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ARCHITECTURAL EXTRAVAGANCE

EKSTRAWAGANCJE ARCHITEKTURY

A b s t r a c t

In the process of architectural creation the crucial concern is its impressiveness and subsequent assessment. Hence the search for unique solutions that is typical of our times. Sometimes, playing with originality is fun, – conceiving unusual objects which need not obligatorily follow the Vitruvian principles of durability, utility and beauty. Often, temporality, transience and phenomenality, according to the intentions of the creators, are immanent features of many projects.

Keywords: architecture, originality, distinguishing mark

S t r e s z c z e n i e

W procesie tworzenia architektury istotnym zamierzeniem jest przyszły jej efektowność i później ocena. Stąd też w naszej współczesności poszukiwanie niepowtarzalności rozwiązań. Czasami zabawa w oryginalność jest grą i wymyślanie niezwykłych rzeczy, dla których zgodność z odwiecznymi witruwiańskimi zasadami czyli trwałych, użytecznych i pięknych, nie jest wartością obligatoryjną. Często tymczasowość, ulotność i zjawiskowość, zgodnie z intencją autorów, są immanentnymi cechami wielu realizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura,, oryginalność, wyróżnik

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1. Introduction

The insane mind of King Ludvig of Bavaria was behind the construction of three great royal residences: Schloss Neuschwanstein, Schloss Herrenchiemsee and Schloss Linderhof. The great projects and huge costs did not lead to the creation of a place where the ruler could find peace. They remained testimony to his fascination with architecture, a trace of his playing at builder inspired by the music of Wagner. Their scale, imaginativeness and arrogance arouse interest and attract visitors and admirers. This is just what is expected of architecture. More and more architects take up the challenge of creating projects that will attract attention, bring the authors prestige, and make the buildings rise to the status of icons. They start a game of originality, which can be an interesting experience at times.

2. Lucien Kroll

In the early 1970s, medical students were invited to participate in designing the architecture of the Woluwe-Saint-Lambert campus of UCL (Université Catholique de Louvain). At that time, it was in line with the popular trend towards making inhabitants participate in the creation of the architecture designed for them, which resulted, among other things, from the failure of the modernist movement and a search for a new form of expression. The involvement of users in the design process by means of workshops and consultations aimed to arrange the flats in a way that would best satisfy the people's needs. The point was to reduce the role of the architect to that of a technical moderator. Lucien Kroll was one of the pioneers of the movement. Between 1970 and 1976, he designed *La MéMé*, a campus for UCL's medical students. He adopted a method of intense consultations with students which allowed him to create an alternative to the seriality and monotony of the architecture of modernism. The concept of the housing units was developed after a consultation with the university authorities and became a record of an experimental design process on the one hand and the architect's game with innovative aesthetic forms on the other. The objects that arose had an unusual appearance, fragmented elevation tectonics with a division into separate sections and no repetition of details or materials, including the part demonstrating a German approach to aesthetics, which allowed the architect to create unique architecture. At the same time, the complexity of the form produced by the process motivated by empathy for the diversity of the student community gave rise to an object that continues to provoke controversy and which is a prototype of radical architecture and is nowadays referred to as *an icon of democratic architecture*. [1] Its significance does not amount to just documenting the idea of participatory design. It can also serve as a source of analyses and research on the aesthetics of the 20th-century architecture. However, his original method of design, which consists in playing with the direct influence of users on the reality, is controversial. These days, any division or distinction with respect to social class or national identity can arouse strong opposition. The same applies to the landscaping of the area which once was an open space, with plants growing on artificial hillocks. Today, big trees grow irregularly on the slopes and alterations to the landscape are made over time and in accordance with current needs. The former openness of the project and its extravagance have disappeared. The aesthetic principles of the architecture proposed at that time, which meant a departure from regularity and symmetry, apparently proved insufficient to deserve a continuation and a special rank in the Belgian landscape.

3. Friedrich Hundertwasser

Hundertwasser was involved in his original artistic activity which earned him the name of a creator of bizarre objects that were rarely considered beautiful. He played with form, details, and – above all – the viewers' feelings. In his paintings there was a clear domination of biomorphic patterns. Initially he was inspired by the style of Klimt, with his dynamic and colour. However, over time, he developed his own style called 'transautomatism' which he defined as deliberate automatism or an ability to identify with an object through a process of deepened creation. From his youth he took an interest in organic art. He opposed the Bauhaus movement with its geometricized forms. Instead of the straight line he preferred the spiral, which he thought was closer to the natural cycles of life and death. Organic spiral shapes dominated his works, and a recurrent motif was an onion slice in vivid colours. His interests also included architecture, and were described in The Mouldiness Manifesto against Rationalism in Architecture [2], or a treatise on the rejection of rationalistic and formal architecture, where he also praised the natural environment and experiencing art as a happening. In 1980, he received a commission from the authorities of Vienna to design an apartment house on the corner of Löwengasse and Kegelgasse. He presented five models of which one was selected for realization. This is how his famous and spectacular building came into being. Everything distinguished it from the surroundings. It became a fascinating object owing to unusual formal tricks: playing with colour and detail, and unexpected surprises. It provoked widespread criticism, which was justified to a greater or lesser extent. Such architecture is a modern accent among the old environment. Its distinguishing marks are contrast and grotesqueness. It is hard to make an objective assessment of this kind of aesthetic phenomenon, including the beauty of the architecture. However, it is worth noting that there are places, such as Vienna and Salzburg, where efforts have been made to create conditions more conducive to the appearance of new architectural distinguishing landmarks in the cityscape. Their extravagance and specific novelty are appreciated and considered to have a significant value. Hundertwasserhaus (Hundertwasser, 1986) happens to be one of them. Hundertwasser took up playing with architecture many more times and the results can still be seen in numerous cities in Austria, Germany as well as Japan and the US.

