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THE POWER OF URBAN VOID

Art research paper

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Abstract

“In the time of the plague” the life of the city goes on, changing its rhythm and adapting to difficult circumstances and limitations. It retreats to the private zone, to interiors hidden behind thick walls. Balconies, like connectors between the interior and the outside, become invaluable spaces. Just like façades, stairs, niches, arcades, and the whole architectural layer that allows to consider the city space to be friendly because it is possible to touch, feel, stay sit and relax. Even when it does not offer attractions, does not flicker with the lights of cafés, does not invite you to the art gallery or for evening theatrical performances. The city affected by the pandemic closes meeting places – restaurants, art galleries, theaters. At the same time, the crisis exposes the power of urban void, the space of streets and squares formed by façades of buildings, and reveals the potential of open meeting places, spaces for walks and urban wanders. If they are not inspiring, do not move, the city quiets and dies: the inhabitants have nowhere to go, they cannot meet and feel like “being in the city”. However, there are such spaces that, without offering anything other than their form, are still visited, do not lose their lives, attract people. What is the secret of their extraordinary quality? How does the architectural layer of public spaces affect the behavior of residents? Without “events” and commercial attractions, can space encourage you to be in it?

The article takes up the topic of space as a meeting place and provides an analysis and interpretation of observations of several selected urban spaces in terms of their potential to serve as meeting spaces.

Keywords

city architecture, public space, place, experience of architectural space, feeling of architecture

Introduction

When the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic in Europe was declared in early 2020, I had to cancel my plans. I already knew that I would not go to Rome to go around the city once again without a plan, and that I would not be able to “disappear” in the bustle of Rome’s space, to feel once again how wonderful places it offers. It was there, in Italy, which was the first country in Europe to stand on the front line of the fight against an unknown virus, that the epidemiological situation was most difficult. Travel bans have been introduced, flights were cancelled and borders were closed throughout Europe.

However, I then took a series of tours of my city, Warsaw. I wanted to see what a deserted city looks like, to experience a space I did not know before, and to explore where I would find places to walk in the city: the only activity that could be indulged in public space. I walked through streets and squares of my city, choosing those formed by buildings with living interiors and pulsating exteriors. I avoided spaces filled with lifeless buildings which at the time of the pandemic restrictions were looked after only by security personnel and whose façades had nothing to offer me as an urban wanderer and observer carefully looking for relationship between buildings and between me and them.

Moved by the impossibility of traveling, I began virtual wandering around Rome, using Web cameras aimed at squares and streets of the city. In parallel, therefore, although using other “tools” and methods, I looked at the two cities, Warsaw and Rome. I tried not to compare them but only to save observations and describe my own experiences based on memories of being in real spaces, video recordings, scraps of images in the form of screenshots¹. I started looking from a distance at the space of the city that I could not travel to. I watched Rome using access to Web cameras which broadcast images from the city’s streets and squares 24 hours a day. I saw a city I had never known before: devoid of tourist buzz and depopulated. The lives of the inhabitants retreated for a time to the private zone, beyond the façade of tenement houses, to interiors hidden behind thick walls. Watching Rome’s space through the cameras, I saw how streets deserted as a result of administrative decisions started to fill with people over time, when it became possible, even though they seemingly had nowhere to go and their favorite restaurants and cafes were closed. I watched the movement of the locals in the tourist-free city. I had an impression that the architectural potential of the city, its planes of façades, stairs, niches, arcades and arcades make the city space friendly because it is possible to touch, feel, stay, sit and relax.

1 Screenshot – in English, screen dump, a record in the form of an image of data displayed on the computer screen



Figure 1. Campo de' Fiori, Rome, <https://www.skylinewebcams.com/>.

I wrote a short text in which I shared my first observations:

During the plague, the city's life tries to move on, changing its rhythm and adapting to difficult circumstances and limitations. It retreats to the private zone, to interiors hidden behind thick walls².

The realization that this life nevertheless “takes place” has never before gained such importance. My wanderings, real and virtual, confirmed my belief that a street or square can become a place or a non-place, that they can be a form filled with a moving atmosphere, or just a non-space to travel through. The time of the pandemic still brings out the **truth** about the quality of space.

