between Kemal, a handsome mature man from a wealthy family, and Füsun, a beautiful young girl and Kemal’s distant cousin. It is a tale of torment and impossible love. Kemal adores Füsun so much that he becomes obsessed with her; at one point in the novel, he even starts collecting and stealing objects she touched. That is where Pamuk’s obsession and need for actual objects begun. One of the most stunning collections in the Museum is the 4,123 cigarette stubs, collected and meticulously dated, labelled and pinned to the wall in the entrance hall of the museum.

According to Jean Baudrillard, while antique object is considered as marginal object and non-systematic with no practical application, its function in the system is the signifying of time. However, the objects in the museum are not only vintage items from the last century safeguarded by Pamuk, but also inspirations and representations of the fictional story, which are the foundation of a new reality of the Museum. Without reading the novel, visitors can appreciate the collections as vintage items that simply evoke the lives of the people of Istanbul from that period. For readers of the novel, the Museum has the capacity to do more than just showcase vintage objects of Istanbul; the displays

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create dimensions of meaning beyond their actual historical value. Therefore, both the novel and the museum manipulate symbolic and sign values of objects\(^4\), in the process made possible by the art of literature. The ordinary objects here narrate the stories of people and their everyday lives, reflecting the nostalgia of Istanbul.

The objects in the museum are displayed in vitrines with sequential numbers corresponding to the chapters in the novel. However, these objects do not illustrate the stories; they are stories on their own. In each vitrine, Pamuk carefully arranged the displays by combining different kinds of objects, photographs and maps to inform themes of the settings and create the ambiance and atmosphere of the museum. Sometimes, quotes from the novel feature as hints to locate the exhibits in the story.

The museum building is a three-storey house, built around 1897. That is where, in the novel, Füsun’s family once lived. Eventually, in both the novel and in reality, the building gets renovated to become the Museum. In 1999, three years before he started writing the novel, Pamuk bought this house, the biggest investment of his collection.

In this way, he safeguarded and *requalified* an ordinary house to become the anchor and source of inspiration for his novel:

... Its appearance—old and ruined, with crumbling plasterwork that revealed the rusting steel bars beneath—echoed a nostalgia within me. Every time I entered the dark, dusty interior, I imagined a vivid orange and yellow life within it. It was [a] fifteen-minute walk to my studio; on the way back from the house, I’d visit the antique shops at the top of the sloping road to buy an old spoon, a crooked bottle opener, or a rusted key. I liked that these objects were old, but also wanted a “new” frame and a ‘new’ context in which to preserve them.°

The neighbourhood of Çukurcuma, where the love story takes place and where the Museum is now located, was famous for its distinctive character is in the Beyoğlu district, where the art and entertainment activities of Istanbul were concentrated. Both the Museum and the novel are closely tied to these areas. They are the main settings of the novel, and The Museum of Innocence helped strengthen their character. The Çukurcuma neighbourhood was in transformation when Pamuk bought the premises and completed the Museum, and becoming the epicentre of Istanbul’s flea markets. Eventually, gentrification crept in with many boutique hotels, cafés, art, craft and fashion shops replacing the workshops of manual workers and local groceries.

One of the Museum collections that interests me is the series of *sketches and scripts* by Pamuk, which is exhibited on the third floor. The hand-written manuscripts and rough sketches in the display vitrines form an archive, documenting Pamuk’s thought process of The Museum of Innocence. For me, the collection demonstrates that the thinking process and the product are equally important. Pamuk’s visual and graphical notes are not merely pieces of paper with doodles and messy

handwriting; they possess a historical value that cannot be measured. They are also products of laborious work; without them, the full vision would not have been reached.

The Museum of Innocence is a thought-provoking project that shows how the creative process of conceiving a piece of literature and a museum involved different scales of interventions. From the scale of tiny object to the scale of architecture, up to the neighbourhood scale and finally to the city at large, the Museum shows the power of art—in this case, literature—to transpose and reinvent meanings.

Having read and re-read the novel, and visited and re-visited the Museum, after encountering all the exhibited objects, my mind is able to slip between seeing the objects as they are and perceiving them as part of the story of Kemal and Füsun. This experience reminds me of some conceptual art from the last century. The question emerges: is the Museum of Innocence a conceptual art?

**Art and the Aesthetics of Requalification**

Throughout history, many artistic movements and actions have questioned the ways in which we perceive ordinary objects, space and their meanings. Marcel Duchamp considered the readymades, which he started to explore in 1912, to be “vehicles for unloading ideas”\(^6\). Duchamp’s readymade objects marked a revolutionary change in what can be perceived as art. Duchamp’s ‘Fountain’, an ordinary urinal, was submitted as a work of art to the exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York in 1917. Duchamp signed it with the pseudonym R. Mutt as a joke. Mutt derived the name from J. L. Mott Iron Works, a large sanitary equipment manufacturer, but changed it to Mutt, which was the name of a character of a contemporary daily cartoon called *Mutt and Jeff*.

For Duchamp, there was complex thinking behind this gesture. His readymades can be seen as conceptual art instead of retinal art; they are created not to please the eyes but to make spectators think.

In the context of the present essay, Duchamp’s position about art and ordinary objects simply confirms that altering the meaning of an object is possible through art or, more precisely, with an action of the artist. Although the original “Fountain” piece has been lost, more than 18 replicas created by Duchamp himself or with his permission are exhibited in many renowned museums around the world. They mark an important point in art history when a fundamental question of what art can be and what kinds of aesthetics are associated with it has been asked.

Another artistic movement, focusing at objet trouvé or found object used raw material in the making of assemblages that called attention to real material qualities and their inherent aesthetic.7

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One remarkable work of this kind is the “Bull’s Head”, which Pablo Picasso created in 1942 by welding bicycle seats and handlebars together. His intention was to make the viewer perceive the bull’s head without losing the sense that it was made of the old bicycle parts:

… if you were to see only the bull’s head and not the bicycle seat and handlebars that form it, the sculpture would lose some of its impact.\(^8\)

The impact that Picasso mentioned can also be found in the works of the Situationist International group led by Guy Debord during the 1960s and 1970s. Founded as part of the Lettrists, the Situationists were heavily influenced by Dadaism, Surrealism and the general idea of the avant-garde. One of their inventions was \(d\text{é}tournement\),\(^9\) the artistic practice of selecting and re-presenting mass media, e.g. films, art, graphics, advertisements slogan, comic strips, and subverting (or detourning) their predetermined meanings so that new, contradictory messages could emerge and divert the original intention of the commercial propaganda. This practice, seen as \(c\text{re}a\text{t}i\text{v}e\ \text{p}l\text{a}g\text{i}a\text{r}i\text{s}m\),\(^10\) was created to challenge the politics and society of that time. The reference to these movements in art history here exemplifies how the boundaries between the ordinary world and art can be shifted by a creative act. Through \(d\text{is}p\text{l}a\text{c}e\text{m}e\text{nt}\) (Duchamp’s Fountain), \(r\text{e}c\text{on}f\text{i}g\text{u}r\text{a}\text{t}i\text{on}\) (Picasso’s Head Bull) and \(a\text{l}\text{t}e\text{r}\text{a}\text{t}i\text{on}\) (The Situationist International), artists attribute new meaning to objects and create a dichotomy in the aesthetic experience, especially in found objects.\(^11\)


\(^9\) which doesn’t have a direct translation word in English but comprises these following meanings: diversion, rerouting, corruption and hijacking (Simon Ford, \textit{The Situationist International: A User’s Guide} (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2005).

