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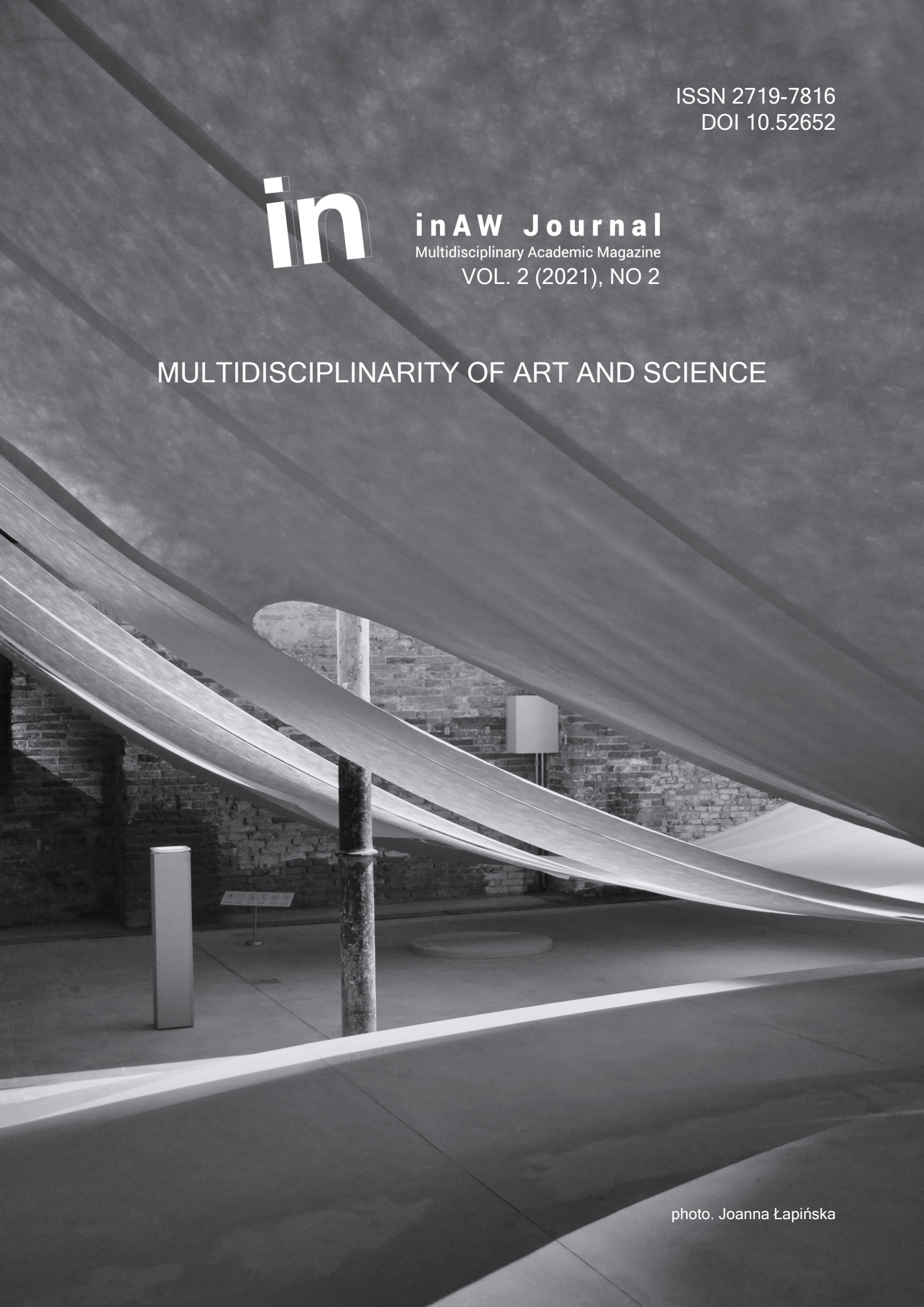


photo. Joanna Łapińska



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EDITORS:

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Spis treści

Prof. Dominika Sobolewska

Contemporary technologies and a new perspective on understanding design goals.

Cultural and social vision of interactive spaces 6

Anna Sienkiewicz, MA

A Thoroughly Necessary Change - About the Future of Fashion in the “New Normality”

Context 25

Prof. Małgorzata Czudak

Japan – Unrest or the Art of Silence?

The influence of Japanese aesthetics on contemporary design 37

Kamila Bednarz, MA

On the edge with everyday life.

The motif of a window in the coronavirus epidemic 53

Marta Bożyk, Ph. D.

The technique of traditional Japanese woodblock print as interpreted by contemporary artists 66

Ivan Juarez, MLA

Sensory Landscapes 81

Prof. Bartosz Jakubicki, Agata Wojtyła-Młynarczyk PhD

Screen windows – academic research on the architectural role of seamless screens in public interiors 107

Joanna Łapińska, PhD

Landscape-inspired architecture - three design methods.

From the series *Found in the Landscape* 123

Beata Ludwiczak PhD

Form follows functions - an empirical study verifying the concept of four product functions derived from Jochen Gros’ theory of product language 142

Martyna Rajewska, PhD

Intermediate Forms.

A Space for Reflection, Here and Now 161

Prof. Beata Gibała-Kapecka

Interdisciplinarity of design arts 173

Prof. Dominika Sobolewska
Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław

CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGIES AND A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON UNDERSTANDING DESIGN GOALS. CULTURAL AND SOCIAL VISION OF INTERACTIVE SPACES

Review paper

Translation PL-EN: Ireneusz Sojka, MA

Contents

Introduction 8

The technological revolution of the 2nd half of the 20th century, interactivity and new paradigms of design 8

Around the user – examples of contemporary trends, design research and socio-integrative aspects of interactive spaces 11

On the border of art, architecture and new technologies. Social and integration aspects of interactive spaces on the example of good practices 12

Conclusion 21

References 23

Filmography 23

Abstract

Although the phenomenon of interactive space is increasingly consolidating its position in more and more new areas of human activity, relatively little attention in contemporary cultural discourse is devoted to its socio-cultural mission. This article is an attempt to show a new perspective of design goals seen through the prism of socio-environmental benefits resulting from the alliance concluded between design and interactive technologies. In turn, the circumstances of the birth of the design paradigms of the 20th and 21st centuries and contemporary user-oriented design procedures and research are discussed. On the example of good practices, the author presents the characteristics and potential of designing interactive installations in the context of building healthy social relations and new cultural trends. Particular attention is paid to the new model of space with a feedback on the user, characterized by temporariness, participation and evolution. The event-oriented type of integration environment, illustrated by appropriately selected examples, acts here as a flexible matrix for building new quality of connections between the environment (public and private space) and the human community.

Keywords

design, interactive space, new technologies, interaction, integration, hybrid space, participation, socio-cultural

Introduction

Interaction is today a well-known term which, in the field of architecture and design, is often associated with single, casuistic technological devices or system solutions that improve the functionality of the objects we use. However, it is relatively rare to think of interactivity on a larger territorial scale as a dynamic space for dialogue with a specific impact on the society.

Although interactive design is increasingly establishing its position in more and more new sectors of human activity (exhibition, interactive art, entertainment, education), relatively little attention is paid to its sociocultural mission in the contemporary social debate.

This article is an attempt to define the role and goals of spatial design, using new technologies at such an angle. The main idea here oscillates around the importance of using this type of solutions in the area of building healthy social relations and new cultural trends.

By indicating the circumstances of the birth of the interactive design model by and showing examples of good practices, I will try to answer the following questions: “How is the perspective of the perception of new media and design itself changing in the face of the idea of interactive spaces?” and “What benefits can the synergy of these disciplines generate on a socio-cultural ground?”.

The technological revolution of the 2nd half of the 20th century, interactivity and new paradigms of design

In order to illustrate the most characteristic qualities of interactive design, it is worth recalling the ambitions resulting from the traditional definition of design and the paradigms associated with it, promoted over the last two centuries.

Derived from the Bauhaus, commonly understood, design responds to the functional and aesthetic demand of the human environment for ready-made optimal solutions in accordance with the principle proclaimed by Louis H. Sullivan: “form follows function”. It is therefore perceived as a professional trade, a practice improving products and services, infrastructure, etc. However, the vision of design, coined during the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, underwent significant transformations in the following years. The main reason for this state of affairs was the civilizational and cultural revolution of the 2nd half of the 20th century.

Witnessing technological progress, man, realizing the possibilities offered by new media, began to percept the surrounding reality in a different way. This had its beginning in the 1960s when the society, inspired by the invention of the remote control, became infected with the desire to remotely control the environment. New technological possibilities are coupled with the need to control buildings in

terms of costs and electric power consumption. The 1970s brought even newer solutions. And so our houses gradually began to fill up with control devices. Automatically adjustable blinds and thermostats appeared. The breakthrough moment, however, came in the end of the 1970s. It was then that Apple created the first personal computer. The whole 1980s were marked by the familiarization of the society with computer equipment. This is the time when access to it was becoming easier and easier. At that time, new, lower production costs and more affordable devices appeared. The first confrontations of users with the system of graphic interfaces took place, with the help of which they gained control over software and data sets.

In 1987, Hypercard was released: a Macintosh product that allows you to freely design applications using graphic interfaces. Finally, the 1990s have arrived, which are considered the most groundbreaking when it comes to the dynamics of cultural transformations. Considered to be the moment of a civilizational leap, they became a contribution to the long-term process of transformation in social mentality. It was during this period that the Internet appeared, which quickly became a publicly available platform for global communication between users. The networking of individual aspects of human environment coupled with increasingly cheaper and handy elements of computer equipment was a harbinger of contemporary phenomena. This is the time when ubiquitous, pervasive or integrated (embedded) “technologization” of the human environment, referred to as computing, began to creep into our reality¹.

Welcomed with great optimism, techno-reality shed a completely new light on the design and style of existing creative processes. Of particular importance was the emergence of computerized design tools facilitating constant design modification and flexible knowledge exchange spaces: online platforms for common strategies and creative solutions and for sharing projects online.

In connection with the new understanding of design tasks on the grounds of the modern theory, the concept of metadesign has emerged². In general, it is equated with the “designing of design”. This paradigm refers to both research conducted in this matter and multidirectional design strategies. It focuses on creating conditions and infrastructure for networked, multidimensional and dynamic processes of cooperation and collective development of products of broadly defined design. The term “metadesign”, born on the basis of interactive art and cultural research, was then adapted to other areas of human activity, including design and design arts.

Regarding the methodology of metadesign, it grew out of three tendencies, clearly visible, among others, in the areas of contemporary interactive design practices. We are talking primarily about focusing on user-centered design and the emergence of new design procedures, such as cognitive research

1 L. Bullivant, *Responsive Environments. Architecture, Art and Design*, London 2006, p. 121.

2 M. Składanek, *Meta-design. Strategie, narzędzia i wspólnoty kreatywne na przykładzie Processing*, [in:] *Kody McLuhana. Topografia nowych mediów*, ed. A. Maj, M. DerdA-Nowakowski, Katowice 2009, pp. 251–252.

or testing finished products with the involvement of recipients³. In the second place, it is necessary to indicate the gradual expansion of the ways of understanding utility beyond the strictly functional dimension. This is the so-called “scenario-based design” in which user activity is modeled using flexible and contextual narratives. The third approach is related to participatory design focusing on the active participation of users in the design process (especially in its final stage)⁴.

Each of these models is important when it comes to designing interactive environments, both those embedded in virtual reality and hybrid solutions integrating physical elements of space with the flexible matrix of the digital world.

Also important in the context of the discussed threads is the concept of “design thinking”. Aiming at a deep understanding of the needs and problems of users, it has become one of the most popular models for creating modern products and services. Today it is a powerful tool for remodeling the identity of not only small enterprises but also large international corporations, such as IKEA, Nike, Starbuck or Bank of America. Focused on the users and their emotions, it works on the basis of a set of appropriately arranged design stages, the most famous of which are: empathy, diagnosing needs, generating ideas, prototyping and testing. What is important here is the non-linear turn of design activities and the free activation of iterations.

3 M. Składanek, *Meta-design...*, p. 256.

4 M. Składanek, *Meta-design...*, p. 256.

Around the user – examples of contemporary trends, design research and socio-integrative aspects of interactive spaces

The emergence of interactive strategies in art and design has clearly accentuated the role of recipients in the process of reading the artifact. This is typical, especially for participatory design and for user-focused design activity, as demonstrated by the theories of Bill Verplank and William Moggridge⁵, and then Don Norman⁶.

Modern designers observe and talk to potential customers, often resorting to conducting the aforementioned “live” experiments. Reaching for various types of research methodologies developed on the basis of the humanities, they combine into teams of specialists representing various fields. Terms such as “user experience”, “human-oriented” or “interaction design” put people at the center of their design strategy. Of great importance here is the ability to adapt the alleged way of thinking of the future user to the designed process. It is important to ensure the recipient’s free, unfettered participation in the anticipation of the offered functional and aesthetic values. Computer technologies create extremely friendly conditions for this. The user becomes a participant, a partial co-creator of the designed procedure. This type of design involving the participation of the recipient in the creation of the final solution has already been mentioned earlier and is referred to as “participatory design”.

The focus here is on the collaborative nature of the work/product-recipient relationship, where the involvement of users as members of project teams allows them to open up “to diverse points of view, needs, activities, strategies for using technology and complex conditions of their functioning”⁷. The main assumptions of such design today oscillate around the production of an emotional connection with the individual, which requires the designer to empathize, a deep understanding of current social needs and tendencies in different cultural areas.

Interesting research in this field, supporting companies promoting new technologies, was conducted in India by Aditya Dev Sood, the founder of the Center for Knowledge Society. The main point of analysis were clients of newly emerging industries and products. The main task of the Center was to provide guidance to emerging companies, provide them with information on requirements of individual user groups and offer them the most adequate devices, interfaces, means or services⁸.

Similar cognitive challenges were undertaken by Jan Chipchase, a long-time researcher of the Japanese User Experience Group of Nokia Research. His goal in the selection of a team of designers, psychologists, ethnographers and users was to study how technology affects different cultures.

5 B. Moggridge, *Designing interactions*, Cambridge, MA 2006.

6 D. Norman, *Wzornictwo i emocje. Dlaczego kochamy lub nienawidzimy rzeczy powszednie*, Warszawa 2015.

7 D. Norman, *Wzornictwo i emocje...*, p. 257.

8 U. Haque, *Distinguishing Concepts. Lexicons of Interactive Art and Architecture*, „4dsocial. Interactive Design Environments”, 4, (2007), p. 29.

An additional aspiration of the team was to understand the scope and impact of the technology which can appear within 3-15 years from the onset of the research.

Analyses of design procedures carried out with the participation of recipients and focused on satisfying newly emerging social needs have become a common commercial practice. They were also received with great enthusiasm by independently acting creators, representatives of various creative practices.

An interesting perspective is represented by Tobi Schneidler, a contemporary architect of interactive spaces, on the basis of his experiences. He is an example of a creator who is perfectly able to make a fusion of digital media and physical space. Mixing them in the name of art, technology and science, he proposes new, innovative solutions. Based on the idea that the technocratic vision of architectural space should give way to the cultural and social vision, the project teams led by him focus on the study of broadly defined interactivity and its impact on the spatial environment. The analyses concern, among others, the relationships between the physical characteristics of the designed objects, media effects and the preparation of people using them. Such exploration, powered by multiple physical prototyping and the aforementioned user tests, is close to the practices of the medical laboratory.

Developed in such spirit, the actions define in a way the silhouette of the designer of interactive spaces, whose mission becomes “to make the project a living organism whose growth dynamics are dictated by the scale and intensity of user participation”⁹.

On the border of art, architecture and new technologies. Social and integration aspects of interactive spaces on the example of good practices

The relationships of people with the environment and objects occurring within it, thanks to new technologies, today take the form of immaterial connections. On the one hand this means improving individual lifestyles, on the other hand it carries risks associated with the loss of control over techno-reality. Correspondence is exchanged in a digital way, airline tickets take the form of interactive tags, money is virtual, and data fed by us to the Internet becomes a currency for both the private and public sectors. The effects of mobile communication have changed our sense of location and geographical distance¹⁰. Thanks to social media, the identity and freedom of the individual have been called into question.

The sense of danger can also be caused by the widespread automation and robotization of production processes and by the artificial intelligence. Techno-inventions and “smart” digital devices today build

9 M. Składanek, *Meta-design...*, p. 258.

10 L. Bullivant, *Responsive Environments...*, p. 117.

airplanes, cars and other complex devices. They work well in all fields of human activity, effectively supporting the demand of today.



Fig. 1. Cooperation between man and machine at the Audi plant in Ingolstadt, <https://motoryzacja.interia.pl/wiadomosci/produkcji/news-produkcja-samochodu-czyli-wspolpraca-czlowieka-i-robota,nId,1671721> [accessed: 22/11/2021].

New technologies, commonly used in the industrial sector, also occupy an important position in the field of scientific research. Robots, drones, 3D printers, virtual or augmented reality support the work of doctors, scientists and other builders of today's reality. Increasingly, we also find them as elements of support for the entertainment and education industries. Machines learn from us, going beyond our wildest ideas about their potential. They help us make complex calculations, produce highly sophisticated objects, warn us about specific climatic phenomena. They reach where our eyes can not. However, their biggest dominant feature seems to be the ability to collect a gigantic amount of data – both about ourselves and about the environment in which we live. The new era of cognitive computing is a completely new type of processing computer information.

The so-called “Big Data” has entered our daily lives, sometimes without our explicit consent. Our mobile phones tell us how we can spend the weekend, TV tells us what to watch, our computer suggests what to buy. Fake news clogs up our news channels and tells us how to think. And prominent scientists and business envoys praise or warn us against the artificial intelligence. Faced with this dilemma, the curators of the DATAMI exhibition, organized in 2019 at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Ispra (Italy), presented the positive aspects of Big Data. The presented installations are a result of cooperation between artists and scientists, based on extensive data provided by the JRC. Rich collections of information from disciplines such as earth systems science, digital economy, natural sciences, sociology and ethics then served as a source of inspiration for extraordinary artistic creations.

Showing the human face of data and new technologies is a very important accent in the context of these considerations. Both tools for collecting information and other representations of technological civilizational development can perform a socio-cultural mission. This article is an attempt to show a new perspective of design goals, seen through the prism of social benefits resulting from the alliance concluded between design and interactive technologies. Unfortunately, the potential of this alliance does not inspire great trust among the recipients.

The dynamics of civilizational changes, including technological development, entail many questions and controversies. The lifestyle of modern man is radically different from the past lifestyles, even those at the end of the 20th century. The technological quality of today and the image of the nearest tomorrow are constantly being tested. The digitalization of social life, recalling especially negative consequences of the development of new technologies, raises ethical and moral questions. The fear of losing control, putting the fate of humanity in the hands of machines, algorithms and large techno-corporations is manifested especially on the grounds of a dystopian vision of our future. The counter-balance is techno-optimism, initially oriented towards the broadly defined civilizational development, today taking on an increasingly human form. According to its optics, new technologies can have a positive impact on the shape of human development – it all depends on the conscious use of them.

Among contemporary artists, designers and architects, there are ones who can perceive technological evolution through the prism of highly engaged humanism. Guided by the principle propagated by John Maeda that “art asks questions, design seeks solutions, and new technologies are a source of opportunity”¹¹, they try to adopt the attitude of “humanized technologists” caring for the human aspect of the designed artifacts.

Their main goal is to consciously use new technologies to effectively eliminate interpersonal distances: distances between man and the environment and man and the broadly defined community.