Feeling

The concept of space in colloquial discourse is often used interchangeably with the concept of place. However, it is worth recalling here, perhaps, the key difference between the concepts of **space** and **place**, which in terms of reflecting on the city during the pandemic is of great importance. In an architectural context, space is an open and abstract area, not clearly defined. A place is part of that space, a specific location, with a special identity and meaning resulting from the factors that construct it. The place can be “seen, felt and heard”³ and is therefore a combination of sensations, narrative and memory, framed in a material framework. The place is also defined by specific events for which it is the background and which events build the identity of the place.

2 Iwona Kalenik, *Miasto w czasach zarazy*, wpis na blogu (źródło: <http://www.lekturyarchitektury.pl/miasto/miasto-w-czasach-zarazy/>).

3 Bohdan Jałowiecki, *Miejsce, przestrzeń, obszar*, „Przegląd Socjologiczny”, 2011, vol. 60, no 2–3, s. 23 (źródło: <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-1f86f0a0-c77e-4cec-a249-480c459fd646>).

Space as a “practiced place” or a “practice of places” appears in analyses carried out by Michel de Certeau who understands space as a place filled with traffic or an “urban interior” filled with passers-by. This “**practice of places**” thus becomes a collection of views, events and landscapes, a sequence of experiences, a journey in which one can participate or in which one can only be a spectator.

While, according to de Certeau, space should be produced based on experience and with this experience in mind, spatial planning makes it the subject of speculation, classification operations and bureaucratic administration aimed at eliminating all randomness⁴.



Figure 2. Via Monterone, Rome, photo by Iwona Kalenik.

Participation, understood as **being in**, experiencing, going deep, can therefore be a criterion that distinguishes places from non-places. According to Marc Augé, these differences mainly concern the category of social experience, which is not possible in non-places. Places, therefore, defined by the three elements: locations, meanings and activities, allow participation in relations both on a human level and in a human-space relationships, as opposed to non-places which are transitional and do not allow development of such relationships.

Being in

Street as a basic element of urban space is considered in different contexts. As a component of the architecture of the city in the past, it was an intimate “small world” shaped by the history of the

4 Konrad Miciukiewicz, *Miejskie strategie i taktyki. Wokół koncepcji praktyki życia codziennego Michela de Certeau*, „Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny”, 2008, R. LXX, z. 2, s. 188.

inhabitants of the city, events, enriched with architectural variations on the same “theme”. And although it was never a “goal” in the sense of a square, it was a space of outstandingly public character, conducive to meetings, an “interior” that could accommodate both the intensity of events and the delightful intimacy of peace.

Modern streets have ceased to favor being on them not only through the huge scale of new objects forming the street image, but also by the loss of their superficial character. Norwegian architect Christian Norberg-Schulz, the author of “Existence, Space and Architecture”, draws attention to the figural nature of buildings which is destructive to the street space. The street loses its walls and its role is “reduced to a subordinate land”⁵. This subordination can be seen in the Polish language in the designation of street addresses. A building stands “on” a street, rarely “at”. Unlike in English, there is no form of being “in” a street at all. Modern streets are therefore often streets only by name, with regard to the administrative address. A street does not constitute a place conducive to staying, an “urban interior”, but only an area defined by the roadway, where there are separate buildings marked with numbers. Norberg-Schulz notes that it is the street, not the buildings, that should be figural in order to become a real form. This is possible through the existence of a clear boundary: the façade constituting a continuous surface, with an intense density, as well as a kind of unification, which, however, is based on subtle variations on the subject, not monotony.

He touches on an extremely important issue, which is the continuity of the surface of the façades of buildings. The touch they share, considered in terms of a kind of “urban emotionality”, proves crucial in producing street coziness and perhaps even intimacy. “The local community of façades is built not from identical, but only from similar, façades without which there would be neither the street nor the city”⁶. Without the tightness of frontages, the street falls apart, ceases to be the interior, and becomes a ground with a designated roadway and sidewalk. The interfaces between buildings, seen as the boundaries between them, “paradoxically become connecting devices owing to which a frontage can be more easily grasped as uniform or coherent”⁷. It therefore appears that the degree of close-up of the urban interior, in this case the street, depending on the tightness of the frontages, has a significant impact on the type of urban energy and on the nature of the place. For an urban walker, it is also important how walls touch the sky and the ground of the street – the upper and lower edges of the street frontage⁸. The former can only be seen, up to a certain height, while the latter are more tangible in their touchability and owing to the movement along the line of contact with the ground.