\(^10\) Ibid.

Pepperell analyses dichotomies, including the capacity of artwork to elicit a multitude of distinct and contradictory meanings in the mind of the viewer.

He links dichotomy with ambiguity, as the latter refers to the vagueness of an object or the capacity of a single object to carry multiple meanings. Ambiguity has long been regarded as an important mechanism to intensify the aesthetic impact of works of art. One could find similar aesthetic experience in the Museum of Innocence where the exhibited objects create the dichotomy of perception. They are obviously ordinary objects salvaged from the junk shops and simultaneously they are the significant exhibits placed accordingly, in the beautiful vitrines to portray the fictional story.

**Requalification**

The Museum of Innocence is one of the best referential examples of requalification. In a broad sense, requalification implies the emergence of a new quality. The term *qualify* is here related to the term quality, referring to a list of essential or acquired properties of a person, object or space. Requalification, therefore, refers to a process of change in which a new quality, which is different from the previously attributed one, is acquired. It also includes possible recognition and reinterpretation of latent, pre-existing values. In addition, it seeks ways to enhance the complex value system of objects, which not only consists of quantitative (functional, economic) values but also includes qualitative ones, such as symbolic and sign values. Requalification can be understood as an aesthetic process in itself, a novel recovery of the aesthetics that emerge through processes that involve artistic sensibility. Such aesthetics celebrate the embodied energies and memories of (urban) artefacts.

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In general, when it comes to design practice, many terms with the prefix “re” refer to a resource approach strategy, such as reuse, recovery, recuperation, restoration, renovation, refurbishment, repurposing, re-adjustment, reconfiguration, remodelling and reassembling. These terms are about action, aimed at extending the life of objects, buildings and spaces by creating a new cycle. Requalification can emerge from diverse design strategies prefixed “re”; however, its achievement is a reaching new quality and new aesthetic value which came up from the very juxtaposition of new and old.

The essence of requalification is not about what and how to do with existing urban artefacts, but more about how new meanings are triggered. As meaning is always at the core of culture, requalification clearly refers to cultural sustainability because it helps ensure the continuity of artefacts and at the same time stimulate new creativity to reinterpret and transform them. Here, the challenge regards the scale of the intervention. Many requalification practices are realised from the scales of artefacts up, towards the scales of architecture; thus, it could be applied at the urban scale and territory, so that the meaningful places can be created. In this regard, The Museum of Innocence is an example of full, multiscalar requalification.

The manifesto of The Museum of Innocence is very modest. The approach is centred on personal stories of people, small and cheap objects full of domestic expressions in contrast to the monumental scale of a national museum. Through his creative approach, Pamuk captured a rich embodied memory of his youth and of Istanbul in the Museum and expressed his love of things that mattered to him.

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The ordinary objects of the past exhibited in the Museum of Innocence trigger the feeling of nostalgia in me.

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Despite cultural differences, the objects evoke a sense of familiarity, transporting me back to my childhood.

I recognise the crystal glasses, the clocks, the tin toys, the small figurines, and many other objects even though they are not exactly the same as the ones in my country; however, they are similar enough for me to associate them with objects of everyday life from my own past. The wear and tear on the objects marks the passage of time. The display arrangements, the craftsmanship of the wooden frames of the glass vitrines and the lighting combine to create an atmospheric quality that is simple but beautiful.

The novel and museum versions of The Museum of Innocence truly give me a deeply personal aesthetic experience.

Although the idea of The Museum of Innocence did not stem from environmental awareness (where I place the processes of requalification), the creation and the outcome surely contributed to the extension of the lifecycle and the embodied energy of the building and all of the objects involved in Making the museum and the novel. Undeniably, the effects are related to cultural and environmental sustainability. The Museum of Innocence possesses an eco-aesthetic quality, artistic expression that represents, critiques and plays imaginatively on an environmental issue or imagines alternatives to present situations.\(^{15}\)

**Little Acts of Artistic Sensibility**

Requalification confirms the importance of the complex value systems embedded in objects, architecture and space. Their meanings generate the aesthetic experience and can only be created if the value system is understood in a holistic manner. The Museum of Innocence, proves that the artistic approach can be a driving force in enhancing the symbolic and sign values that create meaningful impact to sustain culture and environment.

This artistic approach opens up diverse kinds of aesthetic reflexes: from nostalgia to new narratives and dichotomous effects which are not for the pleasure of the eyes, but evoke a variety of feelings including the sense of environmental awareness. Although modest in appearance, the Museum of Innocence demonstrates the value system of such architecture, enhanced with an act of fine artistic sensibility.

In Orhan Pamuk’s The Museum of Innocence I see creative passion translated into ordinary realm, and an extraordinary act expressing it. I share such passion. The Museum of Innocence became a source of inspiration for my own creative works, placed in my combined teaching, research and artistic practice. Some of the resulting works\textsuperscript{16} realised over the last couple of years. These are the drawings and notes aim to capture, record and represent the objects and environment of my everyday life. They seek to let the sketch&script open up the intrinsic value of the ordinariness to interpretation.

\textbf{Figure 3.} A Street with No Name 2019, drawing by the author

Aesthetics of requalification: What I see in the Museums of Innocence

Figure 4. My Everyday Objects 2019, drawing by the author
Facing the crucially important choices for the future of human life, the world and consequently the architecture, in search of the fundamentally humane existential perspective of benevolence and hope, one should bring to mind the importance of appreciating and preserving the essential interconnectedness of architecture with the profound, ontological sensibility of human inner being. Based on the awareness of the ontological sensitivity as a fundamental layer of consciousness through which we experience spaciality, architecture could be perceived as an encounter of the human ontological inner consciousness with the poetic and spiritual structure of spatiality, transcending the discontinuations in time.

The aesthetics of architecture has a decisive role in discerning the enduring interconnectedness of the ontology of created space with the ontology of human inner being and its inner existential mental world, elevating the aspect of aesthetics as essential in connecting creative work in architecture with its intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual sources, enhancing our sensibility of perceptive awareness and our attempts in interpretations. Our inner philosophical and spiritual growth reflects in our creative work devoted to architecture, in our thinking, conceptual and creative process, in the authenticity of our initial creative concepts and our accomplishments, in the level of our awareness regarding the ethical aspects of our intentions and choices, and consequently, in the aesthetics of architecture we design and construct.
Considering the architecture and its future horizons through our existential awareness, in conceiving and planning our environment, one could suggest an introspective re-examination focused on the responsibility for our choices, posing the most profound inner questions on the meaning of our creative work, the invisible, immaterial foundations of our perceptions, ideas and the aesthetics of spaces we design, and finally the purity and meaningfulness of our efforts, choices, visions and scopes in architecture and beyond.

