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CREATING ARCHITECTURE – A GAME FIRST AND FOREMOST

ARCHITEKTONICZNA KREACJA TO – PRZEDE WSZYSTKIM – GRA

A b s t r a c t

The topic that was given to the authors – that of the academic problem of playing with and the game of architecture, has been researched and analysed by the author with the aim of affirming the fascinating nature of this issue – one that is a worthy academic field. It is the issue of the outstanding criterion of evaluating works of architecture. The essay has been composed into four chapters, each examining factors ranging from the more general, broad and theoretical, to the more detailed, specific and empirical. The chapters themselves are four distinct parts that, along with their conclusion, make up a complete and coherent work.

Keywords: The creation process, psychology of the creative mind, the person and society, modernity, architecture, the attractiveness of architecture

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

Zagadnienie intelektualne i naukowe „gry i zabawy architektury", zostało przebadane i opisane z założeniem wykorzystania tego zagadnienia, jako pola badawczego i kryterium oceny twórczości architektonicznej. Pracę skonstruowano w formie czterech uwarunkowań usytuowanych od ogólnych, szerokich i teoretycznych, do szczegółowych, dedykowanych i empirycznych. Stanowią one osobne rozdziały, ale składają się, wraz z konkluzją, na spójną i kompletną rozprawę.

Słowa kluczowe: Proces tworzenia, psychologia twórcy, osoba i społeczność, nowoczesność architekta, atrakcyjność architektury.

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Architectural games are serious and exciting endeavours, and we should understand them as a form of artistic creation and not as a form of utilitarian consumption, entertainment, hedonism, a program fetishism or functionalism [12]. The approach that has been proposed in this essay to the topic is one of an entry point to the higher theory of shaping architectural form and its aesthetics.

1. The psychological profile of the "player" – the creator

Jung is perhaps the ideal candidate for a champion of research into the issue of the psychological condition of the creative mind in relation to the concept of playing architectural games. His contribution to the development of game theory and its application in the field of the analysis of artistic creation was mainly focused on the studying of the relationship between the conscious and subconscious elements of the artist's mind. He viewed it as a "cloud" of information composed of material, intellectual and emotional elements. When artists start a project, they enter into a "game" with their subconscious. They search the "cloud" for inspiration and the building blocks of their future work, doing so heuristically, based on intuition and their free will. Finally, they pick out the most appropriate, which can then serve to visualize and bring form to their work [5].

The heart of this process is its deliberate nature, which is the driving factor behind good creative decisions. While in the USA, Jung expanded his research on the "creative game", working on the association experiment. Association plays an important role in the transferring of the artist's project from the subconscious to the conscious part of the mind. This process can be repeated, moderated and iterated upon until the work is finished. One of the most important qualities of the creative mind is intuition, for it is the deciding factor in the rank of an artist and their work [19].

Among both Jung's predecessors and successors in the field of studying the "game" of the creative mind, the most notable are Kant [6] and Kuhn [15]. The latter coined the term "paradigm shift", which he used to analyse the capacity for innovation and change, defining three types of individuals: the skilful, the outstanding and the geniuses [10]. Phenomenology, on the other hand, has proven to be less useful in this regard, mostly due to its focus on the "material elements", while disregarding the imagination – its proponents did not understand emotional factors such as surprise or bewilderment [7].

2. The poetic and literary conditions of the creative game

Architectural games can be inspired by literature. This discipline, alongside sociology, provides a unique perspective on the world of both the beholders and the creators of art, with good examples provided in works by Czesław Miłosz [17]. He often mentioned "playing games" in his book *Zaczynając od moich ulic*: apart from the "interplay of phenomena", there exists a hard structure to the world and our minds and hearts form an alliance with it. "Artistic games" are only good when they benefit society. The sole purpose of artists is to open up to a new dimension, so that the matter of living alongside others can become more passionate. Works of art which are made in defiance of the basic human effort of unification are just "toying", and should wither away.