This is included, among others, in Tobi Schneidler’s cultural and social vision of designed spaces. The issues he raises in his projects often concern breaking down geographical interpersonal barriers. The best example is the “Remote Home” project developed under his supervision, which revolutionizes the idea of traditionally understood living space. The idea here is based on the concept of building of apartments existing in parallel, integrated using an innovative communication system. Apartments – one located in Berlin and the other in London – communicate with each other through the prism of the activity of their users. Their floors and interior design elements are connected to one another via digital networks. The purpose of the living space developed in this way is to eliminate interpersonal distances. This becomes possible thanks to the virtual co-experience of simple household activities by

11 J. Bailey, *Speaking Machine, Art, and Design with John Maeda*, „Artnome”, <https://www.artnome.com/news/2019/11/20/speaking-machine-art-and-design-with-john-maeda> [accessed: 24/05/2021].

users living in opposite locations. The house performs functions similar to a mobile phone, allowing you to share relationships in a more real three-dimensional format. In the both locations furniture and household appliances equipped with sensors detect information about the inhabitants of the remote counterpart. These are the so-called “impressions” sent between the two poles using the network. Their arrival at the place and manifestation on the other side of the system is possible thanks to the equipping of objects with kinetic and tactile devices and specially adapted light installations. For example, a person who sits on a bench in their living room in Berlin causes a deformation of the surface of the bench in the apartment in London. This is a subtle oneiric accentuation of the user’s presence at a given moment. It can be said that the house in a symbolic way stretches its usable area. With the help of tactile and sensorily activated presence people who are physically distant from one another can stay in contact.



Fig. 2. Tobi Schneidler, *Remote Home*, <http://wiki.networkedbook.org/index.php/Re-Locating>, and <http://www.interactivearchitecture.org/141.html> [accessed: 09/06/2012].

The Remote Home, through a synchronous juxtaposition of the two worlds of experience, initiates changes in the idea of sharing living space, which today is understood not only in the physical dimension, but also in the physical-digital dimension.

A precise elaborate combination of the real and the digital matter of the human environment is a characteristic feature of Tobi Schneidler’s design work. New technologies, ubiquitous in the spatial arrangements he creates, are not visible. All kinds of control signals, radio media, sensors, motors and computers are connected by an invisible system. Giving guidance to future designers, he emphasizes the need to perceive information technology not only as a mechanism or a driving device but as a flexible matter integrated into the tangible tissue of space¹².

The nature of Schneidler’s work can be defined as the desire to achieve a balance at the personal, architectural and translocation levels. His approach, used to implement hybrid design projects, based

on concept, interactive prototyping and testing of the final implementation, can be an inspiration for today's creators of interactive spaces. As the author emphasizes, the value of the project lies in its simplicity. The purpose of interactive arrangements is not intelligent technologies alone but also spaces playing the role of intermediary devices in meeting the user's expectations¹³.

Equally interesting and inspiring solutions were proposed in "Flirtables", another important Schneider's project with a clear pro-social disposition. These networked interactive tables have been designed for bars and clubs. According to the designer's idea, in addition to performing the traditional role, they are used to establish new interpersonal relationships. As their perverse name suggests, they allow you to initiate acquaintance, flirt with a stranger. Their milky translucent surfaces equipped with sensors that collect all kinds of vibrations, including music, are susceptible to physical interferences from users. A tactile intervention in the top plane of the table causes a specific reaction in the form of light moving along the upper plane of one or more pieces of adjacent furniture. A beam of light generated by a stronger impact can "jump" between adjacent tables¹⁴. The stronger pressure on the tabletop, the larger the range of the light beam transmitted to subsequent modules. Interestingly, the user can give direction to this illumination sequence, which allows you to choose the recipient of the generated "attack".

Equipped with new technologies, the interactive environment is governed by new laws. It is able, for example, to identify selected individuals in the crowd. I mean capturing the user's attention through spatial interactive plays, which stimulates more or less controlled behaviors.

An interesting situation took place during the presentation of the "Dune" spatial installation made by Studio Roosegaarde at the Netherlands Media Art Institute in Amsterdam¹⁵, where an elderly woman, walking around an anthropomorphically arranged space reacting to her presence suddenly began to make noises reminiscent of a dog barking¹⁶.

The "Dune" is a hybrid on the border of spatial art and new technologies, inspired by natural landscape. Built of hundreds of optic fibers, it brightens according to the sounds and movements of passers-by. Visitors are a direct part of this work of art, enhancing social interactions between themselves and the landscape. With hundreds of interactive LEDs and sounds, the "Dune" explores the nature of the futuristic relationship between urban space and people. Described by its creators as "techno-poetry", it encourages subtle interaction and uninhibited behaviors.

13 L. Bullivant, *Responsive Environments...*, p. 118.

14 See also: Project presentation: *Flirtables*, T. Schneider, B. Sjölen, 2 min., <http://vimeo.com/13452806> [accessed: 15/02/2021].

15 See also: <http://www.studioroosegaarde.net/project/dune/> [accessed: 15/02/2021].

16 L. Bullivant, *Alice in Technoland*, „4dsocial. Interactive Design Environments, 4 (2007), p. 9.

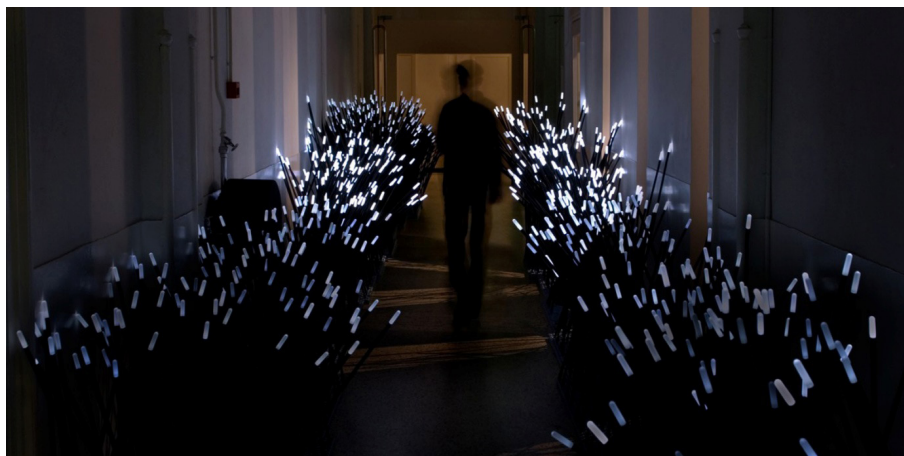


Fig. 3. *Dune*, Studio Roosegaarde, <http://hannahlinehanreflective.blogspot.com/2011/11/daan-roosegaarde-dune-40.html> [accessed: 23/04/2021].

Such behavioral aspects of the work, its unpredictable vivid quality supported by the active involvement of the audience, are an important complement that designers of interactive spaces should especially bear in mind. The target of such design is no longer only a functional artifact intended for a person but also the user and their behaviors.

The history of man so far could be described as a continuous progress in developing our ability to understand and control phenomena external to us¹⁷.

It seems that today you should look at it a bit differently – you have to face what the mind and emotional background of a person offers. The above examples are living proofs that it is possible to build new connections between the user and the external environment. It seems that, in connection with the interactivization of space, it is possible to build a multidimensional language that integrates and even eliminates differences between users.

A good illustration of this phenomenon can be the “Interactive Platform” project implemented by me together with Paweł Janicki from the WRO Art Center, presented on the Wrocław Market Square as part of the promotion of Wrocław as the Capital of European Culture 2011 (Fig. 4).

The way the installation works in a simple scheme is as follows: it is a color plane-instrument divided into equal size fields, activated by physical intervention of users. The colorful segments traversed by the recipient generate sounds assigned to them, which allows for free, supported by choreographic activity, composing of various types of musical works.



Fig. 4. The “Interactive Platform”, Dominika Sobolewska, Paweł Janicki, photo from the author’s archive.

The platform for meetings and integration suggested in the name of the facility has become a foundation for individual exploration and group activities. By leaving the user freedom to choose in the interpretation of the space offered, it also promotes collective interaction.

The coupling of the visual and musical aspects of the installation is intended to strengthen the perceptual experience of communing with the object and significantly stimulates the users’ motor imagination. It triggers the desire to manipulate sound with the help of various systems and body dynamics.

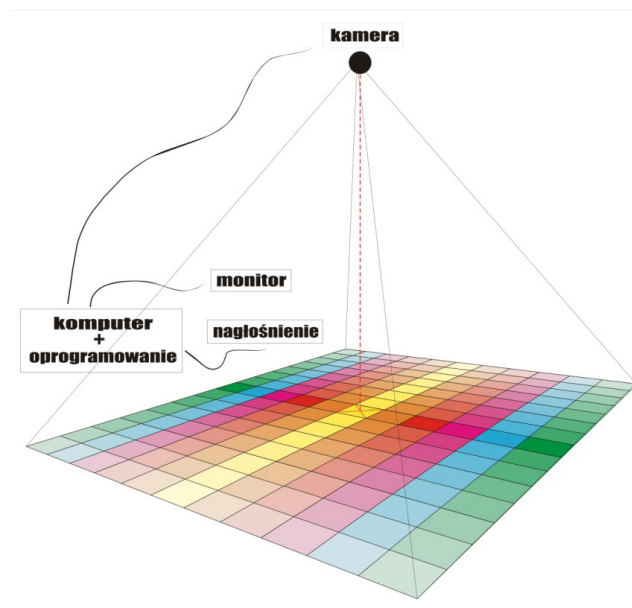


Fig. 5. The main components of the “Interactive Platform” with its technological base – computer + software, display, sound system; the author’s own source.

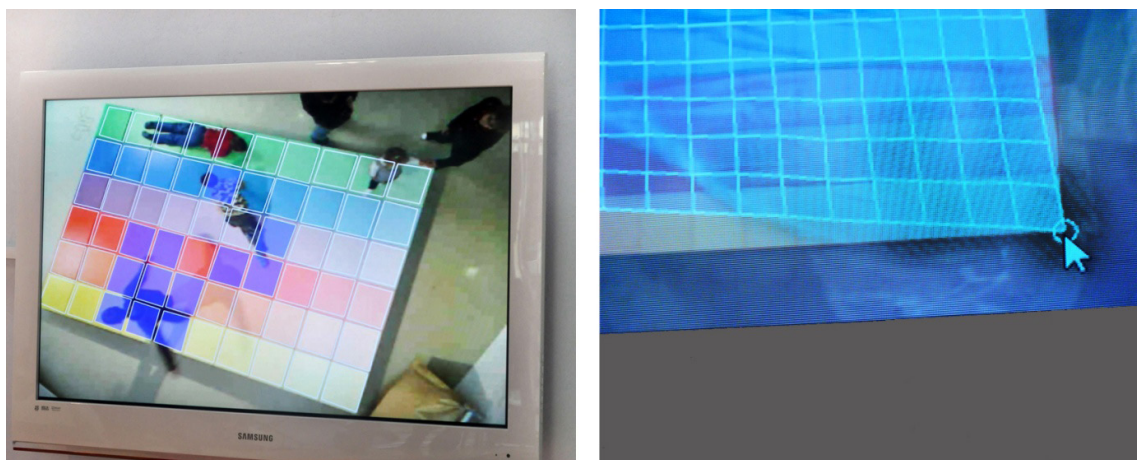


Fig. 6: From the left: activity of software grid fields; the manual, but software-assisted, imposition of the grid on the monitored object (the “Interactive Platform” at the “Art Experiment” in Moscow, December 2011).

The camera eye is a link integrating the physical and the technological aspects of the platform. Suspended at a certain height above the installation, it registers the rectangular fields and streams the image to the software. Here comes the synchrony of the elements that build it, characteristic for the object. The rectangular surface of the Platform seen through the camera is then displayed with a grid imposed onto it by the software. Each of the graphic fields is assigned a sound.

The way the platform works is based on changes recorded within the individual panels. The division of the grid corresponds to the division into the color fields. The appearance of any objects in their area (such as shadows, people or things) causes a response of the software. The presence of the objects is recognized as a kind of interference and the platform emits sounds.

The installation significantly promotes the integration of various types of social groups (regardless of age, gender or psychophysical fitness). Treated as an open source for the creative imagination of users, it allows you to play out various scenarios within it. You can develop interesting sound compositions within it in many different ways. A different effect will be obtained during a single intervention of an individual, another during a collective exploration of an object. Additional acoustic results can be achieved by means of objects projected over the colored field or by generating shadows. Freedom and logic, combined on the basis of the “Interactive Platform”, are a source of stimulation, especially for creative visions of educators and tutors of organized groups. The successive presentation of the object both in Poland and abroad provided many play scenarios and choreographic arrangements.

Trends in the design of interactive spaces are moving towards research developing on an increasing scale. Generated projects more and more often require the organization of a specially equipped laboratory with the involvement of a properly composed project team. The designed interactive environment, as a result of complex experiments and team design procedures, is usually a prototype work.

What characterizes these types of artifacts is their flexible and evolutionary nature. Their specificity can be compared to a piece of music. Composed by a given author, it is then interpreted in various ways during subsequent performances. The same applies to the designed interactive environment. By definition, it is focused on a kind of improvements, variations, which results from its evolutionary character.

Most of these types of projects are characterized by high complexity of execution, and their production is associated with time-consuming implementation works. What is important here is to be open to teamwork and multidisciplinarity.

A good example illustrating this approach is the activity of the Dutch NOX group, active at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, deftly balancing between art, architecture and new technologies. The objects developed by Lars Spuybroek's team are wonderful specimens of interactive, experimental architecture.

An example is the "D-Tower", completed in 2004 on the main square in Doetinchem (NL). Measuring 12 m, the tower with an amorphous "organic" shape was endowed by its creators with unusual properties. The project, in addition to the physical construction, also consists of a Web site and a questionnaire filled out daily by selected residents. The information collected on the basis of the survey is aimed at visualizing data on the emotional state of the local community and showing what mood prevails on this day in the city: love, happiness, fear or hatred. The object stimulated by the emotional nature of the transmitted information each evening is illuminated in the color corresponding to the given feeling: red, yellow, blue or green (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. NOX, *D-Tower*, Doetinchem, <https://ioannafakiri.tumblr.com/post/117681620425/d-tower> [accessed: 23/04/2021].

It is worth noting here that the main goals of the authors of the project focus not so much on the final character of the architecture produced as on its continuous response. The concept they develop includes a specific scenario that puts the final phase of creation in the hands of users. The dynamic personality of the generated object gains in importance only with their active involvement. This is an important aspect of the design of interactive spaces.

Conclusion

The integration of the physical tissue of the designed matter with its digital qualities gives a new look at the designed artifacts, interiors and elements of architecture, which indisputably also reflects on the design paradigm. The laws governing the digital environment are strengthened in this field with tangible spatial qualities representing the reality identified with the culturally grounded real habitat of the human community. The result of such a transaction is a new type of environment of a temporary nature, distinguished by parameters such as participation, eventability, adaptability, kinesthesia or evolution. Such an environment can be educational, integrative, reflective or entertaining. Most often, however, it possesses all these qualities at the same time, stimulating spontaneous, marked by cooperation or healthy competition social attitudes. It is a new type of hybrid space, a territory built on the model of an Internet forum, but it goes out into real space, focusing on (even temporary) eliminating interpersonal differences, enabling collective sharing of emotions, gestures, behaviors or reflections.

Today, in the era of catastrophic visions regarding new technologies and widespread fears that they will take control of the human species, such solutions seem to be a good alternative.

The interactive space described in this essay is the result of a creative dialogue, an understanding between the hardware and software of our reality. It becomes a flexible medium, equipped with virtual communication routes, a matrix of multidirectional provocations taking place between the artifact and the recipient. It is a product of the empathetic approach of contemporary designers, using new technologies to build new quality connections between the environment (public and private space) and the human community. What does this mean in practice?

As Marcin Skrzypek, the author of the “Happy end of the myth of the Tower of Babel”¹⁸, notes, this is a significant manifestation of positive views on breaking the existing communication barriers between individuals and the environment and, thus, a chance for constructive shaping of new quality of space. Citing biblical threads about the circumstances occurring during the construction of the Tower of Babel, he tries to prove that the fact of mutual communication is a decisive factor in the success of the undertaken goal. According to the visions he recalled, God confused human languages in order to prevent the construction of the said building. The consensus obtained between the human community

18 M. Skrzypek, *Happy end mitu wieży Babel*, [in:] *Mindware. Technologie dialogu*, ed. P. Celiński, Lublin 2012, p. 254.

is a guarantee of further development. A similar situation occurs in the case of relationships prevailing within the interactive spaces described in this article. The conversational, reciprocal nature of the connections built between these artifacts and their recipients is, on the one hand, a guarantee of the evolution and dynamics of the work, on the other, a source of rich, constructive user experiences.

Today's challenge of designers operating in the area of new media is therefore to pave and properly arrange communication routes between man and environment. As Anna Nacher points out, "it is not the participation itself, but the overall architecture of information circulation that is important"¹⁹. Particularly important here is the humanistic approach to design using new technological achievements and a conscious orientation to the cultural and social needs of the present day. Therefore, the traditional role of the designer as the main expert of the implementation activities carried out has undergone significant modifications. Some of the formal decisions the architect has made so far have been handed over to additionally involved users. Today, the architect assumes the role of not only a moderator of the design processes but also a director of a flexible dialogue between the produced artifact and users.

The methodology adopted here, modeled on the code defined by new technologies, and especially on free software, has in effect established a new status of produced works that are by definition never finished. Their prototypical character, flexibility and evolutionary character, as well as the strategies applied to them and the language of software (like a human language in interpersonal relations) have become a remedy, a universal carrier of information between man and the environment.

It seems that the communication dispersion shown by means of the biblical parable, in the face of the cultural and social vision of interactive spaces described in this article, gains an opportunity for reintegration.

19 A. Nacher, *Ku kognitywnej przestrzeni publicznej – strategie otwierania*, [in:] *Mindware. Technologie dialogu*, ed. P. Celiński, Lublin 2012, p. 157.

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A THOROUGHLY NECESSARY CHANGE - ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FASHION IN THE “NEW NORMALITY” CONTEXT

Review paper

Translation PL-EN: Władysław Bibrowski, MA

Contents

Towards the unknown? 27

The world of fashion before and after (during) the pandemic 28

Will fashion save the world? 29

We design new materials, but do we design change? (And are we ready for it?) 33

References 34

Abstract

The themes to be raised in the article concern the changes in the clothing industry, which is one of the most harmful to the environment. I will describe how designers, artists, technologists, etc., are responding to the crisis of the industry and the social needs generated by the shape of the modern world (including the pandemic). The clothing industry, fashion and clothing are inalienable elements of people's everyday life, and they also combine aspects such as art, design, science and innovation. Looking at developments in this area will help better write possible future scenarios.

Keywords

fashion, design, new technologies, pandemic, environmental crisis, identity, responsible design, fast fashion, slow fashion, fashion experience

Towards the unknown?

Looking into the future, writing possible scenarios, reflecting on the development of different areas of life. Fantasies about the world, cities and men are an expression of the need to go beyond the horizon of the “here and now”, touching the most profound human questions and fears - what are we for, where is everything going? For this article, a quote by Marjanne van Helvert from her essay entitled *Dirty design – dirty utopia* is relevant:

When I think about the future, I have to think about the distinctly utopian and dystopian realities of science fiction. They are often worlds that revolve around an extrapolated aspect of contemporary society that turns out to have extreme consequences for future generations, both positive and negative, sometimes fraudulent¹.

Human nature and its drive towards infinity, immersion in and analysis of the past often result in a lack of attention and focus on the present moment. We fail to see that the future is already happening, and that every step we take has consequences. When thinking about the changes in the modern world, researchers often use the term VUCA. Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) also describe the ‘new normal’. The term, used concerning the Cold War, has appeared, for example, in Zuzanna Skalska’s² statements on the post-pandemic world. There is no straightforward recipe for the future. However, the concept of sustainability is becoming a challenge that designers, consumers and the entire complex system of interconnected vessels of the fashion industry are currently facing more than ever. The subject of this article concerns the changes that have taken place and are still taking place in the fashion industry (also in relation to the pandemic) and the actions taken concerning the environmental crisis, in which the clothing industry plays one of the leading roles.