**Key Words:** Aesthetics of architecture, architectural space, ontology of space, creative process, human inner being, existential awareness, meaningfulness

**The Ontological Space of Human Inner Being**

Along the continuous aspirations through the history and theory of architecture to suggest one more specific insight into the meaning of conceiving architectural space, focusing toward the ontological space of human inner being as an essential point of perception, might become increasingly significant today, in re-examining our existential orientations for the future. At the time when expansive transformations are reshaping our world, the natural life and the spaces we inhabit, often to the extent beyond recognizability, the perceptions based on the experiential awareness of phenomenology and the perceptive sensibility of aesthetics, may bring us to the valuable, forewarning insights into the vulnerability of human existential condition.

Uncovering my lasting consideration of the ontology of space as unquestionably, profoundly intertwined with the ontology of our inner human being, I wish to suggest a more insightful thought on understanding architecture and the spatiality of our constructed world through this meaningful interconnection with the contemplative and experiential layers of our inner conscious existence. Facing the crucially important choices for the future of human life, the world and consequently the architecture, in search of the fundamentally humane existential perspective of
benevolence, generosity and hope, one should bring to mind the importance of appreciating and preserving the essential interconnectedness of architecture, equally as of the other creative structures of our world - with the profound, ontological sensibility of human inner being.

The distinctive point of observation, exceptionally meaningful to be recalled and emphasized in this context and beyond, emerges from the profoundly intrinsic, inherent space of human inner being, the invisible core of our most delicate and sensitive conscious, experiential, emotional and spiritual - the ontological essence of being. Although that realm of our existential essence and sensibility should be recognized as the source of creative conception in architecture, it remains often unacknowledged, unexpressed or disregarded in the pragmatically and rationally inclined dominant discourses regarding the planning, production and evaluation issues, or it is insufficiently explored and taken into consideration in the theoretical ones, except distinctively in the fields of art.

Nevertheless, we experience everything by this most sensitive, truthful and essential inner side of ourselves: the entire life with its emotional inner movements, challenges and uncertainties, the existential self and our relations to others, our beliefs and philosophy upon which we construct, the world and the spaces we create. In experiencing and inhabiting the architectural space, apart from unquestionably evaluating the functional, structural, environmental, social, historical, cultural and other relevant aspects, we ultimately seek the resonance of that essential, profoundly poetic and ontological experience, that would touch the most innate, authentic and sincere layers of our inner being.

In addition to the complexity of planning, technical, structural, and numerous other functional issues preceding an accomplished architectural work, the ultimate sign of approval and appreciation of created architectural or urban space, however, reveals in how we finally feel while inhabiting it, or how we emotionally embrace its aesthetic atmosphere.
What remains in our memory and experience of an architectural space is most profoundly related to the ontological space of our inner being and it resonates with the intensity of the ontological and poetic experience we search for and hope to rediscover between our imagination, dreams and - reality.

**Architecture as an Encounter of Being and Space**

The first, most immediate encounter with an architectural space takes place in the silence of our inner being, within our inner world of consciousness and emotions, even before we are able to define to ourselves or utter any words to describe our experience, sensations and emotions - in the space of the ineffable. That inner world within our being, the invisible space of our consciousness and the realm of the poetic existential essence, appears as closest to the state of mind and soul we can recognize, resonate with, and most profoundly relate to - in the emotional sincerity, truthfullness of poetry.

Approaching an architectural space, consciously or unconsciously, yet instantly and intuitively, we encounter the inner mental, emotional and spiritual world of its author - discovering and contemplating the immaterial essence and content of created work, the epitomized idea of the architect’s imagination and the concept of the space that we observe, explore and interconnect with. Moving through the flow of created sequences of architectural spaces, either built or imaginative, we can recognize or intuitively grasp a reflection of the mental landscape, the poetical and spiritual inner world of the author who conceived them. Entering certain architectural space, we experience, contemplate, emotionaly immerse ourselves into it and elucidate the layers of embodied intellectual, emotional and spiritual content as an invisible ontological scripture of architect’s existential inner world and imagination.

Based on the awareness of the ontological sensitivity as a fundamental layer of consciousness through which we experience spaciality, I wish to suggest a perception of architecture as an existential, experiential and
The Invisible Essence of Form

Returning briefly to the question of the form, and, before abandoning it in the theory of architecture as delusive, surpassed or unsufficiently referential in the complexity of contemporary theoretical discourses and orientations focused on future developments, it would be meaningful to revise our views and to question ourselves whether we have ever reached a profound awareness of the intuitively conceivable, yet undefinable essence - the invisible, immaterial essence of the form. What remains to be still reminded of, discovered or elucidated on the essence of form and its meaning? What all is hidden, concealed within the unexplored immaterial layers of the form? What essential, the question of the form might still reveal to us?
One could suggest that it is not the question of the form *per se* that evinces as limited or anachronistic in the context of contemporary developments regarding the expansion of futuristically inclined transformative forces. Instead, we should rather question our awareness of the essence of the form, of its invisible interconnectedness with the preceeding intuitive, conceptual, imaginative, explorative, analytical, ethical, evaluative influencive processes, and particularly with the initial creative process, in a certain way the decisive, inherent element in its conception.

The complexity of layers hidden underneath the final form can intuitively reveal the intertwinement of conscious and unconscious, mental and emotional structure of author’s ontological and existential inner world. Layers of the philosophical, intellectual, rational, aesthetical, ethical to the most intuitive, emotional, sensual, mnemonic, imaginative, inspirational, metaphysical, spiritual and poetic mental dynamic structure, all arise from the ontological depths of author’s inner being, from the span of his intentions, strivings and hopes, memories, dreams and imagination - merging the living, mental energy into the substance and space.

The invisible flow of mental and creative energy embedded into the form of an architectural space, structure, a spatial concept or an imaginary pattern, indicates as well the complexity of creative process and the synthesis of rational, intuitive, conscious and unconscious choices and decisions inherent to an individual, a unique human mind and soul, comparable to the creative work in other fields of art. The complexity and synthesis of the initial idea, the conceptual basis of the work and the creative process, embodied in an authentic form of spatiality, either as an architectural object, the spatial structure, topology or the fluidity of motion, built or imaginary, reveals the space of our inner being, the intensity of its existential poetic and ontological essence and the inner mental motion as a source of imagination and creative inception.

Considering the comprehensive impact of the aesthetics of architecture on the quality of our life and environment, broadening our awareness
of the aesthetics of thought and perception within the inner space of our being at the initial point of creating the work, as well of the conscious and unconscious choices in the course of the creative process, would be an important reassessment. Therefore, the aesthetics of architecture would be transposed in a more significant way as an initial, intrinsic and indistinguishable element of the original idea, the architectural concept and the creative process, rather than a mere evaluation of the visually defined, final architectural outcome, post festum. Immersed in all of the mental, emotional and spiritual layers of human inner consciousness, as an integral part, the insightful perceptions of the aesthetics should remain inherent in the entire process of conceiving an architectural idea, influential in creating its spatial concept and the work itself.