5 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Bycie, przestrzeń, architektura*, Warszawa 2000, p. 83.

6 Monika Zawadzka, *Fasada wrzeszczańska. Kamienice pierzejowe*, Gdańsk 2017, p. 16.

7 Monika Zawadzka, *Miejsca-zetknięcia-fasad jako zagadnienie spójności i dynamiki formy urbanistycznej*, praca doktorska, Politechnika Gdańska, 2013 (źródło: Pomorska Biblioteka Cyfrowa: <https://pbc.gda.pl/publication/40321>).

8 Zob. Monika Zawadzka, *Fasada wrzeszczańska...*, op. cit.

A street, or a city square, can be considered as a figure, a mass of air of a certain shape, and therefore also an interior formed by integral and homogeneous frontages, which becomes a kind of container of activity and events just like the interior of a building. In my urban pandemic observations I asked myself if and how this material, the inanimate part of the urban space, affects the quality of being in urban interiors – streets and squares. I noticed that the spaces I observed, featuring tight, continuous and clearly outlined containing surfaces attracted not only me but also other residents, even though they offered only their bare walls.

It can therefore be said that, in the urban context, a street or square can become a space, a place or a non-place. Thus, the street or square where life takes place, filled with the movement of residents, is primarily a space, a part of a larger urban system. It becomes a place when being in its spaces involves sensory experience, activities, being, participating. Empty, devoid of a potential for presence and participation, it turns into a non-place, marked with an information system, roadways bounded by sidewalks. The square or street “is therefore not only traffic, but an accumulation of events”⁹, a multiplicity of activities embedded in the particular space.



Figure 3. Piazza della Rotonda, photo. Iwona Kalenik.

„In the commercialized space of the city only places are able to restore the balance of dismembered, chaotic and devoid of value urban space”¹⁰ – writes Małgorzata Dymnicka, analyzing the issue of places and non-places in the urban context. She refers to the thought of Yi-Fu Tuan who took the perspective of understanding the place as a “humanized space” divided into public places and fields

9 Bohdan Jałowiecki, *Miejsce, przestrzeń, obszar*, „Przegląd Socjologiczny”, 2011, vol. 60, no 2–3, p. 22 (source: <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-1f86f0a0-c77e-4cec-a249-480c459fd646>).

10 Małgorzata Dymnicka, *Od miejsca do nie-miejsca*, „Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Sociologica”, 2011, p. 36 (source: http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.hdl_11089_320/c/35_dymnickaFolia_Sociologica_36.pdf).

of care. The latter seem to be more important and better due to their potential to generate both human-human and human-city experiences. Yi-Fu Tuan mentions the house, garden, market square and café: places where the rhythm of urban life is clearly slowed down, where you have to stop to fully experience their potential.

In the context of art, so also architecture, a very interesting perspective is that referring to the formal characteristics of space as having an important, if not crucial, influence on the perception of street space as a place. Christian Norberg-Schulz believes that the *genius loci* is created by the meanings of buildings that collect (within themselves) the characteristics of the place and make them close to man”¹¹. This very interesting perspective recognizes the key role of buildings in creating a spirit of space, atmosphere and aura that promotes or not the recognition of a street or square as a place that offers much more than the space it occupies. Following this consideration of the issue of *genius loci*, as also created by the form of buildings, it can be argued that it is the architectural framework, as the most tangible element of the street, that has a crucial influence on the recognition of a given space as a place. It is the externality of architecture that defines the shape of public space, the layer between the interior of the building and the urban interior that turns out to be extremely important. During the pandemic, it reveals its power to catch the eye and to encourage to touch, come closer, **be in**.

Coming to a stop

While browsing Jan Gehl’s book, “Life Between Buildings”, I came across the chapter title: “Spaces for walking, places to stop at”. I was moved by its significance. I find in it, perhaps inadvertently devised, another category of distinction between space and place. In this chapter, Jan Gehl lists different ways of being in urban space: walking, standing, sitting, but also seeing, hearing and talking. He writes that “it is not enough just to create spaces and allow people to move around in them. There must also be adequate conditions for moving and staying in spaces [...]”¹². He touches on the subject of landscapes for conversation which will not happen without meeting, slowing down or stopping. He looks in detail at the conditions of urban space, which favor different types of activities. What draws my special attention is the “edge effect”, so called by Gehl, associated with the build-up of activity from the edge of a given space to its center. He cites the words of Christopher Alexander: “If the edge fails, the space will never be animated”¹³. The multitude of forms facilitating static presence of people in the edge zone seems completely unused in modern buildings which sometimes reduce their simplicity to shocking mediocrity, offering nothing more than a cool mirror image.