The pandemic was not a “Black Swan”³. Trend researchers expected a crisis, but it was unclear what form it would take. We live in uncertain times, and subsequent media reports add to the sense of shaky stability in the western world, which was already supposed to last. The spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is not a cataclysmic event on the scale of a global war. However, it is a natural front they are fighting (e.g. doctors) for many. It has changed for years, if not permanently, many aspects of life, e.g. the way and possibility of travel, schooling, sense of security, availability of materials (the problem with paper in printers or building materials), market speculation, the polarization of societies. The consequences of a pandemic are still challenging to predict, and its effects will probably be outlined for decades to come. The clothing industry, fashion and clothing are inalienable elements of people’s everyday life, which also reflect the changes affecting the whole complex reality, which consists of multiple perspectives: from the work of the designer, through the work of technologists, factory

1 M. van Helvert, *Dirty design – dirty utopia*, <https://dirty-design.net/> [accessed: 20/04/2021].

2 M. Bachowski, wywiad z Z. Skalską, *Świat po epidemii będzie jak Polska lat 90. Stary system się skończył*, <https://noizz.pl/opinie/zuzanna-skalska-swiat-po-koronawirusie-bedzie-jak-polska-lat-90/rybmzvr> [accessed: 20/04/2020].

3 Określenie nieoczekiwanych zdarzeń, autor określenia: Taleb Nassim Nicholas.

workers, transport, to the individual choice of the consumer. Fashion and its carriers in the form of clothing elements, fabrics, modern technologies are unique materials for analysis in future scenarios.

You can never say about fashion that it is. Fashion always becomes real⁴.

This is how Georg Simmel wrote about fashion, and in this one sentence, one can read the whole complexity of this notion, its ephemerality and constant fluctuation.

The world of fashion before and after (during) the pandemic

Societies of the Western world quickly have become accustomed to consuming fashion. The number of daily transactions, the lifestyle, in which shopping is a form of weekend relaxation, shape the enormous economic value of this industry. The way clothing functioned in people's lives evolved, influenced by technological developments and social change (Marie Antoinette's frequent purchases were considered extravagant and sowed scorn among her subjects). In the past, fabrics and precious garments were inherited, so they served not only for years, but also for generations. Today, excess, momentariness, ease characterizes fashion (e.g. online shopping with a smartphone), the variability of trends every season pushes designers to work, and crowds of customers to shops. Shops, furnishings, architecture and merchandise layout are a real battle for attention and wallet resources. Just as in the case of online shopping, various traps await the receipt of the message and the potential customer. Nothing in such a space is accidental. If you look at individual brands' alphabet, common patterns can be observed. The colours used, the furniture, the messages (promotion, price), the trinkets at the checkout, and the promotion at the entrance are designed to make the transaction go through and with the longest possible receipt.

Referring to Victor Papanek, it is worth mentioning the classification of design into commercial and responsible. Commercial design - is based on profit, designing attractive forms and driving demand for novelty. Responsible design is an activity that is based on attention to quality, safety, needs, whose creators are aware of aspects such as environmental protection or influence on the shape of society⁵. How do you place fashion and industry at these two opposite poles? Has the pandemic changed anything beyond a worldwide pause for breath?

Narrating fashion in the context of responsibility and design ethics is difficult due to the bipolarity of 'slow fashion' and 'fast fashion'. On the one hand, there is talk of a global market made up of interconnected links; a market of enormous economic value, driven by profit; which provides jobs but also

4 G. Simmel, *Philosophie der Mode* („Moderne Zeitfragen", 11 [1905]), ed. H. Landsberg, Berlin 1905, pp. 5–41 (unter dem Titel *Die Mode* wieder abgedruckt in: G. Simmel, *Philosophische Kultur. Gesammelte Essays*, Leipzig 1911), [in:] S. Magala, *Simmel*, Warszawa 1980, pp. 182–183.

5 V. Papanek, *Dizajn dla realnego świata. Środowisko człowieka i zmiana społeczna*, Łódź 2012.

raises issues of work ethics (e.g. child labour); on the other hand, there are the ideas of the “slow” movement, responsible fashion, which wants to help shape a better world or at least save the remains of the current one. Therefore, the fashion market is of great economic and social importance, in addition to its moral and ecological weight (millions of consumers make transactions every day, each of these transactions leaves a carbon footprint and has social and personal consequences, e.g. the experience of pleasure during a purchase).

Why else does fashion matter so much? „Design can also become a means of creating a sense of identity - civic, collective or personal”⁶ – fashion likewise. Fashion and identity are linked because they are based on an identical dualistic mechanism - they are meant to give a sense of belonging to a community while at the same time emphasizing uniqueness, difference and allowing the „self” to emerge. A unified dress code often characterizes future societies living in a dystopian world in science-fiction stories. Nowadays, however, it is different - the number of trends and their changeability, the democratization of fashion (which also has its negative consequences), the social consent to many possibilities of creating one’s image, the perception of fashion as an aesthetic message available to everyone to convey information about oneself and to shape one’s identity, cause individuality to prevail over unification. Looking at shopping trends during the lockdown - consumers focused mainly on comfort (tracksuits) and safety (masks). Closing time called into question the importance of shopping centres - the era of the big malls was prophesied to be over, and eCommerce became not just an option but a necessity. Actions aimed at supporting domestic producers and local brands have been created (vide: e.g. Szczecin’s action: “Present yourself locally”), the popularity of clothes exchange has grown⁷. Consumers, however, continue to be active participants in the “disposable tissue culture”, as evidenced, among other things, by CSO research, which clearly shows that Polish men and women rushed to the shops after a lull caused by the pandemic, rushed to the shops⁸. The growing popularity of #OOTD since 2012 (currently more than 388 million posts with this # on Instagram) shows the immense power of the fashion message, consumer interest, and emphasizes the need to define oneself through clothing every day.

Will fashion save the world?

The perception of fashion in relation to unification and uniformity is not entirely unfounded in creating the future. However, this is not about shaping an obedient, tailored society, but about looking at clothing and the functions it performs or can perform. A unification that would bring total convenience,

6 https://www.propertydesign.pl/wywiady/109/design_dzis_jest_miedzy_tym_co_lokalne_i_globalne,10863.html [accessed: 20/05/2021].

7 *Spoleczne aspekty mody zmiany w dobie Covid 19*, http://cpt.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Spoleczne-aspekty-mody-_Zmiany-w-dobie-Covid-19-ThinkTank_NPS.pdf, s. 18 [accessed: 20/05/2021].

8 <https://spidersweb.pl/bizblog/sprzedaz-detaliczna-ubrania-buty-sklepy/> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

for example? Breaking out of cumbersome shoes and outfits? However, this sense of individuality is the impulse that shapes and pushes fashion forward, underpinning its constant transformation. „Individualism” cannot be excluded. It is indispensable and testifies to the society in which it grows, values diversity, and does not block individuality - is this not the society that future generations have come to dream of? The question is whether the next few years and the environmental crisis will allow individuality to develop, rather than hinder it? Will this not be a superfluity, poorly received socially?

Mass fashion often results in poor quality products, uncomfortable and quickly damaged. Clothing was initially intended to protect, and in the context of a future pandemic, clothing should fulfil precisely these functions: comfort and a sense of security. Do we imagine that everyday clothing could heal? Filter the air? Technologies, materials linked to the future, which seem to be science-fiction scenarios, already exist. However, they are not widespread use, and adaptation has not occurred. Integrating technology into everyday life is long, involves costs and, above all, time. It also raises the question of whether society will adopt the technology?

Modern Meadow⁹ is a company that pushes the boundaries in creating new materials but has a problem adapting its products. Already in 2017, after five years of research, the company's T-shirt – ZOA¹⁰ – was unveiled at the “Is fashion modern?” exhibition at MOMA in New York, a summary of the innovation area exploited. It is made of biofabricated skin from collagen grown in the laboratory. The company aims to breathe new into the material world through the work of experts in molecular biology, materials science, engineering and design. Staff changes and an influx of funding are expected to drive commercial-scale development of the company's proposed biofabrication technologies, which can replace fossil fuel-based materials and increase the efficiency of natural materials. Fashion brands are interested in Modern Meadow's work, but there is still a long way to go before their fabrics are widely available.

Material is only one element that makes up a garment (but does the consumer think about what dyes/chemicals were used to dye it?). A garment should be considered a sum and other components, such as labels, thread, and buttons (the production of which also has an environmental impact). Most considerations about clothing are made at its production, purchase, and use. The next step, recycling, is rarely thought of, and the issue of recycling clothes and their impact on the environment is also relevant to everyday use. Washing fabrics results in countless plastic fibres entering the water cycle every day. There are solutions, such as special filter bags, which filter the water during washing, and after a given cycle, the fibres must be picked up and disposed of properly. The average consumer is unaware of which fabrics, material blends can be recycled, and unfortunately, are problematic waste. This makes the clothing alteration initiatives and the growing popularity of #refashion activities all

9 <https://www.modernmeadow.com/> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

10 <https://www.moma.org/artists/69271> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

the more welcome. In Poland, the dialogue with already unwanted clothes is undertaken, among others, by the artistic duo Szare Wrony (Grey Crows), who tenderly transform unwanted worn-out clothes into real works of art¹¹.

In terms of an ethical approach to fashion, but also with awareness of the harmfulness of certain materials, an alternative to synthetic artificial fur was created, which, although it spares the suffering of animals, is unfortunately not without its impact on the environment. Stella McCartney is a designer who was among the experts invited to attend the 2018 Climate Summit. Since the beginning, she has focused on sustainable and responsible fashion aspects. She tries to make her actions radiate beyond her brand and gets involved in actions connected with ecological education to raise consumers' awareness. She also tries to be an active participant in solving problems brought about by the activity of the whole clothing industry. For the 2019 launch of her new collection, Stella McCartney unveiled a fur made with plant-based materials - Ecopel's Koba® Fur-Free fur, made from recycled polyester, and DuPont™ Sorona® plant fibres - making the product recyclable. Of course, fur (even the artificial and organic kind) remains a luxury good, a confirmation of a statute, a specific taste, an expression in the fashion dictionary that defines a particular individual. A change in the need for fur may be possible with the following global transition - currently, it remains a willingly purchased commodity.

The designer also encourages us to approach purchases consciously - to gather information about a given product and ask whether we want it to accompany us for years?¹² This communicates a critical trend - entering into relationships with brands and clothing just as you enter into relationships with people. This connects to the issue of building one's own identity through clothes - will customers make more conscious choices, act not on impulse, but a considered decision, thinking about long-term interaction with a given product? The power of the fashion message also stems from the pleasure it gives the consumer, and impulsive purchases often fill the void of everyday life. So it is unclear whether shopping strategies will change soon.

Science provides the techniques and processes through which the materials that shape the market's future are created. Innovation is essential for development. The search for new solutions is not only about new cuts, but also about new materials and technologies to reduce the burden on the environment and take care of additional aspects, such as health. There are already T-shirts that measure a runner's performance during exercise, or T-shirts that allow deaf people to feel music¹³. The SIMPLESKIN project, which lasted three years and involved researchers from Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, produced a washable sensor fabric with which body movements, electrical signals, activity and changes in body capacitance can be recorded¹⁴. The researchers involved in this project would

11 <https://www.facebook.com/SzareWrony> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

12 <https://www.stellamccartney.com/us/en/stellas-world/the-a-to-z-of-stella-mccartney.html> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

13 <https://cutecircuit.com/soundshirt/> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

14 <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/190905-researchers-aim-to-bring-smart-textiles-to-the-masses/pl> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

like their technology to go the way of adaptation by societies, just as the road from the telephone to the smartphone has gone. They see many possibilities for the use of 'responsive' fabric, not only for sports, but also for other people, e.g. as an aid to diet monitoring.

The Levi's® brand has combined its iconic Trucker jacket with innovative Jacquard (Google) technology, allowing you to change music and answer calls by touching the jacket cuff¹⁵. These are still little-known technologies, but already widely available - the "only" barrier is the price. For example, will they become as popular as electric blankets used to be? Time will tell, and the public will decide.

To take a look literally from the kitchen at creating modern textiles, it is worth mentioning objects such as pineapple, mushrooms, oranges or apples. The use of pineapples in the textile industry dates back to the 1990s. The company Ananas Anam, creators of Piñatex®, is well established in the market, but as with faux fur - their product allows an alternative to natural leather. However, the issue of recycling this fabric is problematic. Another solution is that proposed by scientists and engineers at Bolt Threads. Their product is a 'skin' made from mycelium - Mylo material is used by Stella McCartney and brands such as Adidas and Lululemon. Hermes, on the other hand, is using a solution from the MycoWorks startup called Fine Mycelium™¹⁶ to create the Victoria handbag model. Also in Poland, many brands and designers are looking for alternatives to their products - the brand Balagan has vegan shoes in its collection and 99% biodegradable ones. In Poland, one of the elementary wastes of fruit and vegetable processing is the basis for activities related to working on a modern material that could replace leather. Bio2Materials uses apple pomace, which corresponds in appearance and functionality after processing to animal skin¹⁷. Mushrooms and plants are also a platform of exploration for young female creators - Dobromiła Hada-Jasikowska created a dress made of kombucha as part of her project „Self-grown Sustainable Dress”¹⁸. thanks to this project, she won second place in the Fashionetics competition (2017), Manuela Korea, who proposed a project made of banana peels and cotton, also made it to the final round.

Another ethically and environmentally inappropriate material is silk. There are vegan alternatives to this material, but their production and recyclability bring another environmental burden. Italian brand Orange Fibre has invented a new version of 'silk' from orange. The company uses local citrus fruits for its production. Orange Fibre's proprietary technology extracts cellulose from fruit residue after juicing, which can then be transformed into fabric. 2021. Lenzing & Catania - Lenzing Group, a leading global manufacturer of speciality wood fibres, has partnered with Orange Fibre to produce TENCEL™ (lyocell) made from orange and wood pulp. The brands focus exclusively on using

15 <https://atap.google.com/jacquard/products/levi-trucker/> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

16 <https://www.madewithreishi.com/stories/the-making-of-fine-mycelium> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

17 <http://bio2materials.com/> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

18 <http://www.girlsroom.pl/wasz-pokoj/7286-sukienka-z-grzyba> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

natural raw materials to help retailers produce high-quality clothing and accessories that are cruelty-free and do as little harm to the environment as possible.

The context of using food processing waste to create clothes is not without its black side. As Stanisław Lem wrote in *The Megabit Bomb*: “...every new technology, without exception, has the obverse of benefits and, at the same time, the reverse of new, hitherto unknown miseries”. It is difficult to predict what the consequences might be in the future of using waste on a massive scale and converting it into clothing that is not its ‘natural’ purpose. Careful steps should not disturb harmony and cause further damage.

We design new materials, but do we design change? (And are we ready for it?)

An interesting and fresh voice in the context of new technologies and intelligent materials used in clothing is Iga Węglińska’s doctoral dissertation entitled *Human-Interaction. Textiles - New Technologies*¹⁹ with public defence in October 2021. One of the work aims is to identify new forms of experiencing clothing. Appropriate materials are an essential element in developing the wearer’s sense of participation. The term sense of participation was taken from Wisława Szymborska’s poem *Rozmowa z kamieniem* and is meant to emphasize attentiveness and relationality, interaction or even dialogue between the wearer and the garment. This work is fascinating and valuable both in its theoretical layer and (perhaps above all) its practical layer, which consists of two polysensory silhouettes using biofeedback to signal psychophysiological changes in the user’s body. Due to the properties of their materials, they respond to aspects such as body temperature and heart rate. These projects are designed to stimulate cognitive engagement and expand the field of clothing experience. They are rightly called *Emotional Clothing* - emotion is a state of moving the mind, and through the mind, also the body.

I would like to see real innovation²⁰

– says Lauren Bowker, a self-described ‘materials alchemist’, founder of THE UNSEEN. The designer is, for example, the author of the Air collection, made of fabrics that change colour under the influence of external factors, but also depending on who is wearing the clothes - after all, every person has a different heart rate and body temperature (of course, they are within specific ranges)²¹. The artist draws attention to aspects such as digital fashion/digital fashion, which is no longer just an interface for shopping, but a value stored in a cloud of data. Gucci has already entered this market with the Virtual 25 trainers²², which can only be worn “digitally”. This shows the trend of taking

19 <https://igaweglinska.com/emotionalclothing/> [accessed: 28/11/2021].

20 https://www.dazeddigital.com/science-tech/article/53653/1/dazed-studio-trend-report-2031-a-future-world?fbclid=IwAR24Zbg8afR0fBSSOKCWzpcQB2W0lGwFJ-zRv_N-0VYR1rjy4kMiCX4qQEs [accessed: 30/08/2021].

21 <https://www.creativereview.co.uk/creativeleaders50/leader/lauren-bowker/> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

22 <https://gothammag.com/gucci-virtual-25-sneaker> [accessed: 20/05/2021].

clothes online and creating their new identity beachhead there, which is not only based on real-world images published on social media, but also shows the opportunity for sales and consumption that the world's biggest brands have picked up on. Will this trend change the world of fashion and consumer needs? Will it be adapted? Will responsibility for consumer decisions and the development of modern materials and technologies help shape the world for future generations? Are societies ready for the change? It remains to be hoped that at least some future scenarios written in laboratories will influence progress and upgrade reality without harming the environment.

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JAPAN – UNREST OR THE ART OF SILENCE? THE INFLUENCE OF JAPANESE AESTHETICS ON CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Case study

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Contents

Introduction 39

Beauty and Aesthetics 40

Bipolarity 42

Aesthetics and Design 43

The Tradition of Clothing 46

The Great Trinity of Fashion Straight from Ja-
pan 47

Conclusion 50

References 51

Abstract

The aim of the article is to present the influence of aesthetics developed by the Japanese on fashion and design in Asia, and more specifically in Japan. Do creative anxieties find visualization in designs, or does the art of silence, philosophy and aesthetics, which have been honed over generations, give an impulse to act? The analysis of the assumptions and concepts in this field allowed for the selection of the most important concepts – according to the author – that determine the creations of Japanese artists. Every aspect of Japanese life is designed to create an aesthetic effect.

The text discusses such terms characteristic of Japanese aesthetics as *shibui*, *wabi sabi*, and *iki*. Getting to know these features allows for a deeper understanding of the meaning of activities and philosophy of designers, their approach to beauty, life, and death. The author describes the Japanese delight over the fragility and elusiveness, imperfection and understatement. Understanding these basic concepts gives you knowledge that allows you to understand the philosophy of design creators following the example of the works of Naoto Fukasawa, Nendo design studio or the MUJI brand. The profiles of fashion designers who contributed to the development of this area were also discussed: Rei Kawakubo, Issey Miyake, Yoshija Yamamoto. Getting acquainted with the issues presented in the text allows better and deeper understanding of the philosophy of the works of Japanese designers.

Keywords

Japan, Japanese aesthetics, fashion, design

Introduction

Every aspect of Japanese life – food, clothing, painting, architecture – is geared towards creating an aesthetic effect. It is not surprising, then, that the Japanese have created many aesthetic terms,” wrote Ching Yu Chang in the essay entitled “The General Concept of Beauty”¹.

For Europeans, Japan is a remote country located on the Asian continent. Separated from the mainland by the ocean and located on numerous islands with beautiful names and landscapes. The Japanese name for the country is Nihon or Nippon, and the spelling of this name in Japanese calligraphy looks like this: 日本. Two signs. It is an island country; on a map of the world it looks like a narrow strip located between Asia and America, although it is closer to Asia. Japan has four major islands (Hokkaido, Honshu, Sikoku, Kyushu) and many tiny islets, such as the beautiful Oki-no-Tori-shima, whose name can simply be translated as “the Island of Birds of the Open Sea”. This isolation has contributed to the development of its original culture and aesthetics, in the widest sense of its meaning.

Thinking about Japan is a state of mind, so different from the European perception of the external and internal world. Japan either delights, fascinates or arouses great amazement, like the unusual peculiarities found in the modern world. It is the “Land of the Rising Sun”: this is the symbolism of the Japanese flag, the red circle symbolizing the sun on the white background.

Japan has long been a closed and inaccessible country uninterested in the Western world. It was governed by its own laws and rules very much different from those that hold sway in the European cultural and geographic area. Japan has developed its own aesthetics, so different from the European one, with different foundations and different elaborations. Belonging to a single human species does not mean that people understand and speak a similar language of aesthetics. They try to establish a dialogue to get to know one another but societies so mentally different can only concur on a few points. They differ in religion, cultural roots, the concept of life and death, art, theater, literature, complexion and eye contour. There are many more examples.