The Authenticity of Creative Process

As an indistinguishable part of the ontological layers of our consciousness, the creative process indicatively emphasizes one of the most substantial, sensitive and essentially vital connection of human inner being with created architectural space, likewise as with all authentically created structural artefacts of our lived space, environment and the world. The creative process arises from the inner space of human consciousness, from the same source as our continuous inner quest for existential meaning, as well the spiritual search toward reaching the foundations of our existential philosophy, our beliefs and perceptions of the world, of life and its sensibilities, uncertainties and the unconceivable dimensions.

In architecture, as in other artistic disciplines, the creative working process is unseparable from a continuous intellectual, philosophical and spiritual research of an individual human being who is devotedly, intensely and sincerely focused to find the truthfulness and meaningfulness of own strivings and aspirations in defining one’s own existential philosophy, as much as in constructing one’s own creative credo.
In achieving the final form of an accomplished architectural work, the complex dynamic path of the creative process, as an inner mental process that intertwines the entirety of the intellectual, emotional and spiritual layers of our inner being, is epitomizing the essential content of our ideas, evincing the invisible, immaterial essence of the form.

Therefore, our inner philosophical and spiritual growth reflects in our creative work devoted to architecture, in our thinking, conceptual and creative processes, in the authenticity of our initial creative concepts and our accomplishments, in the level of our awareness regarding the ethical aspects of our intentions and choices, and consequently, in the aesthetics of architecture that we design and construct.

The scope of an authentic creative process in architectural design, not limited to the single task in question, unfolds into an extensive, continuous research process which expands into the following projects, forming the unique conceptual, philosophical and artistic statement of the author with the integrity of own creative philosophy, concepts, methods, aesthetics and ethical orientation. Consequently, the creative process of architectural conceptual design becomes the evincible sign of an authentic creative work and thinking, as a unique philosophical and aesthetical creative language of an individual author, or a group of conceptually united authors, toward an authentic architectural artwork of the highest, time transcending qualities.

**The Existential Necessity of Re-Examination**

The expansion of new technological methods and systems in the contemporary planning and production practices have diminished and weakened that profound, vital connection of conceptual creative process in architecture with the sensibility of our ontological inner being, thus indicating an increasing inconsistency between systematicity and authenticity, between efficiency and meaningfulness, and between the imposed, programmed utilization of the architectural spaces and the spontaneous, contemplative and profound poetic experience of discovering
the immaterial authenticity of beauty within the ontological layers of spatiality. With the implementation of the wide range of new computational and digital technologies in the last decades, we are witnessing a worldwide expansion of the unrestrained multiplication of architectural design, based on the excessive repetitiveness of resembling visual solutions, lacking the authenticity of creative conception, the sense of proportion or respect for the existing urban, historical, cultural and aesthetical contexts.

Apparently, the unlimited new possibilities in design and construction did not necessarily indicate the sophistication in conceptual and formal qualities, regretfully concluding in rather trivial solutions of questionable level of architectural aesthetics, even in the recent examples of some internationally renowned architects. In re-examination of the essential evaluative principles of the aesthetics of architecture, it might become unavoidable to reappraise the unresolved question of the form, which nevertheless reveals the level of conceptual content and creative achievement, intuitively yet undeniably, guiding us in recognizing the authenticity of creative concept and the disproportionalities in the qualities of architectural accomplishment.

Furthermore, by an insightful observation of the form, nowadays we can also discern a disquieting, essential difference in the form created by mind, hands and soul of a human being, from the form artificially created by new systems of digitally designed objects, with the evident absence of an intellectual, conceptual and emotional content, and an inner mental motion of the poetic of human creative stimulus and intuition. Reconsidering the impacts of new technologies, which have shown, apart from the evident improvements, also the disquieting signs of unanticipated consequences, there is an increasing necessity to open new questions on the responsibility for our choices, decisions and the imposed domination of the operative systems over the fragile sensibility of an individual, a responsible, inspired and creative human being.
In Search of the Immaterial Proportions

In view of the present moment of the environmental concerns and anxiety, confronting the most expansive developments, transformations and changes of unpredictable consequences for the future life and the architectural spaces which we continuously construct and inhabit, searching sincerely and devotedly for a fundamentally humane existential perspective of unselfishness, awareness and responsibility would certainly guide us to re-evaluate the philosophy of our choices.

Considering the architecture and its future horizons through our existential awareness, in conceiving and planning our environment, one could suggest an introspective re-examination focused on the responsibility for our choices, posing the most profound inner questions on the meaning of our creative work, the invisible, immaterial foundations of our perceptions, ideas and the aesthetics of spaces we design, and finally the validness, purity and meaningfulness of our efforts, choices, visions and scopes in architecture and beyond.

The synthesis of human creative energy, the conceptual and philosophical thinking, intuition, reason, exploration, inspiration, motivation, passion and imagination embodied in spatiality of an architectural form and its immaterial essence, equally as in the form of any other creative work, will always stem from the inner space of the unique, sensitive, emotional, thinking, compassionate human being, from his authentic existential and poetic experience. Therefore, in giving form to our creative efforts, conceptual content, spatial visions and the aesthetics upon which we create our works, it would be meaningful to rediscover an intuitive method of insightfulness and spiritual growth, returning to a profound introspective re-examination of the onotological essence of our inner being, our awareness and conscience, as a foundation upon which we construct.

The quest for a profound sense of proportion in our thinking, emotional spiritual and ethical attitudes, in our scopes, ambitions and efforts
to construct our spaces as well as our life, will become visible also in the conceptual and aesthetical level of our architectural aspirations and accomplishments, from the initial conceptual drawing to the very last detail of the city planning. That inner sense of proportion between our intentions and our responsibilities, imagination and awareness, rationality and sensibility, expectations and generosity, ambitions and sacrifices, should be cultivated and constantly re-evaluated through our entire life, primarily based on the truthfulness, consistency and integrity of our inner being, of our thoughts, words and actions. Furthermore, in searching for the sense of proportion between past, present and future, which unfolds toward the most important, the transcendental awareness of time, we may learn being open to the unfading teaching of the past, as well as responsible for the foundations, structures and spaces we create and preserve for the future. Elevating the level of our awareness, consciousness and responsibility, by constructing a sense of the invisible, immaterial proportions as an inner mental growth from aesthetical to the ethical level transcending to an awareness of the immaterial, spiritual values, may reveal the meaningfulness of our work.

Helsinki, November 2019 - January 2020
WALKING THE CITY

Jale N. Erzen

“A path, even a road, is memory incised on the earth.”