11 Citation from: Krzysztof Bierwiaczonek, *Miejsca i nie-miejsca w perspektywie badań nad przestrzeniami publicznymi polskich miast*, „Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Sociologica”, 2018, 64, p. 57; the text refers to: Ch. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, New York 1980.

12 Jan Gehl, *Życie między budynkami*, Kraków 2009, p. 129.

13 *Ibid*, p. 150 – reference to: Christopher Alexander, *Język wzorców. Miasta, budynki, konstrukcja*, Gdańsk 2008.



Figure 4. The Savior's Square, photo by Iwona Kalenik.

When I visited the Savior Square in Warsaw in another month of the pandemic, I marveled at the opportunities it offers in the area of its edges. The stratifications of façades in the form of arcades, hollows, columns, stairs and niches, sometimes dressed in awnings or curtains, allows me to feel safe as an observer of urban life. I can stay in this place, stand, sit, lean comfortably against the walls of a building. The exterior of architecture invites me to contact it and stay in the space of the square. Its proportions and the variety of building forms encourage observation, do not overwhelm with size, allow to look at the edge between them and at the sky, feel the warmth of sunlight, hide in the half-shade and stay rather than just “traverse”, even though it does not offer any activity from the period of the so-called “normality”.

In the pandemic reality I also look at Piazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, through a Web camera. It is one of my favorite squares in Rome. I spent many hours in it during several trips. It is a medium-sized square, measuring about 60 by 40 meters, in the central part of which there is a fountain. The eastern and northern frontages of the square are formed by buildings with cafes and restaurants on their ground floors, with wide umbrellas protruding deep into the space of the square. In the western frontage there is an arcade entrance to the The Basilica of Our Lady in Trastevere. It is these frontages and fountains that play a huge role on sunny days, when sunrays appear like resting on them, leaving coffee drinkers in the umbrella half-shade. In the peace of the morning they can look at life that takes place on the outskirts of the square, as well as in its central part. Seeing, hearing and talking are activities to which Jan Gehl devotes several pages to his aforementioned book, considering the possibility of doing these things as crucial for considering the space to be conducive to being “pleasant in all respects”¹⁴.

14 Jan Gehl, *Życie między budynkami*, op. cit., p. 171.



Figure 5. Piazza di S. Maria in Trastevere, photo by Iwona Kalenik.

I recall my experience of this place and, with the eye of the Web camera, I look closely at how Romans use this square at the time when the only thing it offers is the exteriority of architecture. I see that there is still a kind of the performance of shutters being opened and closed, which is a signal that life is taking place among the architecture. I watch people stopping in the square, sitting on the steps of the fountain and leaning on the stone pillars around it. I do not hear what they talk about but I remember that the inside of the square is conducive to talking, and it does not take much effort to hear one another. Conversations muffled by the sound of the fountain can be more intimate here. Their intensity does not give rise to noise because sounds diffuse on numerous corneas, niches and caved-in walls of the square. How different from short messages shouted by passers-by on noisy, windy, busy roads.

The inhabitants of Rome continue living in the space of their streets and squares, although social life largely takes place online. And although even the ritual of *aperitivo* has found its form online, grouping friends, the good space of the city still plays a significant role and attracts. Balconies and windows have become filters between the interiors of the apartments and the public area, peculiar scenes of manifestos of the power of survival.

Meeting

„In the concrete reality of the modern world, places and spaces, places and non-places, mingle with each other and penetrate each other. The possibility of a non-place depends on places”¹⁵ – writes Marc

15

Marc Augé, *Nie-miejsca: wprowadzenie do antropologii nadnowoczesności: fragmenty*, „Teksty Drugie. Teoria Literatury, Krytyka, Interpretacja”, translated by Adam Dziadek, 2008, no 4 (112), p. 127–140.