Japan elicits delight or anxiety. Anxiety, because Europeans will not understand Japanese culture or the Japanese philosophy of life or perception of beauty and nature. They often delight only in the initial, superficial, impression or view. People fascinated by this country consider everything so beautiful that you do not need to set the camera lens because you will always grasp something beautiful. But most people don't even try to explore the basics of Japanese philosophy and aesthetics.

The fact that Japan has long been so closed and inaccessible and has its own age-old established customs and traditions has been perfectly captured in several films. The American perception of Japanese traditions, such as the concept of honour shown in the “The Last Samurai” (Edward Zwick, 2003), can arouse different feelings. But it is an attempt to show, in a graspable way, the differences in

1 *Estetyka japońska. Antologia*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków 2001, p. 9.

our understanding of the world and in behaviours. In the film, the main character, a Civil War veteran played by Tom Cruise, learns new rules, honour and other aesthetics of life. The most outstanding Japanese film director, Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998), showed Japan's unique character as well as his own understanding of Western culture by producing film like "Throne of Blood", the adaptation of William Shakespeare's "Macbeth".

It is a country located on a highly active tectonic plate. As a result, Japanese live on the verge of life and death; they experience danger every day. The nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, when the "black rain" fell from the sky, had a huge impact on their perception of the world. Volcanic eruptions and tsunami waves have forced them to adapt to the forces of nature. Seismic tremors are as natural there as the attacks of winter in Europe but the Japanese have learned to live with this: they have specially constructed buildings and training in the event of an earthquake. They know how to act, they are disciplined and, knowing the rules, they follow official recommendations. Living in eternal danger changes their approach to, and the understanding of, the world, life and death. They like to take risks, by ordering food such as the infamous fugu fish, for instance. If improperly treated, this fish can cause fatal poisoning and a dozen people or so die every year because of it. But the meal is an Asian rarity. Balancing on the edge of life and death. Is it fear or the art of silence – Zen?

Beauty and Aesthetics

Beauty permeates many areas of life. The concept of the aesthetics of life and the beauty of dying is one of the values of Japanese culture. This philosophy is perfectly combined with the concept of impermanence, which is an indispensable component of beauty. The Japanese know how to express sorrow over the fragility of beauty and love. Even life is marked by fragility, fleeting and impermanence. This is why the Japanese celebrate the time of the cherry blossom: this delicate flower stays on the trees for a very short time.

The Japanese have created many terms to describe their aesthetics, such as *yugen* (mystery, depth), *miyabi* (elegance), *wabi* and *sabi* (simplicity, coarseness, ephemerality) and *iki* (all the best aesthetic tradition based on the concepts of simplicity, lightness, transience, suggestion and understatement)².

They also apply to Japanese literature and theatre. To understand the aesthetics of the object, further terms are important. One of the most important is *shibui*, which is difficult to translate:

It is not strong or obvious, it is not refined or correct, it is not complicated or exaggerated, nor is it ostentatious". *Shibui* combines the seriousness of tranquillity, understatement and the total integrity of craftsmanship, material and pattern [...] contains the value of tranquillity. Tranquillity can be achieved through incompleteness, or rather a state of unaccomplishedness or an unfinished pattern where there is still room for imagination³.

2 *Estetyka japońska. Piękno życia i śmierci*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków 2001.

3 *Estetyka japońska. Antologia*, p. 62.

This concept seems to partly explain the interest of designers and artists in imperfection and irregularity, understatement and incompleteness. Transience also joins these concepts, even in relation to the perception of objects, viewing them at different times and environments. Beauty is a dialogue with nature, admiration for the transience of weather phenomena, seasons, the flowering of plants.

Mono-no-aware is one of the aesthetic concepts. It defines the emotional state surrounding various areas of life, imbued with sadness and melancholy which arise in contact with the inevitably transient beauty of the external world. It is a kind of reflection. It is in such a philosophy or approach to people and objects, that the essence of kintsugi – literally meaning “to repair with gold” or “golden scars” – lies. It is a technique of repairing broken ceramics by combining broken elements with a mixture of powdered gold, silver or platinum. As a result, the destroyed object is recreated, saved and decorated with “golden veins”. It gains a new quality and value for the owner. The Japanese, who recognize imperfections or irregularities as the essence of beauty, do not hide the effect of what has happened. They use these imperfections and expose them⁴.

The “aesthetic ennoblement of poverty” already appeared in the 12th century. “To appreciate the feeling of poverty, one must not only accept what is given, but also subjectively arouse the feeling in themselves [...] Daisetsu T. Suzuki calls this state an active, aesthetic complement to poverty”⁵. This concept is defined by two terms: *wabi* and *sabi*. *Wabi* is more general, it concerns a life associated with poverty, insufficiency and imperfection, seeing beauty in transience. *Wabi* (侘) originally meant “despondency” and *sabi* (寂) meant “loneliness”. Both terms are customarily combined. *Wabi* can be translated as severity, poverty, restraint. *Sabi*, in turn, is “mellowness”, an imperfection that results from the age and wear of the object, which is the essence of its beauty. The idea of *wabi sabi* promotes finding the beauty of life, and objects, in their imperfections.

The essence of Japanese aesthetics was skilfully captured by Shūzō Kuki.⁶ In the essay “The Structure of Iki”, the author analyses the specific aesthetics of Japan, which cannot be conveyed in a single word or with a short description. The phenomenon of *iki* touches many aspects of life: from the Japanese mentality and affection for art. *Iki* is the quintessence of aesthetic philosophy but is based on urban life and interpersonal relations. Initially, *iki* defined urban life, in the district of pleasure, in Tokyo’s Fukagawa (Edo period). An attempt to compare this term to European phenomena is doomed to failure, although the French *esprit* and *chic* explain *iki* to a minor extent.

Shūzō Kuki made a successful attempt to capture the mentality of the nation, aesthetics. *Iki* is the quintessence of Japanese culture, in all areas of life, art, its essence is the aestheticization of everyday

4 <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kintsugi> [accessed: 4/04/2018].

5 *Estetyka japońska. Antologia*, p. 69.

6 Shūzō Kuki (1888-1941, Japanese philosopher, studied in Germany and France in the 1920’, where he learned about European culture and philosophy. Author of several books on philosophy and aesthetics, the most important of which is „The Structure of Iki”.

life. It is about the sphere of interpersonal relationships, intimate contact between a woman and a man and the whole environment of these relationships: colours and cuts of outfits, food, interior design, equipment and lighting, ways of moving and conversation. *Iki* is often referred to as aesthetic sensitivity or taste. As the philosopher writes in his essay

We can conceive *iki* as an element of a system of taste in various relations with other elements of this system. [...] In each individual case, the taste is accompanied, of course, by a subjective valuating judgment. However, at one time this judgment is expressed in a subjective and clear way, at other times it does not go beyond the limits of subjectivity and is formulated in a vague way⁷.

Bipolarity

Nowadays, one can observe the duality of the nature of the Japanese, especially those living and working in large metropolises which, on the one hand, delight and, on the other, arouse anxiety with the scale of the buildings, the number of people.

Another reference to a film: Sofia Coppola's "Lost in Translation" (2003). The plot is the feelings of a young woman and an aging actor on the background of Japanese settings: perfectly disciplined corporate employees, similar-looking, devoting their commitment, attachment, knowledge and skills to work. They work their stress off during their free time. They behave just like schoolchildren or students. They exchange suits and uniforms for disguises, restraint and peace - for fun. In the evening, entertainment districts come to life. Love hotels (in Japanese: *rabu hoteru*) are popular; they provide rooms for hours, also used by couples in love or young married couples. Another famous meeting place is the Harajuku district. This is a kind of a "catwalk" on which the most interesting and original costumes created by young people are shown. There are lolis and neogoths mixed with other elements. The cosplayers rule: young girls dressing up in fancy costumes of their favourite characters from manga, anime or computer games, posing for photos and posting selfies⁸ on their social media profiles.

The opening of Japan resulted in the acquisition of certain Western aesthetic and technological patterns. Traditional wood and bamboo are often replaced by concrete, glass and steel. Young people go to the West to educate themselves and learn about new opportunities and technologies. They use the knowledge they acquire creatively, showing different levels of ingenuity. Often, they do not reproduce what they get from the West; instead, they modify it in their own way. One example may be the modern bathroom, previously unknown in Japanese everyday life. Nowadays, it is indispensable in new residential and public buildings. However, it has been "packed with features" such as seat heating or a selectable flushing sound or jet type. Briefly: the West outside, the East inside.

⁷ Kuki S., *Struktura iki*, Kraków 2017, pp. 57–58.

⁸ <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selfie> [accessed: 4/04/2018].

Aesthetics and Design

The differences between Western and Japanese civilizations can be discussed for a long time and examples multiplied. Even the concept of shadow is interpreted differently. Light-dark, the two contrasting concepts like white and black. Light generates various optical phenomena, such as shades cast by objects. In Japanese culture, the shadow is at the basis of being itself; it fits perfectly into this aesthetics with its ephemerality, understatement, ambiguity and delusion.

Aesthetics and culture exert an influence on the style of design, leaving their mark on it. Architecture and the art of establishing gardens are inextricably linked with tradition, climatic conditions, location and aesthetics developed over the centuries. This can be compared to the genetic code DNA: certain rules, characteristics are already encoded in man.

This is perfectly demonstrated by three examples from the world of design. This is the essence of the philosophy of thinking about the object, its function and shape. This is such a vast field that I limit myself to presenting three examples important for understanding of the essence and simplicity of Japanese design. Design theorists often emphasize the role of the Japanese philosophy of thinking about an object in creating the Scandinavian idea of design: simple designs for the needs of ordinary people. This is the main idea of Scandinavian design.

In Japanese design, one of the most important values is respect for functionality, not succumbing to quickly passing fashions or tendencies. The trend is passing, and what counts is quality and classics. References and examples in Europe can already be recognized as classic icons in European design: Rosenthal Mary White tableware, the Burberry trench coat, the Hermes Birkin bag, or the 670Z by Charles and Ray James (the dreams of many businessmen and connoisseurs of design). In a slightly cheaper version of the classics, we have: the citrus juicer for Alessi designed by Phillipe Starck, the Flos Arco lamp designed in 1962 by the Achille brothers and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, or the tweed jacket by Coco Chanel.

There are many more examples. These are the determinants of a classic that has not changed for almost a hundred years. A well-designed product combines classics with the quality of material and workmanship and finds its place and buyers in the following decades.

A key figure in understanding the essence of Japanese design was Sori Yanagi⁹, the Japanese designer (1915-2011) who has played a significant role in the development of the principles of Japanese design. He is a representative of Japanese modern design, a modernist who has combined simplicity and practicality with elements of traditional Japanese craftsmanship. His guiding principle was to use social life as the basis for the design of each object.

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sori_Yanagi [accessed: 4/04/2018].

It is impossible to achieve beauty in design only through cosmetic treatments. It must emanate from within¹⁰.

His father was a philosopher and co-founded a movement called “minge”, taking care of local craftsmanship, respecting manual labour and the tradition of making objects. He presented the idea of this design concept in the wooden stool referring to the shape of butterfly wings (the Butterfly Stool, 1954), or the modern plastic (propylene) version (the Elephant Stool, 1954). Both products are currently supplied by Vitra.

The three examples of Japanese design – brand, designer and design studio – show how the tradition and ideas of aesthetics can be interpreted, continued and developed today.

The Japanese brand MUJI can not be compared to any European brand offering products useful in everyday life. It is defined by three meanings: values, culture and minimalism. Founded in 1980, it is the quintessence of the Japanese way of life, culture and attitude to the world. What counts is quality and not luxury, function and not packaging, simplicity and not superfluous decoration. MUJI perfectly implements the “Less is more” slogan propagated by German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Another one of his thoughts, “It is better to be good than to be original”, complements the previous slogan. These two mottos are perfect for MUJI’s brand philosophy. The brand name is an abbreviation of the word *mujirushi* (brandless) and *ryohin* (high quality).

Items designed for the MUJI brand are anonymous. They are distinguished by a simple packaging and a price tag with Japanese characters. Famous world designers create for the brand, but they do not sign their names on the objects they create. What counts for the brand is the function and usability, not the name of the designer. Objects with the MUJI logo are simple, in neutral colours, in a specific sophisticated aesthetic. And above all, they are practical, functional and universal. They are not subject to trends or fashions. The brand consistently implements its philosophy by introducing new products, but the basis remains unchanged. Simplicity and stylistic minimalism also apply to environmentally-friendly production of items needed for everyday life by conscious, well-informed consumers. Because their beauty lies in simplicity:

Beauty seems to exist but is so difficult to find¹¹.

The brand does not care about advertising and nor does it reveal the names of designers. Because the simplicity of objects is to attract customers with appropriate functions and timeless form. Naoto Fukasawa created functional things for the brand: he designed an iconic object: a white CD player in the form of a square with rounded corners, activated by pulling a string. An icon of contemporary design. It is displayed in the Moma Gallery in New York. This perfectly illustrates the philosophy of the brand: simplicity and ease of use, without unnecessary instructions.

10 „Elle Décoration”, Polish edition, 3 (2016), p. 91.

11 <https://sklep.muji.com.pl/content/4-o-muji> [accessed: 27/03/2018].

The MUJI brand responds to the needs of people with a definite philosophy of life, who focus on good functional design at an affordable price. The repeatability of products gives you the opportunity to attach yourself to them.

An important personality in the Japanese design world is **Naoto Fukasawa** (born in 1956). He is one of the aces of Japanese and world design. Although he may not focus on publicity like his colleagues do, he consistently implements his design idea by skilfully combining the experience gained both in his country and in the West. His main guideline is to make lives of the users of his objects easier, so he designs objects that are easy to use. The centre of his attention, apart from design, are electronics and precision mechanisms. In other words, he sees the possibilities offered by modern technology. This is related to the beginning of his professional career, when he worked for Seiko, the watch manufacturer. While working in the United States for IDEO, he noticed differences in the approach to design: in Japan, designs are made in the context of their environment, users and functions; in America objects become fetishes or icons, and they exist for themselves. According to the designer, a chair is just a chair: it must fulfil its function and not be an object of worship. Thanks to experience gained while working for American and Japanese clients, he learned about the differences in understanding the role of objects. His main idea is to design objects used in the simplest possible way: intentionally, intuitively. A well-designed product should be used without reading the instruction manual. Fukasawa cannot be classified into one category of designers. he works for various global brands: Samsung, Magis, B&B Italia and designs very different but functional products. He says:

I like working in different fields, which I combine into one. This means there is always something new; a source is created from which completely new ideas spring. It is insanely exciting¹².

Traditions of Japanese craftsmanship and design can be found in the works of OKI SATO (born in 1977). He belongs to the younger generation of designers, he has many successes to his credit. He is in the forefront of Japanese and world design. He is better known by the name of the NENDO studio that he founded. This brand is known all over the world. Its characteristic feature are designs that combine the play of matter and its properties. The very name of the studio, established in 2002, perfectly shows the idea: nendo means modelling clay, plastic, flexible material. Material that adapts to the elements. You can design everything from it but also fill in gaps or free spaces. And this is the philosophy of his design in context to the environment: „Creating is something like eating or drinking. It is my natural need, a reflex that I don't seem to control anymore”. He is extremely hardworking. His studio works on several hundred projects at the same time. He admits that he is addicted to design.

I am a design addict. I focus on the project all week, 24 hours a day. And, in the end, I am left with a lot of projects, and each of them is different. That is when I feel excited¹³.

12 „Elle Décoration”, Polish edition, 3 (2016), p. 88.

13 „Elle Décoration”, Polish edition, 3 (2016), p. 86.

The Tradition of Clothing

It is surprising that in view of an average person the clothing of a Japanese is reduced to a kimono. For both women and men. For all occasions, every day and for the wedding. Some people still know that Japanese knights, samurai, wore their characteristic costumes just like our medieval knights. Their armour was most often made of leather. Moviegoers would throw in costumes of Ninja warriors. The power of tradition?

In Europe, clothing has evolved over centuries. Each century developed its own forms of dress, especially among the upper or ruling classes. Testimonies of art, painting, sculpture are an excellent source of learning about the history of European clothing. Seeing certain elements, we can place them in a specific epoch. Women wearing a headgear called hemin, conical with a veil, were associated with the Middle Ages and fairy tales. *Verdugado*¹⁴ (the conical frame on which petticoats and outer dress were put) worn by the Portuguese princess Juana, and then by other titled women. Cuts on men's clothing with the Renaissance era. Ruffs, lace and splendour with Baroque. Classicism – this is the empire style. And then, in the 19th century, crinoline, corset and tournure. Art Deco and Art Nouveau, a feminine silhouette referring to a wasp. The 20th century brought a whole spectrum of changes in clothing, after the First and then after the Second World War. Clothing changed, just as styles in art, architecture, painting changed. Similarly, lifestyle, people's surroundings, the shape of buildings, artistic craftsmanship, food and gardens were subject to changes. In Japan, clothing was not subject to epoch-making changes.

The Japanese, even from the simple act of brewing tea, made a ritual, having its own mysticism and meaning. English teas, the so-called *fiveoclock*¹⁵ is just a tradition referring to the queen's custom, drinking tea at this hour, a form of paying homage to the head of the kingdom. These were social, neighbourhood, or family gatherings over a cup of tea and a cookie, not a ceremonial ritual.

In Japanese culture, the strength of tradition is more important than seasonal fashions, trends. Designers in different areas skilfully combine their heritage, Zen philosophy, the beauty of nature with their own image of the object.

The 20th century and contact with the Western world generated the need to adapt to other canons. Opening up to the West. Japanese intellectuals increasingly studied in Europe, learning about this different culture. They returned to their own country and skilfully used the acquired knowledge, combining it with their tradition. Japan, a country with agricultural roots, remained in confinement and isolation for a long time. Dynamic development took place in the years after World War II. The

14 <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortugał> [accessed: 4/04/2018].

15 <https://www.portalspozywczy.pl/napoje/wiadomosci/czas-na-herbate-czyli-skad-sie-wzielatradycja-five-o-clock,155434.html> [accessed: 4/04/2018].

country invested in modern technologies. In the US, Bill Gates and Paul Allen created Microsoft. In 1976, Steve Jobs presented the first model of Apple, which he created and branded with the characteristic, bitten apple. By the way, this is an excellent marketing ploy – the Big Apple is the term for New York.

Japan is finally entering a decade of development and prosperity. Begins to benefit from the aid offered by the United States. Two electronic brands are gaining popularity: Sony and Toshiba. The automotive industry is developing: Mazda, Toyota. Japan wants to catch up with the Western world. Catch up and chase away. On so prepared ground, it is not surprising that people in Japan began to be interested in clothing and fashion. But understood differently than the classics in the European edition.

The Great Trinity of Fashion Straight from Japan

That's what you can call them: three personalities, differing in terms of style and design and, to a lesser extent, intellectually. They share the country of origin: Japan. At a similar time, they appeared in Europe and made a bloodless revolution in the fashion world, shocking Paris, the fashion capital of the world. Their collections and shows were compared to the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 as the term "Hiroshima chic" appeared in the fashion nomenclature. Together with their collections, they brought a new look to clothing and style. The 1980's emphasized femininity, colour, silhouette line, broad shoulders and a narrow waist. Europe promoted classic moderation and a sexy, feminine look. And they showed a different kind of aesthetics and blackness.

A small digression: in Europe, thanks to the British Queen Victoria, black was associated with mourning. After the death of her beloved husband, this ruler wore only black dresses. Paradoxically, this woman, not interested in fashion, changed the tradition. For her wedding, she wore a white dress and a wreath of orange blossoms. And women wanted to imitate her. White dresses became the canon of the wedding fashion, while black became the colour of mourning. Previously, it had been associated with purists, the seriousness of the robes of lawyers. In Japanese aesthetics, it was the opposite. White did not indicate innocence, it was a sign of mourning. The landing of these three designers on Paris caused a big stir in the elegant established world of European fashion. And, later, the world of intellectuals, artists and photographers was delighted with their designs.