Abstract

Many of us from the relatively old generation have been living in the same city for years. Yet, not only have our cities changed form and life-style over the years, but we see that each time we make the effort to walk in our cities, landscapes, buildings, traffic, people and streets offer changing vistas with each step. Not only do we perceive the multitude of sensory qualities, but also notice that our cities change drastically over short periods. The younger generation who move from city to city, changing schools or jobs or looking for jobs or places to live may not be so aware of these changes; yet many of them, due to their energy, have the possibility to experience the city with their body, walking or cycling. That means that for all of us who walk or bicycle or look out the window carefully at every new day, the city changes constantly. To understand any city we must be aware of these changes, in their particular details and fluid qualities. In this text I am going to talk about the dynamic aesthetic of the city, which defies any static map or any frozen photograph. I am going to talk about the bodily perception and awareness which for me creates the principle aesthetic content of urban reality.

1 David Le Breton, Yürümeye Övgü (Eloge de la Marche). Translated by İsmail Yergüz (İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2003).
What is walking?

All creatures change place for food or survival, using their bodies. Even the tiniest insect moves from place to place, obviously sensing the quality of the environment, heat, cold, humidity, dryness, etc.. All particles, atoms, stars and galaxies move constantly. For mankind this movement is particularly special; s/he is the only animal that is erect and has a vision of more than 180 degrees laterally and with the up and down movement of the head almost the same vertically.

In the beginning of the introduction to Honoré de Balzac’s book “On the Theorie of Walking”\(^2\) Pol Bury affirms: “If dance is an art – who can doubt it? - walking is to dance what prose is to poetry.”

As with many women of my age extensive walks are becoming very tiring if not impossible. Yet, only a few years ago I remember, when taking my students on a classical Ottoman architecture trip in Istanbul, how we used to walk, over a bridge, down a hill, up a tunnel, through a side street, arriving at the designated place with great surprise and excitement. Arriving at the intended place meant so much more and had so much added experiences as one tried to assess the shortest way, sometimes through the most varied landscapes and until then unknown streets. Arriving at the destined goal was important mostly because of the challenges the way to the place offered. Of course, Istanbul’s diversity of experiences that it can offer with any turn of a corner, any change of direction, any new neighborhood is unique in the world. Yet, every city, no matter how dull can offer surprises according to how we walk and how aware we become of our various sensory perceptions as we walk.

Cities that have sloping topographies offer innumerable vistas. But cities that are situated on plains can be interesting due to their changing flora or geometries of circulation. As we set out to go to a specific

location, unlike motorized traffic, we can create our own exciting routes or labyrinths.

![Image 1. A happy walk on Christmas night](Image)

Photo: Barbara Frankenberg

Even the shortest and straightest way, when done on foot can open one to all kinds of stimuli. First of all the walk, carrying our body on two feet which create a bouncing rhythm as we put one foot forward and lift the other one up, is an experience which activates many movements in the body and extends its effect to the brain. A rhythmic walk is a wonderful experience all by itself. As we stride forward we rise a little and fill our lungs with air and exhale as we put one foot down.
The body in movement is a fantastic animal, a perfect machine which at the same time measures the level of the ground, whether it rises or descends, it is all ears, all eyes and the skin of the face, of the hands are also receptive to the currents of air, to the smells, and to the softness or harshness of the wind or of air currents.

The body responds, in its own conscious way, to all the physical stimuli of the environment. When walking through the narrow streets of medieval cities, the closeness of the walls create different sensations and somatic reactions that may later be translated into dreams and vague images. Often in our dreams we walk or travel in environments, cities, streets of landscapes that we cannot identify, yet we feel we know so well. This means that the bodily perceptions that we have as we walk in a city are stored up in our imagination to appear later as familiar yet unidentifiable landscapes in the back of our mind, or to put it phenomenologically, in our subconscious. Therefore to really experience a ‘place’, a landscape, or a cityscape, the time we take and the way we engage with our bodies becomes vital. In this sense walking can be the only way to experientially know the world:

“Que peut-on connaitre du monde? De notre naissance à notre mort, quelle quantité d’espace notre regard peut-il espérer bilayer? Combien de centimètres carrés de la planète Terre nos semelles auront-elles touches?” (What can we know of the world? From our birth to our death what quantity of space can our vision cover? How many centimeter squares of the planet Earth our soles would have touched? – Trans the autor’s)³

Each two-feet walk, by millions of city dwellers each day, each hour, multiply the city in diverse, unimaginable, creative, emotional, intellectual ways. Maybe it is mostly the urban planners who try to understand the city by looking at maps.

This multiple reality must seem to them immeasurable, indefinable, too complex to serve as basis for planning. Yet, those who walk know that even a small change in the position of a bench, or on the curve of a street corner would make a great difference in the way people would use urban spaces and in the way people would relate to the city.

Engaging with the city

Arnold Berleant’s works on aesthetic participation have often dealt with the aesthetics of the environment and with the city.

“Perhaps we can think of the city as a continuous medium of varying density in which people are one component among many. Buildings, streets, squares, parks, vehicles, sounds, textures, temperature, smells, humidity, wind, color – these are part of a long catalog of perceptual objects and qualities that join with an active human presence to constitute a living environment. In this respect the city may be a model of all art. And in an insistent way, the aesthetic of the city is an aesthetic of engagement.”

Engagement is possible first of all through our sensory perceptions. Perceptual engagement is made possible by movement. With all perception it is important to be consciously active, aware and not static. Therefore walking offers a special richness due to the fact that the stimuli change constantly forcing us to be aware. People who walk a lot have developed perceptual awareness. Our intake of environmental stimuli depend also on the rhythm of our movement, on how erect or bent we are, how light we feel when we walk and whether we are in good balance. How many people raise their heads to watch the skies that can be fabulous in early spring or late autumn?

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Very few because either the street they walk on is so uneven that they have to be careful not to trip or because they have been used to walk head down, or bent. Walking long periods is the best remedy to wrong posture, because wrong posture can get one into trouble and eventually one learns to walk relatively straight to be aware of the environment, not to bump into others and not to fall.

Walking is the only way one gets engaged with one’s city. As one walks ahead, the vista opens in front of one’s eyes, one looks ahead into the distance all the while one is aware of the physical presence on both sides. All the senses are alive, and this becomes a kind of sensory theatre with sounds differing as one proceeds, with smells from many sources making one remember a particular dish or the flower of a perfume, or, in a crowded traffic inhale exhaust smoke. If a lot of people take to walking in a city the number of vehicles will diminish. It will be safer from many aspects. Walking is also a way of being closer to other people and of being aware of the diversity of the urban population.

One of the fascinating aspects in walking on a crowded street is hearing different dialects, different voices, even different languages, if one is in a metropolitan center. Globalization has brought together many ethnicities even in relatively out-of-the-way towns. It can be fascinating also to see different faces, attitudes and clothing, all the while hearing different ways of talking.

The urban topography or the way streets are planned can make one aware of the city’s relationship to nature. One of the most pleasant walks on a city street is undoubtedly in Kyoto where most streets are along small canals of water and where if one looks ahead one’s gaze ends in the surrounding mountains. Walking parallel to a stream is loaded with symbolic implications as one follows the flow of water. Generally old streets of Kyoto are designed so as to offer a view of the surrounding mountains.
Walking along a street can be very pleasant if the vista ahead offers depth, where foreground, middle ground and background flow into each other. Such a perception of depth gives one a sense of time and as one proceeds, also a sense of the space left behind.