Augé who contraposes the notions of **place** and **non-place**. In this way, it juxtaposes different or even opposite realities: transit and residence, the reality of a “collision-free intersection” and the reality of a meeting, or the experience of a passenger and the experience of a traveler. How much concepts related to non-places have penetrated into the language of design can be felt in the vast majority of discussions on urban issues. It is significant that modern cities still find meaning in the language of extreme functionality, drawing patterns from production lines. “Fast transport”, “easy communication”, “clear signage” have become symbols of a modern efficient city which resembles an airport in its way of functioning – one example of a non-place given by Marc Augé. The pandemic reality reveals the weakness of such understanding of issues related to the space of a city. The pandemic removes from the space of the street and square all layers of apparent attractions, events, events and tinsel, leaving only architectural frames.



Figure 6. Piazza della Rotonda, <https://www.skylinewebcams.com/>.

I look at Piazza della Rotonda, the Roman square in front of the Pantheon. I recall that being inside it was tiring due to the number of tourists trying to capture only themselves and the historic building in the pictures. When I watch this square during the pandemic, through the eye of the Web camera, I see that it is a place of completely different activities. It moves me how much the time of the pandemic “gave a breather” to this space which is now visited only by inhabitants of the city. It is really theirs now. The owner of a small shop, located in the eastern frontage of the square, goes out to play football with random people staying in the square. The floor of the square becomes for a while a kind of arena, a place of unfettered fun filled with cheers of joy. Saunterers, who for a moment become spectators, sit on the steps of the fountain located in the center of the square. They look at the game, but also at details of the façades of the tenement houses. The façade painting depicting Madonna, located above the entrance to the shop, catches the eye. Again, I see an irregular rhythm of tilting and closing shutters. Above, closer to the sky, there is the dynamic edge of the cornices and overlapping

images of closer and more remote frontages of as many as nine streets opening to the square. It is the homogeneity of façades, delicate curves of the frontages and small-angled deformations that allow you to feel inside, in the enclosed intimate space of the square. I have the impression that I observe the real life of this place, penetrate into this relaxed atmosphere, almost participate in this very real and spontaneous performance of urban activities.

I am wandering around my city. I want to be an urban traveler, a *flâneuse*¹⁶. I am looking for places where I can stay during the pandemic, even though seemingly nothing happens in them. So I am looking for intimate urban interiors that are difficult to find in Warsaw. The inner-city, dense pre-war system of streets and squares does not exist, and the modern space still remains degraded, shattered by planning decisions. But somewhere I find streets that attract me. Like small Kozia Street connecting Miodowa and Trębacka Streets. The beginning of Kozia Street is difficult to notice from Nowy Świat Street which is wide in this place because Kozia Street is like a “stratification” of this layout, and its width only subtly makes you know about its presence. When inside the street, you can feel the extraordinary proximity of buildings, this measurable physical small distance, but also the homogeneity, consistency and tightness of the both frontages. They are diverse and rich in details, hollows, faults and bumps. Looking at the street plan, it is easy to notice that about a half of its length is missing the western frontage. However, this is just a misperception. In fact, this section has a “façade” of the wall with arched “windows”, through which you can see the huge tree-covered courtyard, instead of building façades. The slightly wavy shape of the interior of the street does not allow you to see the both ends at the same time. My walk is an experience of a constant overlap of views or images of this place, continuous visual play between the first and second plan, observations of delicate deformations of the shape of the street testifying to its uniqueness. Both the frontages are connected in a half of their lengths by a small building called the “Warsaw’s Bridge of Sighs”. Walking down the street during the pandemic, I enjoy its peace and quiet but I also see two people who sit on the low window sill of one of the tenement houses. In the window niche they talk and expose their faces to the spring sun.

Dialogue

Peter Zumthor cites a very detailed note¹⁷ of his stay in the space of one of the European squares he wrote in his notebook on the Holy Thursday in 2003. In terse sentences, he accurately describes his observations and impressions. He writes about the sunken walls of the tenement houses and about the façade of the church, with a pleasant bluish shadow on the other side of the square, a mixture of the sounds of conversations, the gentle tapping of shoes on the pavement and the voices of birds. He writes about what moves him in this place, listing in turn: people, air, sounds colors, materials, textures,

16 *Flâneuse* – franc., żeńska forma słowa *flâneur* – miejski włóczęga, spacerowicz, postać *flâneura* zaistniała w twórczości Charles’a Baudelaire’a i od tego czasu termin ten obecny jest w dyskursie dotyczącym zjawisk kultury.