The first of these is **Issey Miyake**, the oldest of the three designers, born in 1938 in Hiroshima and deeply rooted in Japanese tradition and history. He even looked like a descendant of samurai. Valuing minimalism and sophisticated, design statements, he did not use scandals to shock people. During this period, his understanding of the form of clothing compared to other designers was still shocking. Another minor digression: I will add that, stylistically, he is my favourite designer of the three, and his perfume L'Eau d'Issey accompanied me for a long time. His design path is the search for absolute

beauty, purity of sophistication and technological excellence. He is one of the more unusual designers of the 20th century, not interested in success and media publicity. He studied graphic design in Tokyo and then went to Paris to study at the Haute Couture Chamber of Tailoring, and was an assistant to Guy Laroche, Hubert de Givenchy. Later in life, the search paths led him to New York. Having gained practical experience in the art of tailoring, he returned to Japan and founded his own brand: the Issey Miyake Design Studio. He presented his first collections at the beginning of the 1970's, when he showed his style and several elements that he developed even further in subsequent collections. His guiding principle was to avoid excess. The slogan propagated by Mies van der Rohe. "Less is More", became his credo. Minimalism, conciseness of design expression, clothes resembling stone sculptures, geometry referring to the architecture of Robert Mallet Stevensen (1886-1946), the French architect and designer who designed Villa Paul Poiret etc). Another collection is clothes in one size; the body hidden under the fabric does not matter, it perfectly illustrates the motto of Miyake: clothing should fit any shape, any silhouette. It was a concept developed throughout his professional career: clothes that fit as many people as possible, regardless of gender, age or size. Japanese roots, the Zen philosophy and the tradition of a kimono sewn from one piece of fabric were palpable in his collections.

At that time, another Japanese designer, Kenzo Takada, was making a dazzling career in Paris. But these are diametrically opposed styles. Kenzo¹⁶ loves colourful floral patterns (chrysanthemums and poppies) while Miyake is a master of shadow and muting. His clothes are described by a mixture of grey, black and white.

Another experiment is pleated fabrics and the „Pleat Please” design. The designer, in co-operation with engineers and technologists, subjects fabrics to technological processing to achieve the desired effect. He was looking for materials to create light non-creasing clothes adapted to the needs of modern women living actively, working professionally or traveling. Suzy Menkes, the fashion journalist, is a fan of his collections¹⁷.

Miyake used his experience in his next A-POC project, an intellectual concept for cut-it-yourself clothes. In his collections, he often refers to Japanese traditions, e.g. the origami art. This is how the series of Bao Bao bags was created from triangles flexibly connected. And although he no longer designs collections for the Issey Miyake brand, he has not stopped his creative and technological research.

The next person was a woman – **Rei Kawakubo**¹⁸ (born in 1946). Stark appearance, forelock trimmed evenly above the eyes, black clothes and avoidance of giving information perfectly match her

16 https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenzō_Takada [accessed: 4/04/2018].

17 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzy_Menkes [accessed: 4/04/2018].

18 https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rei_Kawakubo [accessed: 4/04/2018].

style. Founder of the Comme des Garçons brand (French: “like boys”) in “1965” – a meaningful name that perfectly illustrates the designer’s style. It surprises you with its vision of the brand concept but is defined by simplicity and austerity. The name itself shows a different approach to fashion because these are not clothes for men. Subordinated to the designer’s vision, initially in black, they were a contrast to the aesthetics of kawai – a term meaning everything that is pretty, nice, fresh. Girls dressed this way: kawai girls resembled porcelain dolls dressed in pastel clothes¹⁹. Since 1978, she has been designing successful avant-garde men’s collections.

Her style was described as anti-glamour, a new look at elegance. She showed wide trousers, over-length coats and asymmetrical cuts. When it was shown in Paris for the first time, the Rei Kawakubo collection caused a shock. At that time feminine elegance prevailed, while she presented rags, holes and jagged fabrics. She was labelled “Hiroshima chic”. She said this about the design process:

When I start creating collections, a word comes up. I have no idea where it comes from (...). As soon as I find the keyword, I do not develop it logically. I even avoid order in my mind and, instead, look for its opposite, something completely different from it, or something behind it²⁰.

Rei Kawakubo’s clothes are inscribed in Japanese aesthetics, the concept of beauty, the charm of unconscious misery. Therefore, she uses the unfinished, seams on top, disproportion, asymmetry. This is an intelligent kind of fashion you cannot ignore.

I prefer people to look and see strong beauty. It doesn’t matter if they understand. The norm and common ideas don’t make sense²¹.

She showed asymmetrical silhouettes with sewn-on bubbles. One of her most beautiful collections from 2011, the “White Drama”, expressing the idea of the fragility of a woman, was presented in Paris.

And the designer was looking for further challenges. She took to perfumes, but not in their traditional fragrance. Her famous fragrance, Odeur 53, contains such strange smells as cellulose, roasted rubber and coal: there are 53 of them in total.

The fashion world has her to thank for the concept of boutiques which exist no more than a year and spring up far away from recognized places with salons of fashionable brands. She adopts places found: the idea of Guerilla stores, temporary boutiques, has its fans.

The third personality was Rei Kawakubo’s friend and former partner, Yoshij Yamamoto. They shared their background, similar aesthetics and form of clothes, favourite black, but they parted. He is a person of small posture, with a rich imagination and creation, born in 1943. As a child, he experienced

19 Y. Kerlau, *Sekrety mody*, transl. M. Kowalczyk, Wrocław 2014, p. 296.

20 Y. Kerlau, *Sekrety mody*, s. 298 – wywiad z Susy Menkes, „The New York Times [accessed: 8/06/2009].

21 Y. Kerlau, *Sekrety mody*, s. 300; „News&Info”, „Vogue”, 21/05/2012.

the trauma of war during the bombing of Tokyo. If it were not for tailoring, it could have ended badly for him. He is an unusually interesting personality who is capable of designing clothes for the Adidas brand, promoting his sports Y3 line and designing film and theatre costumes. Watching his shows live, you get the impression that you are participating in the mystery of fashion. He is an extremely interesting designer who creates some of his collections for his own brand maintained in his own convention, aesthetics, and others – functional and casual – for the Y3 and Adidas brands. His costumes are characterized by a great dose of poetry. At the beginning of his Parisian career, Journalist Susy Menkes saw him as a harbinger of new directions in fashion.

Physically, the female body is like a desert where dunes, carried by wind, are constantly changing their shapes. I try to create according to this movement²².

An extremely interesting personality.

Similar ideas were shown by the famous Antwerp Six, the graduates of the Royal Academy in Antwerp: Dries van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester, Drik va Saene, Walter van Beirendonck, Dirk Bikkembergs and Marina Yee.

Conclusion

The culture of Japan attracts the attention of the world. Of course, you can see Asian influences on it but it has also created its own specific nature. It delights people with its beauty and a certain mysticism. However, on the surface, it will never be understood. A kind of humility and respect for tradition, aesthetics and a different understanding of beauty, allows us to appreciate the values of this culture. Modern times and openness to the world have changed the Japanese but this does not mean they have not brought new values to Western aesthetics. Their understanding of permanence and impermanence, perfection and imperfection differs from Western stylistics. But understanding this difference brings new elements into Western reality. Their behaviour and way of life will surprise those who do not understand the basics of Japanese philosophy. Could this uncertainty of existence - or the art of calming down and experiencing beauty in its entire spectrum - possibly be its greatest value?

22 Y. Kerlau, *Sekrety mody*, p. 294; interview with Yamamoto in „L'Express”, 3/12/2010.

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ON THE EDGE WITH EVERYDAY LIFE. THE MOTIF OF A WINDOW IN THE CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

Case study

Translation PL-EN: Maciej Jęczmiński, MA

Contents

Introduction 55

Historical outline 55

Sketch your window 56

Summary 63

References 64

Abstract

During the national quarantine and isolation symptomatic of the coronavirus epidemic, the window became the only direct link between people locked in their homes and the outside world. This motif, eagerly taken up to express a longing for lost everyday life, has also become a form of exchange for a new community in crisis. The analysis of the “Sketch your window” action initiated by Gabrielle Thierry shows the relevance of art in times of crisis, its therapeutic value and the possibilities of expressing experiences. The works created during this period treat the motif of the window in a variety of ways, showing the multiplicity of emotions and strategies for coping with the crisis. The window sometimes appears as an “impassable border”, and sometimes we do not even notice its presence. However, all these works have in common is sensible loneliness.

Keywords

social media, art in the coronavirus era, window motif, window in art, draw your window, Covid-19, isolation, national quarantine

Introduction

The years 2020-2021 are also marked in arts by a coronavirus epidemic. Long-term national quarantine and social isolation have led to a surge in the role of social media in shaping the artistic landscape and an almost complete transfer of creative life to virtual reality. It is not only artists who have taken their activities online, such as organising concerts through social media. According to a report published by the UN in May 2020, more than 85,000 museums have had to suspend their activities for the duration of the national quarantine¹. Numerous museums and cultural institutions made their collections available online via virtual tours and organised temporary exhibitions. Events such as the Virtual Night of the Museums 2021 organised by the National Museum in Wrocław also sparked the considerable interest of the public. The cultural sector, particularly affected by the crisis, has made an effort to 'maintain' contact with regular audiences while trying to attract new audiences.

A window, man's only link with the outside world during isolation, becomes a motif eagerly used by artists. It is an expression of longing for the outside world and the lost normality and routine of everyday life associated with the sanitary crisis. As Anselm Haverkamp points out, it is impossible to analyse representations of interiors without an external context. The interior exists only in relation to external to it, and the two concepts remain complementary to each other, complementing each other. As the author of *In/Doors: The Dialectic of Inside and Outside*, points out, the view to which windows and doors open is historically determined. Nature in urban space bears the hallmarks of a public sphere", and the city, unlike landscape, remains limited². During the national quarantine, the window was also a literal meeting place and social interaction. Residents often organised various social events such as quizzes, competitions, concerts and the popular applause for medical staff. All these activities were designed to meet the need for socialisation, social interaction and community building.

Historical outline

The window motif has been known in the history of art for centuries. As early as the 4th century BC, it was used to decorate vases found in southern Italy. Also worth mentioning are the popular 15th-century depictions of saints, including the Virgin Mary, against the opening landscape behind them, and the numerous 17th-century depictions of rooms by Dutch painters. Over time, a significant change has taken place in the use of this motif. In the 17th century, the window was treated mainly as a source of light that did not open onto the landscape, and rooms were full of anecdotal detail. In

1 UN News, *Covid-19 Crisis Closes 90 Percent of Museums Globally, UNESCO Plans for Reopenings*, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1064362> [accessed: 4/09/2021].

2 A. Haverkamp, *In/Doors: The Dialectic of Inside and Outside*, [w:] *Interiors and Interiority*, ed E. Lajer-Burcharth i in., Berlin-Boston 2016, pp. 104–106.

the 19th century, on the other hand, the landscape was visible through the clearances, and the rooms themselves were ascetic³.

Romanticism was fond of the motif of the window and the “suspension” of figures between the inside and the outside world. As Sabine Rewald points out,

The juxtaposition of the close familiarity of a room and the uncertain, often idealized vision of what lies beyond was immediately recognized as a metaphor for unfulfilled longing, as evoked in the words of the Romantic poet Novalis: “Everything at a distance turns into poetry: distant mountains, distant people, distant events: all become Romantic”⁴.

The unfulfilled longings of this period were represented through the juxtaposition of the “close” with the “distant and distancing”. Painters inscribed windows with representations of contemplative figures set in quiet domestic spaces and images of artists’ studios. The window also gradually became the main subject of the painting, focusing a viewer’s full attention. All these performances share **a distanced lack of anecdote and narrative**⁵.

The window motif also evolved in the 20th century, eagerly taken up by Surrealists and abstract artists, among others. One can recall here the paintings of Piet Mondrian or the series of works by Robert Delaunay, *Window Pictures* (1912), in which clearances are deprived of their traditional function, merging inside and outside to form a unity⁶. As Carla Gottlieb points out, in the 20th century, the window motif took a further step towards autonomisation and became the main subject of the painting, which she links to the development of photography. In previous periods, the window was always a collateral motif, giving context to the figures depicted or providing a backdrop to live still⁷.

Sketch your window

Social isolation has ‘romanticised’ the window motif, giving it the dimension of a metaphorical representation of longing. However, unlike in the 19th century, this time is a longing for normality and the routine of everyday life and social interaction. One of the many problems associated with national quarantine is loneliness caused by a prolonged lack of personal contact with loved ones and a shortage of daily social interaction. One of the art projects addressing human needs is the action called “Dessine ta fenêtre” (“Sketch your window”), launched in March 2020 by French artist Gabrielle Thierry. The painter, whose work explores the harmony between colour and music and their relationship with emotions, has initiated an artistic and social project providing an opportunity for social

3 S. Rewald, *Rooms with a View. The Open Window in the 19th Century*, New York 2011, p. 15.

4 S. Rewald, *Rooms with a View...*, pp. 3–5.

5 S. Rewald, *Rooms with a View...*, p. VIII.

6 S. Rewald, *Rooms with a View...*, p. 20.

7 C. Gottlieb, *The Role of the Window in the Art of Matisse*, „The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism”, 22 (1964), no 4, p. 393.

interaction so necessary in times of crisis. Before the epidemic, the artist had organised numerous art projects to disseminate the art to different social groups. The main idea of the initiative was to share the view from your window.

Inspired by the common experience of national quarantine, she referred to a well-known motif in art history. The project was addressed to professional and amateur artists of all ages and countries of origin. Anyone interested in taking part had to post their image on social media and tag it with the relevant hashtag: #dessinetafenetre or #sketchyourwindow.

As Gabrielle Thierry explains, the lockdown has changed the way we perceive the world and ourselves:

My perception of the world has been shaken. An intimate game is played with the universality of lockdown, with our fears and struggles. We direct our longing for freedom looks towards a window. The window opening to the outside world has become the most valuable today. We perceive them differently. We transfer our expectations and hopes to them. It is a place of expression: we sing in it, we applaud the exploits of those who fight, we communicate, we share music and art, we celebrate life in it⁸.

The window thus became the leading site of socialisation, the only link between ‘me’ and ‘others’ and between ‘me’ and the real world. The artist invites her audience to share their experiences and reflections by presenting the view from her window and showing the lost normality and our longings.

At this point, it is worth mentioning the role of social media, which has become the primary tool for communication and exchange of ideas, replacing conversation and abolishing national borders. A reflection on loneliness, which can directly cause depression, anxiety, stress, and other mental ailments, is symptomatic of the coronavirus epidemic. Depression, by definition, is a drop in mood of varying degrees of severity that manifests itself as “mental distress, slowed psychomotor reactions, increased feelings of anxiety and a range of physical symptoms (insomnia, anorexia, headache, weight loss and sexual dysfunction)”⁹. In doing so, the researchers point out the critical role of conversation and the exchange of experiences in therapy. Patients’ widespread view that only those who have dealt with the illness themselves can understand them completely¹⁰. In this case, art and various artistic activities become tools for dealing with psychological problems. The viewer’s activation also allows the previous viewer to identify with the artist’s experience and share their trauma-induced emotions.

Ekaterina Besson also emphasises that the attempt to recreate the relationship between viewer and artist virtually results from loneliness and states of depressed mood. These attempts alleviate the pain of prolonged isolation, which further disturbs the sense of satisfaction and removes the will to act¹¹.

8 Zob. oficjalna strona projektu: <https://dessinetafenetre.org/presentation> [accessed: 4/09/2021].

9 M. Godfryd, *Vocabulaire psychologique et psychiatrique*, Paryż 1993, p. 32.

10 P. Keller, *La depression*, Paris 2020, pp. 93–94.

11 E. Besson, *Performing Arts at a Distance: Music and Dance Culture during COVID-19*, Transitions et transformations des secteurs « arts et culture » à l’aune de la pandémie, Conference held 27.05.2021 in Paris, recording available online <https://centerinparis.uchicago.edu/events/transdigital20210409> [accessed: 4/09/2021].

Virtual dialogue motivates the motivation to act in a world full of monotony while becoming a kind of “support group”. Initiatives such as “Sketch your window” have not only an artistic role but also a social one; art is becoming above all a therapeutic tool, losing its elitist character. The transfer of art to the Internet and social media allows for its dissemination and the involvement of a primarily passive audience in active participation in artistic actions.

According to the definition proposed by Kaplan and Haenlein, social media is a type of online application that allows content to be created and shared between users. The most popular social media include Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter, with the first two being the most popular in the cultural sector. Researchers analysing the marketing potential of social media emphasise the emotional involvement of the recipient and on stimulating them to take action, for example, to share interesting content or to like a post¹². The “Sketch your window” campaign organised through these media makes it possible to reach a large audience. What is more, the marketing potential is fully exploited: it actively engages viewers in interaction - after all, the main objective of social media is to stimulate action and reaction to the posted content. As Monica Marchese notes, museums and cultural institutions are still learning how social media works and use it to its full potential. Through them, museums try to meet the main expectations of their audiences, namely education and entertainment¹³. The virtual experience of the museum collections is a substitute for the direct experience in the gallery. This experience responds, in a limited way, to the need for contact with artists and protects artists from being forgotten.

The action initiated by Gabrielle Thierry lived to see an exhibition organised at the Mediatheque in Vannes (open from 28 May 2021 to 25 August 2021), featuring a selection of works created during the period of the first national quarantine in spring 2020. The representations are framed by texts about windows - a combination of text and drawing for which the institution is famous. As the painter emphasised, the first quarantine was characterised by the hope of ending the isolation as soon as possible. The exhibition was accompanied by the production of a brochure of several pages and a report produced by the French television channel Tv5Monde, which was viewed over 300,000 times. The exhibition aimed to present the variety of experiences and emotions felt by those affected by quarantine. The slogan “drawing is a tool of freedom¹⁴” accompanying the exhibition directly refers to the symbolism of the window motif in the coronavirus epidemic.

12 D. Caoa, M. Meadowsa, D. Wongb, S. Xiaa, *Understanding consumers' social media engagement behaviour: An examination of the moderation effect of social media context*, „Journal of Business Research”, 122 (2021), p. 836.

13 M. Marchese, *Museums and Social Media in the Time of COVID-19*, 2020, <https://greyartgallery.nyu.edu/2020/10/museums-and-social-media-in-the-time-of-covid-19/> [accessed: 28/08/2021].

14 Por. <https://dessinetafenetre.org/exposition-dessinetafenetre-au-musee-des-beaux-arts-la-cohue> [accessed: 29/08/2021].



Fig. 1. Olivier Massebeuf, *The Courtyard*, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-2ifuVqVsQ/> [accessed: 5/09/2021].

An analysis of the works posted on the project website makes it possible to identify a few prominent representation trends. The first is to show just the view from the window without highlighting the window frames or interior elements. Françoise Coulon presented a view of the empty garden. A bench and a table with two chairs seem to be open to the viewer's presence and invite him to relax. The perspective from which the scene is presented bridges the distance between the garden and the viewer, who might remain unaware of the existing barrier. One gets the impression that the artist is standing in the garden and deciding where they should sit. The absence of elements such as a window sill or a window frame and the colours of the painting, especially the dominance of green, emphasise optimism and shorten the distance between confinement and freedom, even though the painting is characterised by solitude and the absence of human figures, the outside world appears as something close at hand.

Another group includes works that suggest a distance between inside and outside. A viewer is confronted with the representation of a window behind which another world unfolds. Olivier Massebeuf presented his view of an empty Parisian street. The outer sill is shown in the lower-left corner of the representation. The viewer leans out of an open window overlooking other seemingly abandoned buildings. There is no sign of life or any movement in the neighbouring windows. The grey and white colour scheme emphasise the pessimism of the depicted scene. The window, though open, is an

impassable barrier, and the inaccessibility of what lies beyond the window is further emphasised by the perspective. The view of the street seems to be “steep”, captured from the sixth, the highest, the floor of the tenement, and the road itself are, in fact, a spatially narrow courtyard formed by neighbouring buildings situated close to each other. This treatment increases the feeling of claustrophobia and confinement, and leaving the house is impossible.