In his *Ogród Nauk* Miłosz states that the "game" is an important part of the artistic creative process. The true discipline of creativity is contemplation focused on reality which, even

though subjected to necessity, remains constantly fresh and unnamed. Contemplation entices us to capture this eerie "game" between the stable and the fickle in a process of constant transfiguration. Miłosz claimed that the logic of art is one of incessant movement. In his *Rodzinna Europa* he contemplates the question of using artistic games as a means of carrying energy, the golden centre between pseudo-artistic madness and equally pseudo-artistic pathos. In *Widzenia nad Zatoką San Francisco* Miłosz analyses and evaluates "intellectual, artistic and creative games, which end up in a gigantic museum of the imagination", where the final elements enter the "game".

Życie na wyspach contains a fiery polemic by Miłosz against deconstructivism, which he sees as similar to "playing with fake cards".

Miłosz's perspective is broad: he focuses on architecture and the landscape: he states that man-made myth is recorded within a space. Thoughts are transformed into three-dimensional images. They are marked as belonging to a moment in the history of civilization. However, not all of the manners of space deserve the same rights, the same admiration and finally, preservation. He claimed that when a poet espouses the tenets of deconstructivism, poetry becomes incapacitated. In order to function, it needs a belief in reality; it needs to aim at the heart of things; it needs to be on the side of the *mythos*. Miłosz reminds us of the boundary between truth and falsehood, good and evil. That we should not perform demagogic tricks to appease the littler, for there is a lively essence hiding behind the platitudes.

This critique is interestingly similar to the views of Gianugo Polsello, regarding "architecture with a plume" [13].

3. The professional conditions of architecture and urban design, "the play of forms in the light" and "the game for the city"

The professional conditions of "architectural games" are presented based on the example of the three following subjects:

3.1. Le Corbusier's idea of a "creative game"

From among the many written works of Le Corbusier, Précisions [2] illustrates his approach to his great mission and his work in the form of a "game". It contains a written record of the lectures which he delivered in 1929 in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, New York and Moscow. The author fervently preaches his messianic view of a new modernity of the inter-war period Modern Movement, "when architecture and urban design became like nothing that was before". He uses the famous revolutionary slogan *Tout a changé* – everything has changed. His "game for the future" shows that art and the beauty of architecture is a method of educating society at a higher level – equally important as homes viewed like physiological machines for living. The degree to which Le Corbusier won his "game" is astounding; his uncompromising and modern ideas on architecture defeated the old fashioned forms that he ridiculed in his drawings.

Another phenomenal book on the topic of "playing architectural games" is the post-war *Poeme de l'Angle Droit* [3]. This work propagates the author's ideas in a clear, yet mysterious manner. The weird composition of this album, which contains the author's paintings and essays, is laid out in a manner which reminds one of alchemy or mythology, a little like in

[Photo. W. Kosiński]

Picasso's work [18]. It combines the engineering logic of the titular right angle with the ease of painting and sculpture within architecture. The great "player's" personality can be seen as remarkably open and brilliant. Both in regard to the forms of his buildings and in the level at which they are integrated with other arts. He is equal in rank to the other great artists – the "players" of the most illustrious epochs in history.

3.2. The "game" factor in parametric design

Another subject of choice that reflects the current professional conditions of the game of architecture is parametric design. Corbusier was the greatest victor in the "game" for a modern, artistic, functional and accessible architecture. The current "Third" wave of Modernism ("Super Modernism?" [13]) – aside from its minimalist branch – primarily offers the type of architectural games associated with frivolous hedonism, freeform design, decadence and a finality which can be associated with the irrational styles of Mannerism and the aforementioned deconstructivism. The leading "player" in this game is of parametric design is P. Schumacher, who, while promoting this approach to creation, proclaimed that parametricism is a new style of architecture [20]. The reality of the matter, however, is that it is simply one of the technologies used in design.

There are, however, other young players entering the field: N. Dunn, the author of *Digital Fabrication in Architecture*; L. Iwamoto, the author of *Digital Fabrications-Technologies-Materials*, and the author of marvellous designs; W. Jabi, the author of the *Parametric Design for Architecture* handbook. However, the leading parametric design projects of today are, for the most part, "clouds of possibility", rather than defined, timeless works. The education regarding parametric design is still in its infancy, with Zaha Hadid remarking that the youth of today is ignorant and dislikes mathematics, which is the basis of creative parametric design [20].