17 Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres*, Bazel 2009, p. 17.

forms. He looks in detail at every detail of this urban interior. But he also writes about his feelings and mood. And he shares the observation that he “could never have had those feelings without the atmosphere of the square”¹⁸. Thus, he refers to the sensory characteristics of the place where he is located, and which he recognizes through his own sensitivity. I have an irresistible impression that Peter Zumthor was sitting at a restaurant table in one of Rome’s squares while writing this note.



Figure 7. Rome, photo by Iwona Kalenik

In my dissertation I used the concept of the **space of a void** in relation to urban interiors. “You cannot design a void but you can design its boundaries”¹⁹ – writes Peter Zumthor whose design thought is very close to me, especially in the context of urban space. He draws attention to the extremely important role of surfaces forming urban interiors – façades of buildings, edges and floors – which determine their sensory characteristics and personal experience of space. Considering the space of streets and squares as a void of a certain shape, which can be read with the help of the senses, having its smells, sounds, colors and light, extends the understanding of the city with an additional layer based on non-functional aspects. Public space, such as a street or square, becomes truly an urban interior when it creates an opportunity to meet and reside in it, regardless of the purpose of the buildings that form the space. It becomes a place when it has its own, hard-to-measure but clearly palpable, atmosphere conducive to slowing down, noticing details, meeting. The atmosphere is an abstract concept which, like beauty, is reluctant to be taken up in the discourse on the shaping of urban spaces. However, it arises as a result of interaction between the matter of the city, architecture and man. It is therefore

18 Ibid, translated by the author.

19 Peter Zumthor interviewed by Barbara Stec, *Trzy rozmowy z Peterem Zumthorem*, „Architektura & Biznes”, 2003, no 2.

connected with existence, presence, “being in”. “However, the multitude of buildings does not speak only through the image. Its strength lies in the possibility of actually experiencing this multitude and, the same time, and the space of void that the multitude forms”²⁰. The externality of the architecture that forms urban interiors seems crucial in building the power of urban void. The smooth and difficult-to-determine contact between the outside of the building and the interior of the square or street contains a potential for attractiveness of the public space of the city. It is on this border, in the space of the façade of the building, that the architectural dialogue is played out, which professor Jacek Dominiczak writes about:

Here is when the inner wall of the façade is the boundary of the “inner” of the building and is designed from inside to outside, the exterior wall of the façade is the boundary of its “exterior” and is designed from outside to the inside. The space between the layers of the façade is a phenomenon of dialogue: in it the ethical dimension of the architectural encounter is physically realized. Not only because something happens in it but because its form creates a possibility of being without a clearly defined purpose. Being in such an interior in itself is a rewarding process²¹.



Figure 8. Piazza della Rotonda, photo by Iwona Kalenik.

My observations of the streets and squares of Warsaw and Rome confirmed my belief that the city’s streets and squares can strengthen the real, haptic experience of the city’s architecture. Following Gordon Cullen’s idea²², I am almost certain that the atmosphere of the place, its architectural quality and the potential to participate are responsible for building the character of the space and, consequently, for stopping and staying in it. It is not without reason that the interiors of streets and squares of old towns are so attractive. Their phenomenon lies not so much in the history of the places but in a kind of mixture of their atmosphere, geometric proportions and visual expression.

20 Iwona Cała (Kalenik), *W objęciach miasta. Architektura jako emanacja bliskości*, doctoral thesis, the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, 2018, p. 54.

21 Jacek Dominiczak, *Miasto dialogiczne i inne teksty rozproszone*, Gdańsk 2016, p. 80.

22 Gordon Cullen, *Townscape*, London 1961.

A city in the pandemic, but also in the so-called “normal”, time can become a non-place that more often traversed than occupied and in which time as if it does not exist. Its space may resemble a kind of **portal** used only to move from one place to another. Wide streets, without the buzz of conversations, filled with traffic noise, become routes or transit arteries. However, the pandemic city still combines historical, identity, familiar and previously tamed threads. These are still streets and squares, which are spaces of communities, places of encounter, bearing traces of human joys and dramas, events, rooted in the history of the city and the collective memory of the inhabitants. It is still a framework of human existence in which life must take place, regardless of the circumstances.

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The additional inner parenthesis [] in the bibliographic entry contains the year of the first issue, which allows you to get a better idea of the period from which the text originated.

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