Another example is the work of Nadine Urien, who, on a vertically positioned work that imitates a window depicts a view of a garden in light green colours and a blue sky. However, access to the garden is visually restricted by horizontal bands of black paint representing the roller blind. The black contrasts in colour with the idyllic landscape outside the window, exposing the sudden nature of the changes that have occurred. What until recently was part of everyday life suddenly became inaccessible. The viewer has separated from the outside world, and the visual barrier is reminiscent of prison bars, emphasising the pessimism and emotional distance from what is outside the window. Despite physical proximity, access to the outside remains limited and apparent. The viewer can add to what is inaccessible to the eyes by filling in the gaps using memory. However, the distance between the viewer and the world is evident whether the window remains open or closed.



Fig. 2. N.U., *Thinking about Covid-19 patients and everyone else in isolation*, 2020, <https://dessinetafenetre.org/galerie-dessinetafenetre> [accessed: 06/09/2021].

The third group of works most strongly intensifies the individual's sense of remoteness from the outside world. The window becomes merely an element of interior design, from behind which landscape elements are visible, and the artist does not even make an effort to cross this barrier. Rosemary Kessler presented her window together with a room fragment, emphasising the contrast between the familiar and the external. The view opens up to neighbouring buildings and leafless tree branches. The closed window is shown to the left of the canvas. Decorative elements and painting utensils intermingle on the lower part and the right. The author has thus added her work to the long tradition of window representations in the artist's studio. Kessler looks to the view outside her window for inspiration for her work.

Another artist taking part in the "Sketch your window" action is Bénédicte Roullier, who, in one of the representations included in the window series, has shown a passage in another room, visible through an open door, which, like the window, acts as a link between what is inside and what is outside. The pile-up of boundary elements multiplies the viewer's sense of distance from what is outside the flat. In another work, Roullier presented a window reflected in a mirror above a fireplace. The passage enters a well-known private space full of personal objects and trinkets.

However, the artists emphasise confinement to the house and the impossibility of crossing the border between the two worlds, and the windows, sometimes visible only from the corner of a room or as a reflection in a mirror, become a kind of obsession, surprising us in every room, their sight haunting us. However, it is impossible to cross the border, and the inhabitants become more and more distant from the outside world.



Fig. 3. Bénédicte Roullier, *Paris 14*, 2020 <https://dessinetafenetre.org/galerie-dessinetafenetre> [accessed: 06/09/2021].

The last distinguishable group is the representations of people inscribed in the window's context. Artists like Sylvain Cnudde paint self-portraits. On the left side of the canvas, the artist has depicted a view of vegetation almost entering the bedroom through an open window and the neighbouring residential buildings. On the right, however, he presented his self-portrait while drawing in the reflection of a windowpane. This emphasises the impossibility of crossing the transparent barrier of the window, even when it remains open. There are also views of lonely people on the streets. Katarzyna Siedlecka presented a view of one of the streets of San Francisco. On the opposite pavement, the author sees a figure walking a dog. In addition, in the windows of the building opposite, we see several other figures looking out onto the street, alone or in pairs. The sketchy nature of the figures makes it impossible to identify them, and the anonymous outlines of the silhouettes do not represent specific people but are such a familiar phenomenon regardless of the location. Despite the proximity of neighbours and passers-by, we remain alone, each in his world separated from the others by a pane of glass, and the contour outline further visually distances us from the seemingly close people we cannot get to know due to lockdown. It is irrelevant whether the window opens onto a cityscape or nature. Experiences of loneliness, alienation, and anxiety characterise most of the works presented.



Fig. 4. Katarzyna Siedlecka, *San Francisco*, 2020, <https://dessinetafenetre.org/galerie-dessinetafenetre> [accessed: 06/09/2021].

Summary

The project was trendy and successful, as shown not only by the number of works submitted but also by similar initiatives proposed, among others, by the Landscape Institute of the Catholic University of Cordoba (Argentina), where competition was organised to submit works showing the view from a window. Other artists also independently referred to this motif during the quarantine. One example is the work of Italian illustrator Vito Ansaldi, who referred to this motif on 24 December 2020, wishing observers a merry Christmas and publishing the drawing *The Window on Christmas*, the central part of which presents a Christmas tree-shaped opening, formed by dark curtains. In addition, the “tree” was decorated with lights hung outside the window. The artist’s only companion, a cat, has been placed on the window sill with its back to the viewer. The performance of the window on Christmas evening carries a strong emotional charge. Many people were forced to spend Christmas Eve alone, away from their loved ones. Thanks to its colour scheme and the lack of introduction of human figures, the illustration expresses reflection and longing, especially acute at the time of a family holiday. On the other hand, Photographer Marcus Cederberg offers the opposite perspective, presenting the windows from the outside, treating them primarily as a visual motif.

Open or closed, the window becomes the only link with the outside world, allowing us to remember that we are not alone and the epidemic will end one day. During this time, art takes on a form of therapy and contact, allowing a bond to be maintained between the artist and their audience and between

the audience themselves. Once again in history, a motif known for centuries has taken on a strong symbolic dimension, becoming a metaphor for lost everyday life and an expression of longing and nostalgia.

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THE TECHNIQUE OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE WOODBLOCK PRINT AS INTERPRETED BY CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

Art research paper

Translation PL-EN: Maciej Jęczmiński, MA

Contents

Introduction 68

History of the origin of Japanese woodblock print 68

Japanese woodblock print technique 69

Japanese woodblock print - Mokuhanga 71

Interpretations by contemporary artists 73

Exhibition of contemporary Japanese woodblock prints
at The Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kra-
ków 75

Summary 78

References 79

Abstract

The Japanese woodblock print has developed in the Land of the Rising Sun for many years and continues to amaze with its beauty and perfection in its manufacture. The greatest asset of a work of art is its technique. Many contemporary artists today draw inspiration from the work of Japanese woodblock print artists. In this article, the history and technique of the creation of Japanese woodblock print are presented, as well as the work of selected contemporary artists, who have been inspired by the craftsmanship of Japanese woodblock print when creating their own art, are discussed.

Keywords

traditional Japanese woodblock print, mokuhanga, ukiyo-e technique, contemporary Japanese woodblock print, Japanese graphic arts

Introduction

Mokuhanga is a word that is commonly used in Japan when talking about woodblock print. Outside of Japan, this is the term used to describe a woodblock print technique derived from the ukiyo-e tradition. Only a handful of artists outside Japan creates their works in this rare technique. The way they have modified and exploited the possibilities of this technique is remarkable. The original ukiyo-e technique is based on printing with water-based inks and using the famous Japanese handmade washi paper. The technique of traditional ukiyo-e woodblock prints differs from that of modern woodblock print in its freer approach to established rules and in its maximum use of the technique of water-based inks and especially of paper made from long kozo fibres. The results of artistic experiments with the original technique of Japanese woodblock print created by several world artists are very interesting. Among the most important names in this group, one should certainly mention: an American specialist and author of a book entitled “Japanese Woodblock Print Workshop”, April Vollmer, professor Anu Vertanen from Finland, an American of Korean origin, Yoonmi Nam, and finally a Polish artist and professor Dariusz Kaca.

In 2019, the author of this article organised an exhibition of Japanese woodblock prints at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, to which she invited selected professors and artists from different parts of the world. This article looks at the history of the creation and technique of the traditional Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock print, and the inspiration of this technique by contemporary artists. The author of the article also describes the exhibition of Japanese woodblock prints she organised at the Academy of Fine Arts Gallery and her own experience in creating Japanese woodblock print.

History of the origin of Japanese woodblock print

Moku means wood in Japanese and *hanga* means print¹. The combination of these two words (*mokuhanga*) gave rise to the colloquial name adopted in the graphic arts community for the technique of Japanese woodblock print, which is printed on paper using water-based inks (gouache, watercolour). The woodblock print appeared in China in the 5th century. It found its way to Japan in the 8th century, with the spread of Buddhism and religious texts. In Japan, the Edo period (1603-1868) brought the development of a technique called ukiyo-e (literal translation: *ukiyo* - transient, flowing world, *e* - image)². Prominent artists who contributed to the development of this technique were Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858). The prints depicted places important to the Japanese, such as Mount Fuji, the streets of famous cities (the streets of Edo) or nature (waterfalls)³. The stencils made in wood made it possible to reproduce and distribute the views, reminiscent

1 A. Vollmer, *Japanese Woodblock Print Workshop: A Modern Guide to the Ancient Art of Mokuhanga*, New York 2015, p. 1.

2 *Góra Fuji. Hokusai i Hiroshige. Japońskie drzeworyty krajobrazowe z kolekcji Feliksa Mangghi Jasińskiego*, red. T. Leśniak, Kraków 2012, p. 43.

3 F. Morena, *Hokusai*, Warszawa 2006, p. 80.

of today's postcards or calendars (Master Harunobu). The masters of Japanese printmaking created original interpretations of landscapes through aesthetic treatments that exploited simplicity (economy of form), mystery (mists) and elegance of representation (meandering contour lines), sophisticated colours and intriguing frames⁴. From time to time the Manggha Museum in Kraków presents a collection of Japanese graphics from the collection of Feliks Manggha Jasiński (1861-1929). Japanese ukiyo-e prints were a huge inspiration for turn-of-the-century artists all over the world, also in Poland. Stanisław Wyspiański produced a series of pastels with a view of the Kościuszko Mound, well known to the inhabitants of Kraków and characteristic of the city. The show was undoubtedly inspired by the prints of the artist Katsushika Hokusai, author of the woodblock print series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*⁵.

Japanese woodblock print technique

Traditional Japanese woodblock prints used planks of hardwood, cherry (Fig. 1). Today, soft plywood - *shina* (made of *Tilia japonica*, from the lime family) is used. An interesting fact is the restrictive environmental law that forbids the use of too much poisonous glue in plywood (containing formaldehyde), so *shina* plywood from Japan is healthier for the user than American or European plywood. The type of lime used in Japanese plywood is so soft that cutting into such a board is easy and pleasant. Prepared on fine, almost transparent *washi* paper, the drawing is redrawn and pasted onto wood blocks. To make a coloured print, use several boards to cut out the individual colours. Sometimes the free space on one board is used, but the colours are printed separately. Traditionally, however, separate matrices are used for individual colour patches (Fig. 2).

4 Dariusz Kaca. *Grafika*, red. D. Leśnikowski, Łódź 2015, p. 9.

5 *Góra Fuji. Hokusai i Hiroshige...*, p. 143.



Fig. 1. Woodblock board by the artist Marta Bożyk,
source: Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków.



Fig. 2. Matrix and print - sumi ink, photo by Marta Bożyk, source: Author's Archive.

The work should begin by cutting out the *kento* - stamps in the corner and on the side of the wooden matrix, identically on each board. This is a corner and edge marking in the board that shows us where to apply the paper so that the colours from the different boards come together to form a single image. We stick our drawing onto the prepared board using rice nori glue and start cutting through the outlined paper. The convex areas will be the areas on which the colour is applied. Woodblock prints are cut with various types of chisels and *chokokuto* knives, the production of which is extremely important in Japan. The master craftsman making the chisels and knives guarantees their quality. Purchased chisels can be returned repeatedly for sharpening by the manufacturer for a small cost. This is mediated by family-owned American companies that sell graphic design tools, especially those related to Japanese tradition, more efficiently than Japanese ones via the Internet. The manufacturers have continued

the tradition for several hundred years and their brand is known worldwide. To ensure that the board does not move during cutting, special boards with a railing, called Hanga Sagyodai, are used.

For printing, we first prepare the paper. In countries with low humidity, we need to soak the paper the day before using a technique called *damp pack*. In Japan, a tropical country, this is not necessary. For proper soaking, it is sufficient to briefly cover the paper with wet newspapers. Spray the newspapers with water or soak them with a soft brush and place the *washi* paper between the soaked newspapers. Then wrap the newspaper-lined paper in foil and keep it out of the air overnight. *Washi* paper is thin but strong and the tradition of hand drawing dates back over 1,500 years. The unique fibres of this paper, which is made from the *kozo* plant, are long and absorbent and therefore easily absorb water-based paints. However, it should be protected against too much soaking with Myoban or dosa, a type of skin glue with a bit of alum⁶. If one do not paint the *washi* with such glue, the paints will soak into the paper uncontrollably. We also need to wet the board or plywood before printing. Watercolour paint or gouache is rubbed into the board with special brushes and the colours are reflected successively from different boards. Finally, apply *sumi* ink with brushes to the cut out, convex outline on the board. Printing is done by hand with a baren. Baren is a special tool in the form of a disc wrapped in a bamboo bark leaf or, nowadays, a disc with plastic balls on the underside (designed by Kyoto professor Akira Kurosaki) or with metal balls - an American product⁷). Gotowy wydruk posypujemy mika, która zabezpiecza kolor i dodatkowo nadaje pracy delikatny blask.

Japanese woodblock print - Mokuhanga

The technique itself *ukiyo-e* is nowadays referred to the word *mokuhanga* by artists. Japanese woodblock print uses water as a printing base. It is sometimes said to be a water woodblock print. Artists, or rather Japanese craftsmen, today are teaching western artists how to create works in this technique. There are several well-known master schools in Japan where one can take a course in this traditional printmaking technique in 3 months. Completing such a course gives a participant a technical basis to develop one's own style. Japanese teachers are very demanding and course participants must know how to name their tools, matrix and printmaking operations in Japanese as well as learn the history of the origins of the technique itself in order to begin their workshop work. Completion of such a traditional school teaches discipline and respect for the Japanese woodblock print tradition. One will never know the elegance and taste of this painstaking work, which requires precision and patience and is characteristic of the craft culture of Japan by only using textbooks. The artist must first become a craftsman, learn the whole process and learn it to get the most out of it.

6 McClain's Printmaking Supplies, <https://www.imcclains.com/catalog/blocks/shina.html> [accessed: 11/03/2021].

7 A. Vollmer, *Japanese Woodblock Print Workshop*, p. 71.

Contemporary artists practicing this technique are affiliated with the International Mokuhanga Association in Tokyo founded, among others, by American artist April Vollmer and Japanese Katsutoshi Yuasa (MI-LAB Special Advisor, Japan). The purpose of this organisation and its mission is, among other things: to include and inspire all artists/artisans/creators mokuhanga at all levels; to develop the aesthetic language of mokuhanga and promote dialogue conducted within this technique; to encourage innovation at all levels of mokuhanga; to preserve mokuhanga skills, crafts, traditions and materials; and to build an archive of mokuhanga resources for the next generation. Artists associated in the International Mokuhanga Association practice this traditional art but also develop it. Among the most important artists outside Japan are: artist April Vollmer, who has published a manual on this technique, and Anu Vertanen (artist and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts/Finland), who teaches this technique in Finland and uses it in a distinctive way. Yoonmi Nam of Kansas Lawrence University and Katie Baldwin of the University of Alabama have written *Zin*, a mini textbook on mokuhanga. In Poland, this technique is practised by Professor Dariusz Kaca and Tomasz Kawełczyk, Ph. D. Both of them have studied in Japan and Professor Kaca is also a member of the IMA.

In Japanese woodblock print, paper is important in addition to the board. The paper used in mokuhanga should be hand-drawn from the bast of the *Kozo* bush, glue from the root of the *Tororo-aoi* flower and water. The paper called *Washi* in Japan is also extremely important in tradition. For more than 1,300 years it has been made by hand in several cities and provinces (the famous paper mills: Kochi, Mino, Awagami, Mino - Hon-Minoshi paper, Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO)⁸. The combination of paper and woodblock print is a precious art of Japanese craftsmanship that distinguishes Eastern from Western printmaking. Today *washi* paper is available and can be imported from Japan or from a few shops in the USA. It is often used by restorers due to its exceptional thinness and strength. The 1,200 year old paper has the same colour as the contemporary handmade paper⁹. *Kozo* fibres are hand beaten and not ground like European cellulose, so the long fibres overlap. When scooping, the sieve is swung so that the fibres overlap like a net, creating a strong bond. *Washi* paper, highly prized in Japan and less known internationally, is important in mokuhanga. Still, it is a rarity and a precious value of this technique. Woodblock print artists respect this paper and know its value, also as a traditional product, made only in the East.

8 The Mino-Washi Brand Book, Mino 2017, p. 9.

9 M. Kurlansky, *Paper – Paging through History*, New York [2016], p. 10.

Interpretations by contemporary artists

Japanese woodblock print also uses *Sumi* - black ink as an outline, drawing the image and applying it at the very end of the printing process. *Sumi* black ink, which was traditionally used as an outline, is rarely used by contemporary artists. Sometimes it is not used at all, the graphics are then more painterly. Paints in the traditional ukiyo-e technique were rubbed in with brushes (*burashi*) or with special paintbrushes, which were selected according to the size of the surface of the colour spot. Colour is treated freely and nonchalantly in the work of contemporary artists. The surfaces are not perfectly covered with colour and often the artist allows excessive water to soak around the stain, creating a kind of streak or soft mark.

This is the method used, for example, by the well-known artist Anu Vertanen. The use of paint that pierces through from the other side of the paper is an interesting procedure in her woodblock prints. The artist uses both sides of the paper to apply the paint. Paint with a lot of water runs softly through to the other side, giving the impression of being blurred and fuzzy. Vertanen prints sharp linear motifs onto this soft, reverse side of the paper. By juxtaposing a soft spot and a sharp clear linear form, she achieves a spatial effect. This Finnish artist prints transparent colour over colour to give the impression of spatiality. Vertanen likes colours, which she uses perfectly in her graphics, and she is economical with her means. She has created various series, usually using simple forms like stripes, circles, linear patterns. It goes beyond the format used in traditional Japanese woodblock prints. She is not constrained by her association with the Japanese workmanship. She uses the knowledge and skills acquired in Japan with lightness and ease.

Yoonmi Nam, who comes from Korea but lives and works in the United States, works differently. Yoonmi makes one clearly feeling the tradition and drill of the Eastern workmanship. However, the artist has turned this perfection into an asset. She is able to convey an almost hyper-realistic impression with very simple means. Her series entitled *Arranged Flowers*, which are representations of flowers and other plants in contemporary paper cups printed by popular fast-food companies, is an impressive series in terms of technique. Here, Nam combines the traditional workmanship of a classical woodblock print artist with the conceptual approach of a contemporary artist. In this series, the artist also combines a drawn graphic world, linear with a decorative way of representing plants, with a simple but clearly realistic element from the contemporary world.

Dariusz Kaca, a professor from Łódź, emphasises his fascination with the perfect workshop and pays tribute to the Japanese with a series of woodblock prints dedicated to Utamaro - an artist from the Edo period. Kaca has undergone courses in Japan and his works show a reverence for this traditional technique and traditional Japanese motifs. In his woodblock prints we see motifs of waterfalls, landscapes, flying birds, fragments inspired by motifs taken from the prints of the old masters, such

as the hairstyles of Japanese women. However, Kaca simplifies the image by depriving it of realism in favour of abstracting the motifs. The colours of his small woodblock prints are very subtle and sophisticated. It narrows the colour range and uses lines printed with Sumi ink. The line, however, does not describe the shapes, but weaves a separate story. The world in Dariusz Kaca's woodblock prints is illustrative and interestingly fabulous in colour, and the story is clearly set near the Japanese islands.

Norwegian artist Elisabet Alsos Strand leads the viewer towards water, towards reflections, towards the transparency of the sky reflected in the water mirror. The artist likes to limit herself to one or two colours. Her abstract forms evoke in us the familiar world of landscape. The artist gives space to our imagination to reflect on the landscape, using the effects of watercolour paint heavily saturated with water in her workmanship.

American artist, April Vollmer is a master of the detail and perfection of the line print. Vollmer uses plant motifs, small figures of birds seen from afar or insects and builds decorative compositions by using those. It combines the black Sumi line with spot colour solutions. What is most impressive about her work is her ability to layer multiple layers of colour on top of each other.

A very interesting Japanese artist is Takuji Hamanaka. In his woodblock prints it is hard to guess the technical procedure. The artist creates forms resembling the structure of bacteria or other micro-organisms. Semi-transparent forms overlap to build spatial creatures. Some prints use abstract, geometric forms to create the optical illusion of spaciousness. The artist likes to create surreal, abstract forms out of colourful brushstrokes, which are confusingly similar to painterly efforts to render spatial forms. The effect is achieved by repeatedly applying different paints in one place from the same block. Painting with brushes with the „Iris effect” or tonal transitions creates the illusion of spatiality. The artist therefore uses here the traditional method of *bukashi* (tonal transition) - the application of paint with nori glue with a brightening of colour.