“(Depth) is the ‘rift’ disengaging and engaging figure and ground, the ‘cleavage’ by which they oscillate, they interplay.”  
“depth is not simply the ‘background’ and neither it is simply a ‘hidden dimension. It is best understood as a source of ‘re-versibility,’ as the process that generates that backgrounding of the foreground and the foregrounding of the background we can perceive whenever we perceive one or another of the ways in which ambiguous figures can come to the for or unfold.”

As Choi explains, “the sense of space emerges along continuous movements.” As we move all that we perceive and the totality of space are transformed. “Body and space become both sensible and sensing…” …the body and space work together to create certain spatial patterns or relations.”

As Choi explains in his text, distance is the spatiotemporal form of movement. The above clearly indicates how in walking, through our bodily movement, space becomes an extension of our presence and thus the movement of walking becomes a close engagement with the environment, with the city.

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As we walk in the city we gather into our somatic presence all the sensory stimuli; we become, in a sense, what we see and hear and touch.

The kinesthetic sense not only concerns the movement forward but also changes rhythm and direction according to the topographic undulations of up and down. The fact that forms are never static and unchanging does not only apply to forms as we observe them in a static position, but more so as we walk and involve our movements as we sense the world. Understanding a city also greatly concerns our experience of moving with the topographical forms of the city landscape. We can never sufficiently experience these land forms if we are in a vehicle.

Image 2. Street view in Yezd - Iran. Photo: author
In the engagement with the environment the visual sense has a special expansive function. We can extend our being as far as we can see. Therefore walking gives one a sense of freedom and relationship to the whole earth; looking at mountains we are elevated, in a forest our imagination is at work in creating openings through the unseen and unknown.

**Cities and pedestrians**

It is not possible to like and to enjoy the city one lives in or the city one visits, without touching it in some way. Getting close and knowing a city is only possible if one walks in it. As Arnold Berleant affirms we are our environment, “We are thus like our environment. In fact we are our environment.”⁹

In this sense, Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, as she walks in the neighborhood of Westminster and lets herself be carried away by the charms, the sounds and memories of the city, becomes, in a way, part of what she experiences:

> “Only God knows why we love it (London) so much, why we see it like this, why has it been created, and built around oneself, one reverses and reinvents it each moment;…… And in the strange chant of an airplane in the sky, above heads, is this what she loved: life, London, this moment in June.”¹⁰

Knowing a city intimately, which is only possible by penetrating it in walking, ends up always in a kind of love. The fact that our experience of the city today is unthinkable without the presence of cars makes us forget that cities were not built for cars.

The overcrowding of cities with vehicles or even with horses is a development that occurred in the 19th century. “Today’s cities have not emerged with the invention of the automobile.”11

Since 10,000 or more years the necessity for humans to live in close proximity eventually gave way to settlements with neighboring shelters and even those who lived far must have often come to these settlements for exchange of goods and for social contact.

In her recent essay on walking, Prof. Irem Mollaahmetoğlu cites the Aegean cities of antiquity such as Priene, Arykanda, Kolophon or Ephesus as places “that were not designed for the free circulation of carriages but were built to make human life-walking and existence possible. Every point was thought out to allow the wind-light-green to enter.”12 Today, especially in developing countries the city has become a prison one cannot get out of, cannot have access to the periphery, to nature, to freedom.

All historic cities were designed for the pedestrian. I remember that streets in İzmir were directed almost at right angles to the sea, creating a little alcove where people used to come and sit and where children used to bathe. Half a century ago all this was demolished to create a continuous road parallel to the sea that made it impossible for pedestrians to access the coast. Even another parallel pavement implemented for people’s use, as it is now the common practice in almost all Turkish coastal cities, such as İstanbul, İzmir, Mersin, requires crossing a huge road of motorized traffic, often at intervals of several kilometers with traffic lights.

The aim here is not a critique of traffic planning, but to show that the human being whose most typical movement and most urgent need is walking is incapacitated in this most crucial activity.

12 Ibid., 103 (translation by the author)
Walking is also, for many well known philosophers like Rousseau and Benjamin a way to activate thought; walking without an aim, being open to the stimuli around is a condition incentive for new ideas. The Greek cities of antiquity all had agoras where people met and talked. One walked through the streets to this gathering place and met acquaintances and friends, and as in the case of Socrates, exchanged ideas.

Jean Jacques Rousseau who is one of the most important authors who wrote about freedom, in his book, ‘Les Reveries du promeneur solitaire’ talks about unexpected discoveries and deep spiritual states and thoughts that solitary walking has offered him. Rousseau considered walking both as a simple exercise and a means of contemplation.\(^\text{13}\)

Soren Kierkegaard, like Benjamin, especially enjoyed meditating while walking in the city.\(^\text{14}\) Aristotle who claimed that the human was a creature of the Polis\(^\text{15}\) said that for free citizens the agora should be a place where nothing is sold, and that there should be other places for shopping.

To go for conversation, for lingering without doing anything, not to hurry, just to stand in a corner seemed to be a great pleasure; everybody was there at the agora in the morning hours; evidently just being there was a blessing according to many ancient authors. Classical authors mentioned that barbarian visitors also seemed to enjoy going to Greek agoras and dressing like Greeks.\(^\text{16}\) But beyond all, the city, Polis, was an educational force. In Greek antiquity living, administrating and being guided in the polis was esteemed as a continuous educational force. “…the greatest possibility of achieving humanity lies in the urban environment.”\(^\text{17}\)

In short, the city in its ideal form has always been a place for social interaction, for free movement and especially for education. Today the city also educates or makes us forget our culture. As we go out on the street we learn how to walk in a crowd, how to greet people we meet often, how to enter or exit a door, how to wait in line, and other social manners.

But to learn proper manners we first have to be able to walk freely, without being stressed or being threatened by motorcycles or crowds leaving no passage, without being hit by passers-by.


\(^{16}\) Jacob Burckhardt, *Greeks and Greek Civilization*, Translation to Turkish İsmail Hakkı Yılmaz, ed. Oswyn Murray (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1999), 104-108.

\(^{17}\) Berleant, 1992, 83.
The city can educate us in being attentive to the physical forms that make the environment, in distinguishing symbols and signs, languages, sounds and smells. Walking in the city is a way to sensitize our perceptual acuity.

**The neighborhood**

A neighborhood is before anything else an area at a distance we can access by foot. The city is constituted of neighborhoods, even if in most cities today the neighborhoods have lost the qualities and aspects, the social structures that create an environment. In some developing or underdeveloped areas of the world, where even if globalization has greatly played its role, due to insufficient means and economic shortage, neighborhoods still retain their constitutive aspects.

The most important of these are the small industries, small shops of repair and craft, shops of homemade food or local products. These not only give color and create diversity, which according to Jane Jacobs is one of the most important qualities of cities, but are the life giving forces of social contact.