3.3. The use of game theory and chaos theory in urban design

The newest generation of the "game of cities" [1] – strategic planning, a permanent and dynamic field, also associated with a high level of digitization, uses slightly different tools from architecture. Advanced digitization, based on "top to bottom" photography allows the monitoring of the evolution of cities, their unplanned development and the sprawl. The very same technologies, used "in reverse" can be used to analyse and then create advanced spatial plans. The old monotonous way of designing cities is turning into a colourful "game". Some of its tools include fractal graphics, derived from chaos theory. A similar, yet separate "game for the urban quality of life" can be described by the "smart city" [14] slogan.

4. Digital and technological conditions. Examples of interactive projects

The latest innovative development which allows designers a chance of playing the "innovation game", which also provides a lot of fun to its users, is interactive architecture.

It is based on designing the building in a manner which allows it to form a symbiotic relationship with an electronic installation, which can be programmed in a manner so that certain behaviour on the part of its users can produce surprising effects that can be a source of fun. It is another level of the (r)evolution in electronics, digital technology and automatics [4].

Interactive devices are slowly becoming standard fittings in public buildings, for instance acting as support equipment in exhibition spaces. The Georgia Tech College of Computing in Georgia, USA, specializes in the "live pasting" of satellite ortho-photography with video filmed on site [16]. An international conference on the topic of combining interactive technologies with hybrid public spaces took place in Moscow in 2011.

Interactive buildings and equipment are a sort of sensation; each piece of equipment is innovative in a way. The development of interactive "games" within the fields of architecture, interior and industrial design continues [8].

4.1. "Playing with UFOs", upper illustration

[photo http://www.blur_house_yverdon_le_bains.ch]

One of the most interesting interactive buildings is the Blur-Dome, commonly known as the UFO. It was designed by the architectural designers Diller and Scofidio of New York in cooperation with interior designer C. Renfro. The building is located in Yverdon-les-Bains, over the waters of Lake Neuchatel for the Swiss Expo 2002. The openwork pavilion has a diameter of around 100 m, with its structure made of steel trusses supported by pillars resting on the lake floor. Two ramps provide access to the building.

The structure emits a mist of water vapour. Those who wish to participate in the experiment being conducted at the building put on coats fitted with sensors that register their emotional state. The coats change colour according to the emotional state of the wearer. The idea of the experiment was to analyse the exterior signs of the "internal climate" of the members of the group: the mutual expression of their emotions.

4.2. "Playing with the Heart", lower left illustration

[photo. http://www.doetinchem_D-turm.nl].

Another attractive, highly ingenious interactive venture is the structure in Doetinchem in the Netherlands. It has a controversial, intriguing and not so aesthetic or original form, yet deserves recognition. It is a sort of a large "heart", made from a soft, translucent material, standing on a tripod of "arteries". It was designed by architect L. Spuybroek and graphic artist Q. Serafijn. The "Heart", constructed in 2003 and paid for with public money, is connected via a pneumatic installation with the City Hall. Every midnight, the City Hall collects internet surveys from registered computers belonging to the inhabitants and guests of the city on their emotional state. The surveys are evaluated and the mean emotional state is reflected in the appearance of the "Heart", with an appropriate explanation summarily provided. Its state changes every day at midnight and is regulated by colourful gasses which are pumped into it. Positive emotions produce a firm and bright red effect, while average and depressed emotional states result in a floppy, grey heart.

4.3. “Playing with the Globe”, lower left illustration

The interactivity of public spaces is starting to become a commonplace in both developed and developing yet ambitious countries. In one of the most beautiful cities of China, Guilin, the City Park, located in the historic city centre, contains touch-sensitive “globes”, which can be used “to play a game of globalization”. They also provide lighting during the night. They are even more popular among visitors than the most beautiful Imperial era monuments [11].

CONCLUSION. Playing architectural games, as an intellectual idea, is a serious issue which demands academic analysis. The “game” is a key state in an artist’s search for the most innovative, beautiful work. The “game” can be a fitting, attractive and interesting way of observing and utilizing the beauty of architecture.

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