In the Japanese woodblock print technique, re-printing is a very difficult procedure, as both the matrix and the paper must be moist during printing. Maintaining moisture during printing is very important for the colour to reflect on the paper. Rubbed with a special disc *barenem* on top of the paper, transfers the ink from the board to the paper, provided the correct amount of water is used. It is the flair of the artist or *master-printer* (master craftsman, the word comes from English) that determines the effect of the print. The artist can control the amount of water and thus achieve different effects. However, it is extremely difficult with this technique and requires great skill. In the old days in Japan, an artist would invent a motif and paint it. On the other hand, the craftsman cut in the wood and it was he who reproduced the master's work. Kyoto-based professor Akira Kurosaki (1937 - 2020), however, preferred to print and create the graphics himself from motif to print. Kurosaki, called *sensei* (master), headed the Papermaking Department at Kyoto Seika University. His abstract and surreal prints grow

out of the Japanese tradition. Motifs of still life or landscape transform over time into total abstractions. He used a lot of colours: red, Prussian blue, white on paper in a darker, natural, non-dyed shade. Akira Kurosaki used an interesting procedure of surrounding the cut-out pattern, the ritual of the hole with a dark colour. Such an effect gave the impression of spatiality or even levitation of the elements of the composition.

Many artists use the Japanese printing technique or imitate its effects. Karen Kunc, an artist from Nebraska, uses Japanese *mokuhanga* but also combines techniques. Her inspiration comes from the technical effects of printing with water-based paints, the iris effect or the combination of watercolour, transparent colours, the layering of colours and forms on top of each other is due to her knowledge of the *mokuhanga* technique. The artist is extremely prolific, and her works are presented at several exhibitions a year. Her works are always made up of a large number of colours, which is completely different from the Japanese tradition but is an original feature of the American artist's work. All of these outstanding artists are members of the IMA who have undoubtedly contributed to the development of this technique as well as the art of woodblock print in the world.

Exhibition of contemporary Japanese woodblock prints at The Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków

From 17 October to 1 December 2019, the Academy of Fine Arts Gallery hosted Mokuhanga, an international exhibition of contemporary woodblock prints made in the traditional Japanese ukiyo-e technique. Its curators were Marta Bożyk, Margarita Vladimirova. The idea of the project came from Marta Bożyk, Ph. D., an artist for many years connected with the Faculty of Graphics at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, assistant professor at the Woodblock Print Studio. For the realisation of this exhibition and related workshops, the curator won a grant from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education from the Fund for Science Promotion Activities. Seven contemporary artists, working in the ukiyo-e technique, have been invited to participate in the exhibition:

Kristi Arnold (USA),

Katie Baldwin (USA),

Marta Bożyk (Poland),

Dariusz Kaca (Poland),

Tomasz Kawełczyk (Poland),

Yoonmi Nam (USA, Korea),

Elisabet Alsos Strand (Norway).

All the artists are educationalists and teach ukiyo-e technique at their home universities and in international workshops. In the catalogue for the exhibition, the artists describe where and how they learned this technique. They describe their experiences in working on it and their meetings with the masters from whom they drew their knowledge. A perfect example is the author of this text who came into contact with the Japanese woodblock print technique during her stay at an artistic residency in Mino Paper Village, a town where washi paper is made in Japan. The artist got to know the mokuhanga technique better by observing the workshop of her friend Elisabet Alsos Strand, during her stay in Norway. An interesting experience too was attending the Impact 10 conference of 500 graphic artists from around the world in 2018 in Santander, Spain. At the conference, the artist met a group of woodblock print artist, listened to lectures and learned about the art of these specialists. She got the courage to try her hand at Japanese woodblock print when she decided to do a large project called *Washi no Fushigi* dedicated to washi paper. The artist made three large-format woodblock prints using the mokuhanga method. The technique proved to be very difficult especially when making large format prints. The board dried too quickly and the unevenly soaking water caused the colours to spill over and create unwanted effects. Experience, precision and correct sequence are very important in this technique. However, the artist has used the effects of painterly blurring and repeated colour enhancement and overprinting of the outline. Smaller graphics are much easier to print. That is why at her next exhibition at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków she also showed new mokuhanga made in a smaller size. The author of the text, having her own personal experience in the mokuhanga technique and aware of the value of the prints by old masters of ukiyo-e, appreciates, however, the importance of work in this technique by contemporary artists. The exhibition, organised at the Academy of Fine Arts, shows how fascination with this eastern technique can unite professionals, despite the difference in visual stories (Fig. 3-5).

At the same time, the Manggha Japanese Arts and Technology Museum, a partner of the project, hosted an exhibition entitled “Masters of ukiyo-e: Utamaro, Sharaku, Hokusai, Hiroshige, Kuniyoshi”, woodblock prints from the Ei Nakau collection. As part of the collaboration, the artist Marta Bożyk has prepared a guided tour of the masters’ exhibition from a technological perspective and a series of ukiyo-e workshops for students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.



Fig. 3. Exhibition of contemporary Japanese woodblock prints at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, photo by Przemysław Wideł, source: Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.



Fig. 4. Exhibition of contemporary Japanese woodblock prints at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków photo by Przemysław Wideł, source: Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.

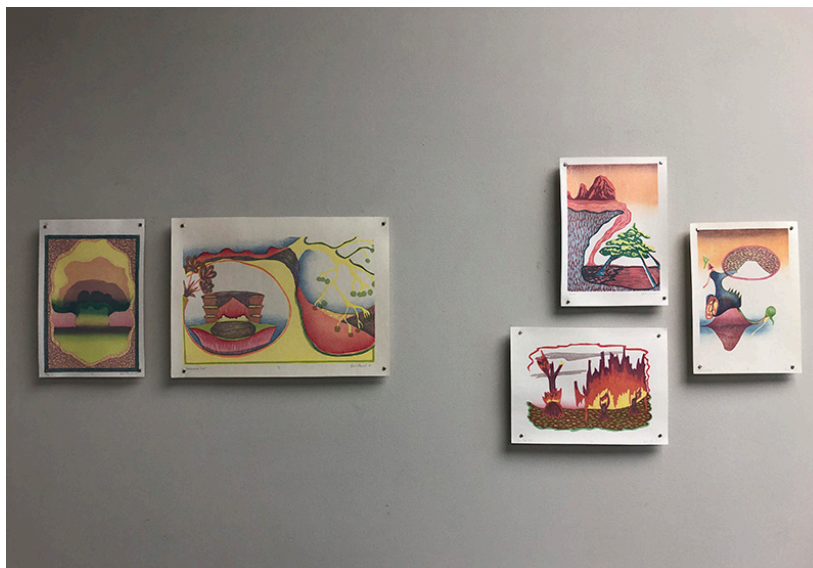


Fig. 5. Exhibition of contemporary Japanese woodblock prints at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, photo by Przemysław Widel, source: Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.

Summary

The traditional Japanese Mokuhanga woodblock print still inspires artists around the world to this day. Contemporary artists are eager to learn the traditional, extremely complex and labour-intensive ukiyo-e technique. They often practice this traditional art, but also develop it by drawing on different cultural traditions and taking a freer approach to the technique itself. Polish enthusiasts have had the opportunity to encounter the art of Japanese woodblock prints at many exhibitions at the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków, but also at an exhibition organised by the author of this article in 2019 at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. It is worth noting that the author is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Graphics of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków and creates works in the traditional ukiyo-e technique herself. The artists mentioned in the above publication continue the old technique, expanding the range of technical effects and giving the technique a new dimension and artistic value by combining tradition with innovative, original technical procedures and their own reinterpretations of motifs used by old masters from Japan. Respecting tradition, they are discovering new perspectives for this ancient technique.

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SENSORY LANDSCAPES

Art research paper

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Contents

Introduction 83

Nature-based approach 84

Perceptual approximation. Sensory Landscapes 85

Conductive thread: Cartography of senses 85

During the process, a conductive thread weaves intertwines geographical areas with the sensory experience of touching, smelling, observing, tasting and listening. 85

Theory and praxis 86

Site approximation: The Genius Loci. Sense of Place 86

Soundscapes. Listening landscapes 87

Smellscapes and scentscape experience 88

Tactile landscapes and haptic environments 89

Landscapes of taste 90

Visual landscapes: scenery and time 91

Seasonality and landscapes 92

Research performed in the field of senses & landscapes 92

Multi-directional and dynamic research process 93

Development of phases 94

Artworks. Site-specific interventions 94

Final thoughts / Summary 103

References 104

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide a wider range of environmental disciplines by highlighting a series of reflections, processes and artistic projects for a sensitive approach to our environment involving a combination of bodily experience and landscape awareness. Sensory Landscapes are based on practical research into progressive action designed to raise awareness and increase our understanding of the natural and human environment through the conception and results of artistic approaches to landscape using senses and experiences. As part of the process, a conductive thread weaves diverse geographies with the sensory experience of touching, smelling, observing, tasting and listening. Throughout this article, various ways of thinking and acting are explored, interweaving disciplines, media and places. At the same time, this article raises a series of questions that broaden the understanding of site-approximation and landscape concepts through a dialogue between artistic practice, critical thinking and environmental mindset. With this in mind, *Sensory Landscapes* is designed to be a conceptual framework for exploring various perceptions as a medium for approaching a given scenario, connecting tangible and intangible concepts to transform sensual concepts - smells, textures, tastes, sounds, scenes - into experiences.

Keywords

Senses; Perceptions; Sensory interventions; Art Interventions; Landscape; Site-Specific; Environmental Art; Artistic Practice; Multidiscipline

Introduction

Contemporary societies are dealing with challenges addressed by design and artistic disciplines searching for sensitive dialogues to generate ways of coexistence between natural and human-made environments. According to the definition of nature as “the phenomena of the physical world as a whole, including plants, animals, landscape and other features and products of the Earth, as opposed to humans or human creations”¹ and understanding landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”², the article examines and provides a series of reflections and examples on how artistic-design practice can provide sensitive and mindset-based approaches to our landscapes.

In recent decades, human activities have significantly increased the impact of nature degradation.

Degradation occurs when the Earth’s natural resources are depleted. The resources affected include water, air and soil. Degradation also has an impact on our wildlife, plants, animals and micro-organisms³.

This process, together with existing environmental issues, is significantly increased by anthropogenic effects rather than natural factors. To preserve and enrich livable environments, we must shift our main priorities in life towards more ecological and sensitive behaviour.

We need to optimise the use and management of resources, sustainable development, adoption of green concepts and, above all, community participation in all developmental activities⁴.

In terms of artistic practice, sensory experience has become an essential approach to environmental issues that can provide receptive insights by raising emphatic questions on the relationship between human beings and nature. How do people perceive, experience and respond to their environment? How can perception and experience be a source for developing a landscape intervention? What is the relationship between landscape and sound, smell, taste, touch or vision? How can humans, animals and plants co-exist? How can we make this possible and transform our habitats from a biocentric point of view and not only an anthropocentric one?

With this perspective, my main field of interest focuses on the relationship between environmental design disciplines and artistic practices, and how this connection can be a means of establishing dialogues between natural habitats and society. Throughout this article, I will examine how, through nature-based approaches, I intend to establish artistic narratives for relating people and environment by exploring new aspects to redefine the boundaries between natural habitats and humankind by creating sensitive interventions that leave spaces for new encounters. This article provides a broader

1 *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (2 ed.), 2006, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>.

2 Council of Europe, *European Landscape Convention*, „European Treaty Series”, no 176, 2000.

3 M.P. Choudhary, G.S. Chauhan, Y.K. Kushwah, *Environmental Degradation. Causes, Impacts and Mitigation*, [in:] *National Seminar on Recent Advancements in Protection of Environment and its Management Issues*, Kota, Rajasthan 2015.

4 M.P. Choudhary, G.S. Chauhan, Y.K. Kushwah, *Environmental Degradation...*

understanding of these ideas, exemplified through a series of site-specific interventions examining how art-design practice, in connection with nature and perceptual experience, could provide a conceptual framework to intervene in specific cases.

Nature-based approach

Current artistic practices focused on nature-based approach as a main input are mainly centered on the premise of -learning from nature-. According to environmental sound composer Frederick Bianchi, “artists have always been drawn to the principles of design and structure inherent in nature”⁵. When considering how to interact within nature and how to intervene in a particular landscape, it is essential to perceive and understand the natural environment from a holistic point of view. To emphasise its natural dynamics and be sensitive to the tangible and intangible factors that are part of its essence. To learn from its biological and physical processes as the best medium to create a dialogue with it, without trying to modify or control its biological dynamics or spontaneity. On the contrary, we should try to let nature perform its own role, as a living and interconnected organism in constant evolution, of which the human being is only a part. To understand its natural cycles and its self-regenerating essence. To be sensitive to its rhythm, sonority, plasticity and temporality. To understand natural phenomena as part of its essence and complexity. To be perceptible to its transitory and seasonal changes, because nature grows, rests and regenerates itself. To understand the temperament of nature, which expresses itself in different ways, at moments of complete calm or at times when it expresses its sheer strength and impetuosity, because natural phenomena underline the power of nature over human beings. To understand the role and significance of each ecosystem and how it functions as part of an interconnected and unified whole. To understand that each element or organism that conforms our environment, regardless of its scale, micro or macro, is a fundamental part of the natural balance, part of a whole, and how each of them adapts and interacts according to the conditions of its own environment.

When thinking about designing something within nature, it may be useful to consider new approaches based on sensitiveness, empathy and reciprocity, replacing existing models based only on the human being as a central figure: approaches that underline the essence of nature in order to promote a positive impact on the natural environment while at the same time providing benefits to local communities.

5 *Environmental Sound Artists: In Their Own Words*, ed. F. Bianchi, Oxford University Press, USA 2016.

Perceptual approximation. Sensory Landscapes

The body is our general medium for having a world (Maurice Merleau-Ponty)⁶

Sensory Landscapes is an approach to research developed within my artistic practice. It aims to raise awareness of, explore and understand the natural and human-made environment based on the conception and results of artistic design processes derived from perceptions and experiences. The aim of this approach is to develop a broader comprehension of landscape and new approaches to it, using diverse processes that appeal to different senses and increase people's awareness of the environment by exploring human perceptions. This approach also aims to increase bodily experience and natural environment awareness by using perceptions as a method of approaching the context, connecting concepts that transform different aspects of sense into experiences: smells, textures, tastes, sounds, scenes. The research is linked by a guiding thread that intertwines textures, smells, sounds, tastes, scenes and other perceptive landscapes.

Conductive thread: Cartography of senses

During the process, a conductive thread weaves intertwines geographical areas with the sensory experience of touching, smelling, observing, tasting and listening.

- Soundscapes: the acoustics of natural and urban environments.
- Tastescapes: productive landscapes, urban agricultures and gastronomic landscapes.
- Scentscapes: Cultural and natural smellscapes. The sense of smell as an evocative connection associated with space, memory and experience.
- Hapticscapes: The experience of touching and feeling temperatures.
- Visualscapes: The visual perception. Scenery and time and the cyclic sense of time and nature.



Fig. 1. *Body-nature-senses*, Ivan Juarez.

Theory and praxis

According to different studies on the use of senses in artistic environmental practices, and how this approach has become a conceptual frame for intervening in the cultural and natural environment, researchers, theoreticians and practitioners have provided important contributions to this connection. A body of literature is based on the association between perceptual experience and site approximation and how these concepts have contributed as a theoretical framework to explore a meaningful approach to artistic- design practice and as an essential step towards the development of discipline. The following paragraphs examine concepts related to the notion of place: Pope (1731), Heidegger (1971), Norberg-Schulz (1980) i Lynch (1960). They also examine ideas based on tangible and intangible landscapes in connection to the sensory characteristics of site: Pallasmaa (2005), Careri (2013), Hedfors (2003), Ingold (2007), Porteus (1985), Gordon, L.J. (2018), Tolaas (2009).

Site approximation: The Genius Loci. Sense of Place

Place is a centre of meaning constructed by experience (Yi-Fu Tuan)⁷.

Site-approaching is closely connected to the essence, character or atmosphere of a particular location. To the notion of the *spirit of the place*, which is mainly known as the *genius loci*. The initial notion genius loci in landscape design came in the eighteenth century, when romantic writers, inspired by the Picturesque style, developed a new aesthetic appreciation of landscapes⁸. The English poet Alexander Pope introduced the Latin term meaning -the genius of the place- as an essential value in garden design. In his verse - Epistle IV, to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington - he suggests the commitment of the architect to be sensitive to the unique qualities of the place. He also asserts that

[...] gardening must be adapted to the context in which it is located, in terms of architecture and gardening [...] and everything must be adapted to the genius of the place, and [...] beauties not forced into it, but resulting from it⁹.

In the twentieth century, the term *genius loci* was associated with the concept of place-making, initiated from the philosophical discourse of -phenomenology of place-. According to Elie Haddad, a researcher from the Lebanese American University, the phenomenological perception in architectural theory used the later writings of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger as its main reference point, particularly the series of essays: *On the Essence of Truth, The Origin of the Work of Art, and Building, Dwelling, Thinking*¹⁰. At the end of the twentieth century, inspired by Heidegger's writings and the structuralist studies of semiotics, sociology and psychology, Christian Norberg-Schulz in his

7 Y.-F. Tuan, *Place. An experiential perspective*, „The Geographical Review”, 65 (1975), no 2, p. 151.

8 G. Jivén, P.J. Larkham, *Sense of Place, Authenticity and Character. A Commentary*, „Journal of Urban Design”, 8 (2003), nr 1, pp. 67–81.

9 A. Pope, *Epistle IV, to Richard Boyle Earl of Burlington*, 1731, pp. 57–60.

10 E.G. Haddad, *Christian Norberg Schulz and the Project of Phenomenology in Architecture*, „Architecture Theory Review”, 15 (2010), no 1, pp. 88–101.

book, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, introduces the concept -spirit of the place-, suggesting that the meaning of this term must be understood before being developed. For the historian and theoretician Norberg-Schulz, it is essential to comprehend the landscape-related concepts of order, character, light, configuration and location¹¹.

Soundscapes. Listening landscapes

Sound is invisible but has the power to change the space characteristics we occupy (J. Schulz-Dornburg)¹².

While sound has not received significant emphasis, compared to vision, in the perception of place, it performs a fundamental part in an individual's notion of landscape. This field explores concepts that have contributed to the understanding of the discipline in the field of sound and acoustics. According to landscape architects Eckehard Pistrick and Cyril Isnart, in their article *Landscapes, soundscapes, mindscapes*, the interconnection between sound and place suggests that sounds actively take part in the meaning of the spatial-temporal environment¹³. As Pistrick and Isnart, stated: the term of soundscape was first created by R. Murray Schafer. In his book *The Tuning of the World* (1977)¹⁴ Schafer describes the soundscape as any acoustic field of study; it may be a musical composition or an acoustic environment. For Pistrick and Isnart „the most noticeable study on the relationship between landscape architecture and soundscape is Hedfors's thesis «Site Soundscapes: landscape architecture in the light of sound»"¹⁵. In his thesis, Hedfors analyses sound in a landscape architecture context. He proposes a theoretical instrument, named *The model of prominence* as a starting point for landscape perception¹⁶.

Even though acoustic space does not have specific boundaries and is less precise in terms of orientation and localization¹⁷, auditory perception is considered a vital sense for perceiving the environment through spatial experience. According to British anthropologist Tim Ingold, who is interested in environmental perception, sound should be considered as a phenomenon medium of experience in which we are immersed¹⁸.

11 Ch. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, New York 1980.

12 J. Schulz-Dornburg, *Art and Architecture. New Affinities*, Barcelona 2000.

13 E. Pistrick, C. Isnart, *Landscapes, soundscapes, mindscapes. Introduction*, „Etnográfica. Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia”, vol. 17 (2013), no 3, pp. 503–513, <http://etnografica.revues.org/3213> [accessed: 16/04/2016].