Yet, can such neighborhoods live if one cannot walk, cannot easily cross the street or is threatened by motorcycles speeding on the pavement? Small industries, small repair shops and small markets are usually places where one socializes, talks with neighbors, moves around without haste, stops to have a cup of coffee and feels at home.

Usually if one has lived long enough in a neighborhood one comes to know many of the people who own these shops; they become people of our close circle. In Turkey and in many countries of the Middle East, entering such a shop means that you are invited to a glass of tea and to a conversation about the weather or family.

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Such experiences are what create intimacy and a feeling of belonging in a world that is increasingly becoming alien and unsafe. Such neighborhoods and human contact can only survive if people can walk safely. These kinds of social contacts are the plus of the walking experience that cannot survive if all our shopping and errands are carried on in Shopping Centers that are becoming the main concentrations of urban life today.

Image 4. Sidewalk shop in Ankara. Photo: author
Conclusion

In this essay I have articulated the various benefits of the walking experience for the human being. I have also tried to emphasize the role of walking for the quality of urban life as well as the role of experiencing the city for human development. Unfortunately due to the increasing domination of our existence by cars, both walking activity and the human urban qualities are becoming extinct.
These also have ecological consequences that are outside the scope of this paper. Yet, as more studies appear on the subject and more urban designers begin to be aware of urban problems related to humans rather than to cars, I feel there may be some hope that in the coming decades people will use their bodies and their cities in more natural ways.

Let me end with a quote from Joseph Margolis, from his text, “What is a City”:

“Viewed in the pragmatist way, its (the city’s) distinction rests with its discernible regularities, which remain, at the same time, profoundly contingent — salient.....variable, purposive to the felt needs of collective improvisation, informally bounded. Perhaps you already grasp the full sense in which the aesthetics of the city proves to be distinctly different from that of mere landscape or the Kantian formula of the aesthetic.”
Contributors

DAVISI BOONTHARM
Davisi is Professor at Meiji University, Tokyo, International Program in Architecture and Urban Design. Her international careers stretches from France, via Thailand, Singapore and Australia, to Japan. Davisi’s research and teaching are interdisciplinary and cross-cultural, with strong emphasis on environmental and cultural sustainability. Her research focuses on resource approach to urban requalification and creative milieu. She has written, edited and translated several academic books and research papers. Her passion for cities also finds its expression in creative work. She exhibited drawings and paintings in Japan, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy. Davisi is co-founder of co+re, a platform for strategic thinking, making and living better cities. She also serves on the Council Board of City Space Architecture, Bologna and holds a Visiting Professorship at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (2019-22).

STEFANO CATUCCI
Full Professor of Aesthetics at the Faculty of Architecture of the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, Stefano Catucci has published several essays on twentieth-century philosophical and aesthetic thought. Most of his writings are focused on Michel Foucault’s work: his Introduction to Foucault (Introduzione a Foucault, Laterza, Roma–Bari) was first released in 2000 and last updated in 2019; Power and Visibility (Potere e visibilità, Quodlibet, 2019) is a collection of essays written over twenty years. His innovative book about the heritage of the first Space Age, Learning from the Moon (Imparare dalla Luna, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2013 and 2019), has made a considerable international impact. He is currently Principal Researcher of “Feelings and the City”, a multidisciplinary research project undertaken at his University, for which he wrote the essay “Feelings, Ritual and the City” (forthcoming in 2020).
BOŠKO DROBNJAK
(b. 1988) is a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade. He holds a master degree in Urbanism from the Faculty of Architecture, and is a current Ph.D. student. Drobnjak’s research focuses on the interdisciplinary relations of art theory, aesthetics, politics and experimental, avant-garde architectural practices. Drobnjak has published several articles in both Serbian and English and was a guest co-editor on one issue of the Finnish journal for aesthetics and popular culture *Popular Inquiry* (Aalto University), co-editor of the publication *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Aesthetics, Possible Worlds of Contemporary Aesthetics Aesthetics Between History, Geography and Media*, and co-editor of the publication *100 Years of the Bauhaus - Contextualizations and Re-Contextualizations of the Bauhaus in the Yugoslav Art Space*. Drobnjak is the secretary of the Society for Aesthetics of Architecture and Visual Arts of Serbia (DEAVUS).

ZORAN ĐUKANOVIĆ
PhD, Associate Professor of Urban Planning, Urban Design and Public Art at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Urbanism, Belgrade, Serbia. Initiator, founder and leader of the international, interdisciplinary research Program “Public Art & Public Space”. Visiting professor at Sapienza University of Rome (Italy), Keio University of Tokyo (Japan), University of Sassari (Italy), Politecnico di Bari (Italy). Special critics, guest lecturer and mentor of diploma/postgraduate study works at several faculties in Serbia, EU, USA, AUS, JP; member of several management, consulting and advisory bodies of the cities, public/private institutions and NGOs in Serbia and abroad. His recent research includes: Wine Cellars Of Negotin: Participatory Urban Design (2019, with Cecchini, Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Belgrado), Belgrade in Plural (2017, with Giofrè), Health Spaces: Hospital Outdoor Environment (2015, with Giofrè), VinoGrad: The Art of Wine (2015, with Živković); Belgrade Fortress
Contributors

– Dream Book of White Town’s Continuity (2009, with Andrić); Art in Public Space (2011, with Živković, Bobić, Vuković, and Đerić); Cità, fiumi, margini fluviali, Roma - Belgrado (2008, with Cherubini); Placemaking (2008, with Živković); Urbophilia (2007, with Radović); and others.

JALE N. ERZEN
painter, art historian, Emeritus Prof. Dr.; Fullbright Scholar 1985; since 1974 has been teaching design, art and aesthetics courses at the Faculty of Architecture, Middle East Technical University, Ankara; editor of the Boyut and Dimensions fine arts journal 1980-1984; recipient of the French Ministry of Culture’s Arts et Lettres Chevalier honor; recipient of Contribution to Turkish Architecture prize 2008; Organizer of the 17th International Congress of Aesthetics in 2007 and editor of two proceedings books of the Congress; editor of IAA Yearbook 2003, 2008 and 2013; President of the Turkish SANART Association for Aesthetics and Visual Culture 1991-2010; IAA President 2016-2019, has lectured internationally on aesthetics, Turkish and Islamic art and architecture and has many books and international publications on these subjects. As an exhibiting artist has work in many private and public collections in Turkey and abroad.