4. Teatro del Mondo

This floating theatre with 250 seats was made for the 1980 Biennale in Venice. It was designed by Aldo Rossi as a compilation of two buildings – the Anatomical Theatre of Padua and the Globe Theatre of Shakespeare. The first is the world's oldest anatomical theatre built at the Palazzo Bo, the main seat of the University of Padua. It was founded by the anatomist Girolamo Fabrizio in 1594. It has been preserved in its original form which resembles the shell of a walnut. From the moment it was erected, its form and function fascinated people through the ages as death and art as well as anatomical drawings inspired macabre art. The other structure is equally significant and inspiring because the Globe Theatre has been inseparable from the image of the theatre and the world of illusion presented in it since 1599. It had an amphitheatric interior with the stage covered by a small roofing – *heavens.* A crest above the main entrance was inscribed with the motto *Totus mundus agit histrionem – The whole world is a playhouse* This suggestion of playfulness and the specific form of the structure certainly inspired Aldo

Ill. 1. Lucien Kroll, *La MéMé,* 1976, photo. author

Rossi and made him design the specific shape of his *Teatro del Mondo.* The ephemeral project remains famous and has been subject of countless formal interpretations and semantic analyses by various researchers. The architect himself seems to have treated the project as a game of originality which gained significance over time. The *macabre* motif is also present in the history of this short-lived structure. After the Biennale, the theatre was moored in the vicinity of Santa Maria Maggiore. The shabby, empty structure, stripped of the seats for the audience was a public toilet for people unaware of its significance for future generations of architects and art historians. In 2014, *Teatro del Mondo* was recreated for the 2015 Milan EXPO when a provocative idea was put forward to move the EXPO to Lugano and build exhibition pavilions on platforms floating on the lake [3, 4]. One of the newspapers published an article with a photomontage showing three del Mondo theatres along the waterfront ...

5. Serpentine Gallery or programmatic play with architecture.

The 2015 Serpentine Pavilion was designed by José Selgas and Lucia Cano. The temporary structure will stand in Kensington Gardens between June 25 and October 18. Its

form resembles a chrysalis of irregular shape made of double-skinned panels of a translucent polymer strongly accentuated by colour. Inside, there is a flow of spaces that vary in shapes and sizes. Daylight is filtered through the skin producing a brilliant stained-glass effect in the interior. In the evening, the pavilion is lit from the inside and becomes a stunning structure of light, shadow, transparency and lightness that leads the viewer into a fairytale world. The organic form of the pavilion, reliance on new technologies and materials, vivid colours and translucent skin are a trademark of the architects. The London pavilion is a deliberate play with ecology aided by plastics which has not prevented it from becoming a message for this year's London summer in Kensington Gardens.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the idea to create temporary, transient architecture which lives only for several months and yet is significant and commented upon. Distinguished artists create icons whereby they declare their view on contemporary architecture with all its trends and idiosyncrasies. In the space of the park there is room for playfulness, for transforming architecture into a record that immediately goes down in history. Contemporary architecture's immersion in the pursuit of originality can be seen in other projects as designers have a wide range of formulas for self-presentation.

6. BUS:STOP Krumbach

In 2014, several bus stops were designed by famous architects in the small village of Krumbach, Austria. The architects in question were: Aleksander Brodsky (Russia); Rintala Eggertsson (Norway); Architecten de Vylder Vinck Taillieu (Belgium); Ensamble Studio, Antón García-Abril and Débora Mesa (Spain); Smiljan Radic (Chile); Amateur Architecture Studio, Wang Shu / Ly Wenyu (China); Sou Fujimoto (Japan) [5, 6]. Each architect created their own project, which were remote from standard solutions and surprised everyone with their form and ingenuity. The idea was to use local materials and to work in collaboration with local architects so that all the projects could be implemented quickly and efficiently. At present, they attract admirers of architecture and works of famous architects to Krumbach and the adjacent village of Vals.

7. Conclusions

Everything which serves the purpose of distinguishing a building or a complex of buildings from others is carefully premeditated and then implemented because the final result matters to every architect, every designer, particularly when it is combined with the pleasure derived from creating and inventing durable, useful and beautiful objects according to the eternal Vitruvian principles. At the same time, when an object becomes significant by the addition of distinguishing details, it provokes widespread criticism and gains popularity. An objective assessment of the aesthetic values of architecture, including its beauty, is difficult and ambiguous, but there are places where great effort is placed in creating distinctive landmarks in the cityscape. Such provocative architecture, created for the sake of being noticed, emerges to mark a contrast in space, which sometimes ennobles the space itself and sometimes simply plays with it.

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