HANS IBELINGS
is Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream at the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, University of Toronto, and the editor and publisher of the Architecture Observer (Montreal/Amsterdam). Ibelings studied art history and archaeology at the University of Amsterdam and holds a PhD from the University of Coimbra. He is the author of a number of books, including *Supermodernism: Architecture in the Age of Globalization* (1998/2003). He is currently writing *An Outline of a Global Warming History of Modern Architecture*. 
KENGO KUMA
was born in 1954. Before establishing Kengo Kuma & Associates in 1990, he received his Master’s Degree in Architecture from the University of Tokyo, where he is currently a University Professor and a Professor Emeritus. Having been inspired by Kenzo Tange’s Yoyogi National Gymnasium, built for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Kengo Kuma decided to pursue architecture at a young age, and later entered the Architecture program at the University of Tokyo, where he studied under Hiroshi Hara and Yoshichika Uchida. During his Graduate studies, he made a research trip across the Sahara, exploring various villages and settlements, observing a unique power and beauty. After his time as a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University in New York, he established his office in Tokyo. Since then, Kengo Kuma & Associates has designed architectural works in over twenty countries and received prestigious awards, including the Architectural Institute of Japan Award, the Spirit of Nature Wood Architecture Award (Finland), and the International Stone Architecture Award (Italy), among others. Kengo Kuma & Associates aims to design architecture which naturally merges with its cultural and environmental surroundings, proposing gentle, human scaled buildings. The office is constantly in search of new materials to replace concrete and steel, and seeks a new approach for architecture in a post-industrial society.

VLADIMIR MAKO
Dr. is the professor at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture and the president of the Serbian Association for Aesthetics in Architecture and Visual Arts. He is author of a number of books, articles, and conference papers, including: An Islamic Numerical Interpretation of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, Keynote Speach, Proceedings of the 21th International Aesthetic Conference ‘Possible Worlds of Contemporary Aesthetics: Aesthetics Between History, Geography and Media’, University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture, Belgrade 2019, pp. 32-44; The Aesthetics and Attainability of Cultural

VLADIMIR MILENKOVIĆ
PhD Arch, architect and music pedagogue, educated in Belgrade, associate professor at the Department of Architecture UoBFoA (Design Methodology, Methodical Practicum, Design Studio, Master Thesis & Project). He is the author of two books Architectural Form and Multi-Function (Andrejević Endw. 2004) and Form Follows Theme (MAA & UoBFoA 2015), floor installation wohnlich (National Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2008). Awarded on many architectural competitions as well as for built works: Textil Commercial Building, Užice (Novosti Award 2008 & Mies van der Rohe Award 2009, nominee) and Villa Pavlović, Zlatibor (UAS Annual Award 2019 & Mies van der Rohe Award 2019, nominee), currently working on RTS Memorial Sixteen - kinetic structure, Tašmajdan Park, Belgrade. Co-founder of the studio NeoArhitekti.

www.neoarhitekti.net
www.instagram.com/345a_af
vimeo.com/302293467
JELENA MITROVIĆ
architect, graduated from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade in 2007; employed as a teaching assistant at the Department of Architecture from 2009-2015; PhD candidate from 2016. She participated in international conferences and published several papers in international journals and publications. Employed with Blakstad Haffner Arkitekter - Belgrade office from 2016-2018.
e-mail: jessicamitrovic@gmail.com ; http://poligon.rs/

JUHANI PALLASMAA

FRANCO PURINI
architect, born in 1941, is a professor of Architectural and Urban Composition at the Faculty of Architecture at La Sapienza University in Rome. Since 1985 he is honorary professor of C.A.Y.C. in Buenos Aires; since 1989 he is member of Italian Accademia Nazionale di San
Luca and since 2000 of Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Florence. In 1983 Franco Purini was decorated with Targa d’Argento Unione Italiana del Disegno; in 1984 with Award Art’s Critics Associated in Buenos Aires; in 1985 with Leone di Pietra Biennale di Venezia; in 2003 with Award Grotta di Tiberio per l’Architettura and in 2008 with Award Sebetia per l’Architettura in Naples. In 1966 Franco Purini started a partnership with Laura Thermes, with whom still now he is collaborating in a research research about architectural language and complex urban issues, following an experimental line that associates a strongly rational component to figurative suggestions drawn from the classical tradition. This research has been expressed in many projects, extensively documented by the foremost national and international magazines and included in some twentieth century history book of Architecture. Franco Purini combines his design activities with a critical and theoretical research, while maintaining a constant commitment in architecture drawing. Several of his drawings can be found at important Design Archives (Venezia, Frankfurt, Buenos Aires, Atlanta) and in a fair amount of private collections. Because of his numerous publications and his famous Disegni d’Invenzione, that set him among the most important protagonists of what is known as Archittetura Disegnata, Franco Purini has greatly influenced the international background by developing a clear copy about the theoretical issues of the disciplinary debate.

**DARKO RADOVIĆ**

professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Keio University, Tokyo, and co-founder of co+re platform for strategic thinking making and living better cities, Darko has taught, researched and practised architecture and urbanism in Europe, Australia and Asia. At Keio, he heads co+laboradović, research laboratory which focuses at the concepts of urbanity and sustainable development across scales, in contexts which expose difference and offer encounters with the Other. He has published in English, Serbo-Croatian, Catalan, Japanese, Korean, Italian and Thai languages.
LUCA RIBICHINI
(b. 1960), architect since 1989, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Architecture of Rome “Sapienza”, professor in Architectural Design, he teaches at the Doctorate of History, Design and Restoration and in three Masters of Sapienza: in Design of Buildings for Worship, in Sports Facilities Architectural Design, and Lighting Design. He studied and worked in international architecture studios, such as Ricardo Bofill’s Taller de Arquitectura in Barcelona, Spain, and Paolo Portoghesi’s studio. From 2007 to 2017 he was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI, as a member of the Permanent Commission for the Protection of Historical and Artistic Monuments of the Holy See, at the Vatican (chaired by Prof. Antonio Paolucci, Director of the Vatican Museums). He has won numerous national and international architecture awards and recognitions, including: in 2015 he received from the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella the Representation Medal for research and culture for the “Giuseppe Terragni in Rome” exhibition. The exhibition was hosted in the universities of several countries: Germany, the United States and Australia, as well as in various Italian cities. In May 2018 he received the Silver Medal at the Architecture Triennale held in Sofia (Bulgaria), author of four monographs and more than 70 scientific publications.

AJLA SELENIĆ
(b. 1960) Architect (Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, 1986), artist and author of the awarded architectural projects, competitions, completed public buildings, exhibitions and art installations. Focused on the interdisciplinary creative research merging architecture, art and phenomenology of space, she has been working in her own architectural studio established since 1995 in Helsinki, Finland. Her architectural projects have been internationally awarded, exhibited and published in architectural reviews, books and publications on contemporary architecture. Exhibited at the Venice Biennale of Architecture (1985). Awarded by the Serbian Architects Association’s Annual Award

**MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ**

Miodrag Šuvaković publishes under the name Miško Šuvaković. He received his PhD from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Art in Belgrade in 1993. He has been professor of applied aesthetics, Faculty of Music in Belgrade (1996-2015). He is professor of applied aesthetics & theory of art and media, Faculty for Media and Communications, Belgrade. He is member of Slovenian Society of Aesthetics and Society for Aesthetics of Architecture and Visual Arts Serbia. He is President of the International Association for Aesthetics (IAA). He has published or edited 50 books in Serbian, Slovenian, Croatian and English.