14 E. Pistrick, C. Isnart, *Landscapes, soundscapes, mindscapes. Introduction*.

15 E. Pistrick, C. Isnart, *Landscapes, soundscapes, mindscapes. Introduction*.

16 P. Hedfors, *Site Soundscapes. Landscape architecture in the light of sound*, PhD Thesis dissertation, Uppsala 2003.

17 J.D. Porteous, *Environmental aesthetics: ideas, politics and planning* Routledge Academic, London 1996, p. 33.

18 T. Ingold, *Against soundscape*, [in:] *Autumn Leaves: Sound and the Environment in Artistic Practice*, ed. E. Carlyle, Paris 2007, pp.10–13.



Fig. 2. *Sound mappings*, Odra river, Wrocław, Poland, photographs: Ivan Juarez.

Smellscape and scentscape experience

The nostrils awake a forgotten image and fall into a vivid dream. The nose makes the eyes remember (J. Pallasmaa)¹⁹.

Intangible landscapes are particularly defined by scents, providing significant information on micro and macro aspects of our environment. By discussing this topic, I intend to explore the human sense of smell as an intangible connection to landscape which is closely associated with emotion, memory and orientation. Ethereal landscapes that highlight the olfactory experience. Based on the concept -smellscape-, cultural geographer Douglas Porteus explores the emotional effects associated with place and time and the importance of this sense for cultural landscape identity. He asserts “The smellscape is an emotive environment, not an intellectual one, and, as such, it should be cherished”²⁰. In his opinion, smellscape is “fragmentary in space and episodic in time”²¹. For the Norwegian contemporary artist Sissel Tolaas “smell is the first sense through which we interact with the world and react to it. We smell before we see”²². For her “smells are very closely associated with personal and group

19 J. Pallasmaa, *The eyes of the Skin. Architecture and the Senses*, Wiley Academy, Great Britain 1994.

20 J. D. Porteous, *Smellscape. Progress in Physical Geography*, „Earth and Environment”, 9 (1985), pp. 356–378.

21 J. D. Porteous, *Smellscape...*

22 S. Tolaas, *The city from the perspective of the nose*, [in:] *Ecological Urbanism*, ed. M. Mostafavi, G. Doherty, Zürich 2009, pp. 37–38.

identity”²³. In the book chapter titled *The city from the Perspective of the Nose*, Tolaas has reviewed how people and designers can learn and discover new codes, methods and interactions through smell-related environments. In her research project -Talking Nose_Mexico City-, based on smell as a medium for navigating through the city, she concludes that the study of smells provides additional dimensions to understanding our cities. Smell enriches sensual experience by providing inputs for environmental design²⁴.

Tactile landscapes and haptic environments

The hands want to see, the eyes want to caress (W. Goethe)²⁵.

Surfaces, textures and materials transmit a complex language that can suggest emotional responses. Concerning tactile experience as a significant source of spatial and place connection, the Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa defines touch as “the sensory mode which integrates our experience of the world and of ourselves”²⁶. Pallasmaa has developed an extensive body of literature on the significance of touch as a bodily and emotional expression. In his writings *Hapticity and Time* (2005) and *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (1994) he reflects on the significance of the haptic sense in spatial disciplines and how “all the senses, including vision, are extensions of the sense of touch”. In his opinion, “senses are specialisations of the skin, and all sensory experiences are related to tactility”²⁷.

According to research studies from Takehito Kikuchi, from the University of Oita in Japan, it is essential to recognise the importance of the foot sense for the environmental identification²⁸. From a complementary point of view, in accordance with the Health site, walking on natural textures can stimulate body areas, helping the human being to stay healthy in body and mind and, consequently, there are positive reasons to perform this activity: it connects to the Earth, stimulates the senses and the whole body, calms the mind and neutralises electrical energy²⁹.

Natural textures and surfaces also transmit positive haptic perceptions, and through them it is possible to perceive patterns, spots, cracks, stripes or lumps. This area also examines the positive relationship between tactile perception with natural phenomena such as fog, wind, rain or weather, and its connection with natural elements, such as water, leaves, barks or trees. What does a plant leaf feel like? Is it smooth? hard or soft?, warm or cold?, wet or dry?

23 S. Tolaas, *The city from the perspective of the nose*.

24 S. Tolaas, *The city from the perspective of the nose*.

25 J.W. Goethe, *Römische Elegien V*, 1790–1795.

26 J. Pallasmaa, *Hapticity and Time. Notes on Fragile Architecture*, „Architectural Review”, 207 (2000), pp. 78–84.

27 J. Pallasmaa, *The eyes of the Skin. Architecture and the Senses*.

28 T. Kikuchi, *Contribution of senses of foot for identification of shape, elasticity and tilt angle of ground*, [w:] *23rd International Conference on Artificial Reality and Telexistence (ICAT)*, Tokio 2013, pp. 61–66.

29 Health site, thehealthsite.com.



Fig. 3. Trees barks, Wrocław, Poland, photographs: Ivan Juarez.

Landscapes of taste

This theme explores interactions between people, food and landscapes, and focuses on searching dialogues between gustatory perception and the landscape concepts of -productive landscapes, urban agriculture, site food production, local gastronomy, food systems and gastronomical landscapes-. The research also highlights the importance of finding connections between agricultural practices and artistic strategies to redefine the boundaries between community and productive landscapes within contemporary life. On this topic, landscape architects Andre Viljoen, Joe Howe and Katrin Bohn examine the value of urban agricultures, highlighting farming values integrated inside the edible city in their book *Continuous Productive Urban Landscape* (CPUL). They also propose a series of strategies to reinforce the importance of this activity by implementing community models of environmentally sustainable urban living³⁰.

On the other hand, local food and gastronomy are key concepts for the definition of cultural landscape identity, human health and sustainable environment. On this theme, Dr. Line Gordon, director of the Stockholm Resilience Center³¹ and board of directors of the EAT Foundation, a science-based global platform for food system transformation³², conducts innovative research focused on -gastronomic landscapes-. In order to find connections and sensory narratives on this specific subject, Gordon investigates local food practices that emphasise the role of seasonality, ecological practices, land-use models and local biological-cultural heritage.

30 A. Viljoen, K. Howe, *Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes (CPULs): Designing Urban Agriculture for Sustainable Cities*, Architectural Press, UK 2005.

31 <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/>.

32 eatforum.org.

Visual landscapes: scenery and time

The Art of Seeing. It is essential to an architect to know how to see: I mean, to see in such a way that the vision is not overpowered by rational analysis (Luis Barragan)³³.

This approach is focused on the way of seeing landscapes. It is based on how the cyclical sense of time and seasonal change suggest a temporal process to observe the environment. Using this approach, connections between the visual sense and the environment are explored, as a symbiotic relationship, with a view to understanding landscape scenarios. This field also provides an insight into visual approaches to landscape visual, focusing on the notions of scenery and close-up view, in which the value of an individual part is highlighted to emphasise the whole pattern.



Fig. 4. Trees seasonality, Wrocław, Poland, photographs: Ivan Juarez.

According to Karanika Myrto, a researcher from the Royal College of Art “spatial experience is a synthesis of all of our senses, and in the modern perception of the approach to sensory issues, vision has been the dominant sense”³⁴. On the other hand, Dr. Yi-Fu Tuan, professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, asserts:

[...] with taste, smell, and touch, we feel as though we are simply registering sensations provoked by external stimuli. With hearing, and particularly with seeing, we seem to be actively exploring the world beyond us and getting to know it objectively³⁵.

In his opinion, seeing is thinking, in the sense that it is a discerning and constructive activity; it creates patterns of reality adapted to human purposes³⁶.

33 L. Barragan, *Pritzker Prize Acceptance Letter*, The Pritzker Architecture Prize, 1980, The Hyatt Foundation, http://www.pritzkerprize.com/.../1980_Acceptance_Speech [accessed:15/11/2021].

34 M. Karanika, *Haptic Space and Bodily Expressions. A Bi-directional Relation of Affect*, [in:] *Symposium on Mental States, Emotions and their Embodiment The Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and Simulation of Behaviour (AISB) Convention, UK*, 2009 <http://www.aisb.org.uk/convention/.pdf> [accessed: 12/04/2016].

35 Y.-F. Tuan, *Place. An experiential perspective*, p. 151.

36 Y.-F. Tuan, *Place. An experiential perspective*, p. 151.

Seasonality and landscapes

According to the French gardener and writer Gilles Clément, who is professor at the National School of Landscape Architecture in Versailles, the main task of a gardener is to guide, maintain, enhance and interpret the spontaneous growth of the natural vegetation process without altering its natural cycles and dynamics. Since 1977, Gilles Clément has continuously applied his principle „Garden in Motion” in his own experimental garden – La Vallée. For him „the *Garden in Motion* is subject to the evolutionary process resulting from long term interaction”. This garden conception, based on seasonal variation and constant change, is essentially originated from the self-sowing and self-migration of vegetal species. For him, moving gardens should be not only visual, but tactile and olfactory. This design experience was first described by Clément in 1984 on his article *Mastering Neglected Land*, and subsequently developed as a theory, which was extended to other contexts and scales³⁷. A complementary time-based approach comes from the Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf, who also emphasises the seasonal life cycle of the vegetation in his compositions. Oudolf mainly uses perennial herbaceous plants and varieties of herbs for his plant designs. Through his gardening, he highlights the wide range of colors, the structural characteristics, and the changing interactions that the plants generate throughout the year. In his book *Planting Design: Gardens in Time and Space* he suggests a naturalistic ecologic garden approach as main principle for garden design, in which time and space are essential factors in creating changing rhythms and constant seasonal flows³⁸.

Research performed in the field of senses & landscapes

Based on concepts and practices explained previously, and along with my practice-research trajectory, I have developed a body of work focused on academic, artistic and cultural initiatives that explore diverse connotations associated with the human perception of landscape and site as well as on-site interventions exploring the integration of landscape concepts and natural cycles. This field of research includes the conception of a variety of site-specific works conceived in different contexts and geographies. A series of site-intervention projects in relation to people’s connection to locality that promote and integrate experience and nature-based processes. I have developed these concepts through a wide variety of projects, ranging from landscaping projects, ecological and site-specific interventions, public art engagement, place making, low-impact interventions and urban acupuncture in installations, body architectures, bio-sculptures, devices as well as handicrafts and objects.

37 G. Clément, *El jardín en movimiento*, Barcelona 2012.

38 P. Oudolf, N. Kingsbury, *Planting Design: Gardens in Time and Space*, Timber Press, UK, 2005.

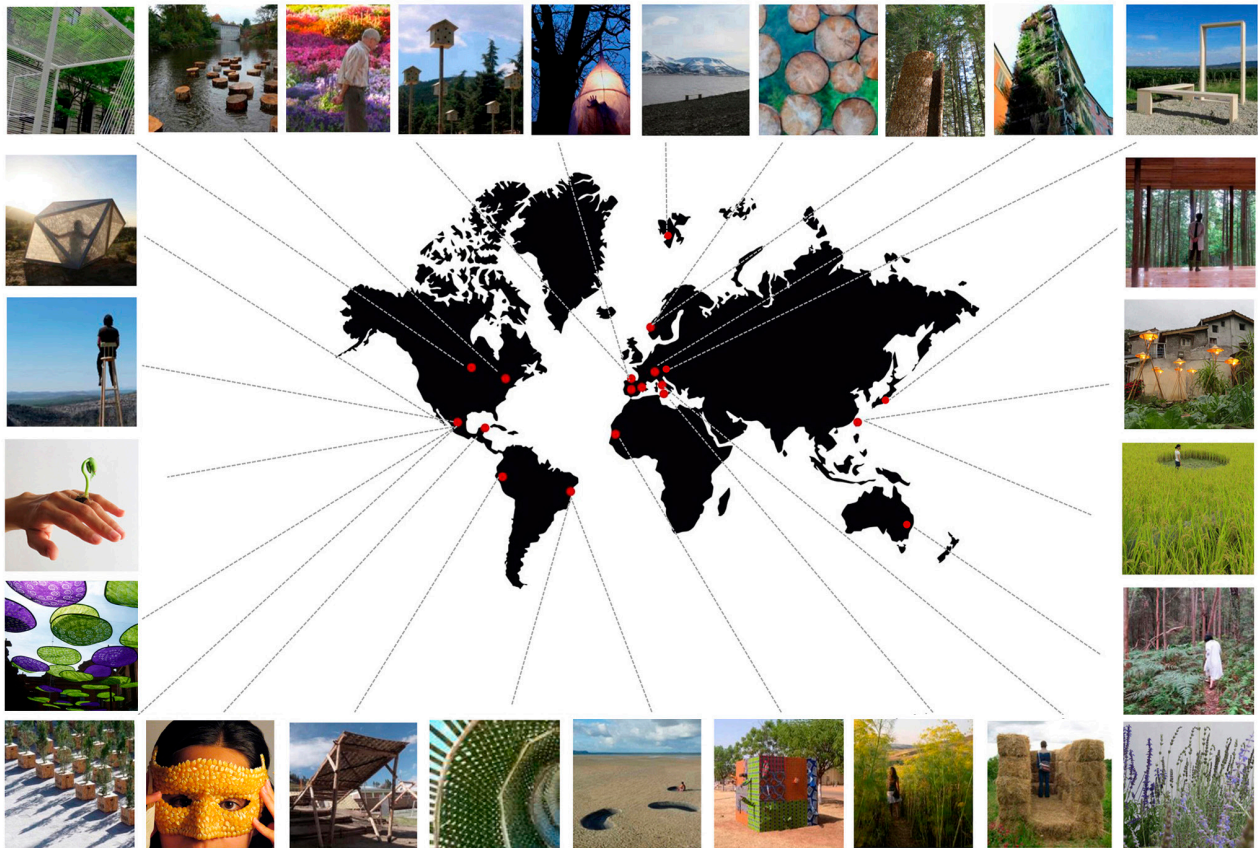


Fig. 5. Site-specific interventions, Ivan Juarez.

Multi-directional and dynamic research process

During the development of the research, I propose to carry out a process that is not necessarily linear, but multidirectional, intuitive and dynamic, in which each project can be ramified into different areas or narratives. New paths emerge from each experience, generating diverse explorations that can be integrated as gears in the body of work. The research integrates cross-disciplinary contributions and examines connections between theory, sensitive approaches and practice, by exploring diverse methods of searching – collecting, interpreting, experimenting, mapping or intervening.

Development of phases

Although the process is not necessarily linear and involves intuition as part of the creative process, in general terms, the phases in which I constantly elaborate site projects are developed through the following main steps:

- Developing main research questions and contextual framework
- Recognising the natural and cultural values and understanding how the environment functions
- Experiencing specific environments through sensorial perceptions and approaches to specific sites
- Interpreting the concepts that have been experienced and recognised through sensory art-design projects.

Artworks. Site-specific interventions

In order to provide a broader comprehension of the ideas mentioned previously and give examples of said ideas, I will briefly describe a series of artworks that have been developed in different landscapes. The examples described below explore and reinterpret specific sites in connection with bodily experience and in response to their physical context - in other words, site works that could not be generated in any other places than that where they were conceived and realised.

Soundscapes

Echoes from the sea, Mallorca, Spain. A sensory experience of the Mediterranean landscape

Based on the idea of listening to the symphony of the Mediterranean Sea, with its rhythms, musicality, and sonic ambience, this project proposes a new dialogue with the surrounding landscape through the sensory experience of hearing. The acoustic installation, as an instrument that plays sounds from nature, is located on a steep cliff on the east coast of the Island of Majorca, above the Mediterranean Sea. From the lime stones, the piece gives a sensitive notion to the natural environment, bringing a new perception to the marine context through bodily experience. In this way, the piece makes a connection to the ocean through its acoustic environment by amplifying the echoes from the sea; wind, birds, rain and breeze.

The acoustic device explores the use of a local material terracotta, a handmade resource that responds to the cultural environment of the island. The project has been implemented with the support of the Utzon Foundation³⁹ and the Danish Arts Foundation Committee for Architecture⁴⁰.

39 Utzon Foundation, <https://utzoncenter.dk/en/content/the-utzon-foundation-6136>.

40 Danish Arts Foundation Committee for Architecture, <https://www.kunst.dk/english/architecture-1>.



Fig. 6. Soundscapes, Mallorca, Spain, project and photograph: Ivan Juarez.

Sound Device. Body and sound, Granada, Hiszpania, Ivan Juarez and Francisco Manuel Diaz, luthier and guitar maker from Granada

Sound Device pays tribute to the musical heritage of Granada, a city recognised internationally for its extraordinary patrimony of guitar makers. The handmade guitar is a local craft of great tradition in Granada with important contributions to the Spanish and Flamenco musical instrument that has been transmitted over several generations. In this way, the piece pays homage to the cultural environment of the city by exploring new ways of bodily interaction, carrying an acoustic instrument. The piece proposes a new approach to the string instrument as a device related to the body, integrating sculpture and sound by exploring the auditive perception through corporal and tactile experience. The piece has been handmade using a process that applies the same techniques and materials used in the construction of the traditional guitar. The object has been made of Cypress wood from the Alhambra and Palo Santo wood. The work is meant to be a thought-reflecting invitation towards new dialogues between body and cultural intangible landscape.

The project is the result of co-operation between Francisco Manuel Diaz, a luthier and guitar maker from Granada and Ivan Juarez, as part of the cultural project -Handcrafters, Artists and Designers Meeting-, organised by the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Granada and the Albaycin Centre.

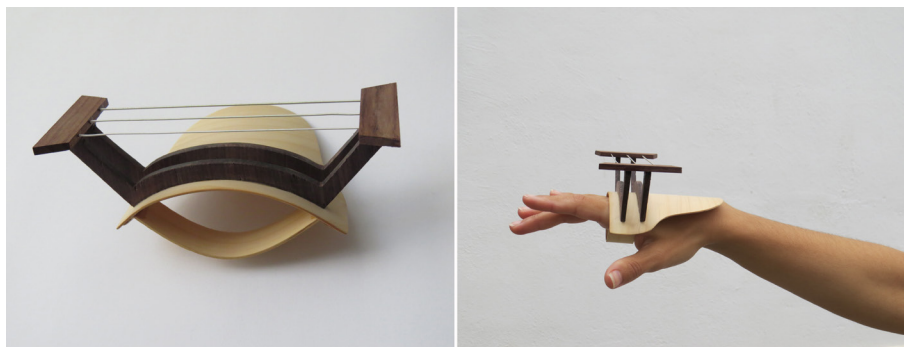


Fig. 7. *Sound device*, Granada, Hiszpania, artwork by Ivan Juarez and Francisco Diaz, photographs: Ivan Juarez.



Fig. 8. *La Alhambra*, Granada, Spain, Cultural heritage, photographs: Ivan Juarez.

Tascapes

Inner Rice Field, Kamiyama, Japonia

The natural scenery of Kamiyama village, located on Shikoku Island, Japan is characterised by a continuous dialogue between the forest, agricultural and water landscape. Over the centuries, the geography of this mountainous territory has been culturally modified, shaping a landscape of significant historical value. Its slopes and steep areas have been transformed into a landscape system of terraced rice (*tanada*⁴¹ in Japanese), in which the water, during its descent, performs an important role. This pays a tribute to the rice seed as an essential cereal in Japanese culture. At the same time, it also pays a tribute to the agricultural activity of rice farming which has been common practice in Japan for thousands of years, emphasising the importance of this agricultural activity and the cultural and symbolic landscape that it generates.

The intervention was conceived during the autumn, a fundamental harvest season, when the terraced rice fields change their colors into bright golden tones. The intervention creates a void made from the action of harvesting, a circular inner space that represents the natural cycle and from which it is possible to contemplate the scenery of the landscape.

The action was carried out in co-operation with local farmers of Kamiyama, with the support of the KAIR Kamiyama Cultural Association⁴².

41 Tanada, 棚田, <https://www.japanese-wiki-corpus.org/history/Tanada.html>.

42 KAIR, in Kamiyama. <https://www.in-kamiyama.jp/en/en/art/kair/>.



Fig. 9. *Inner Rice Field*, Kamiyama, Japan, artwork and photographs: Ivan Juarez.

Scentscapes*Aromatic & Pollinator garden, Farm Cultural Park, Favara, Sicily, Italy*

Conceived as a tribute to the Mediterranean landscape, this site-specific intervention was located in a public outdoor space in Farm Cultural Park, a cultural complex located in the Sette Cortili (Seven Courtyards) neighborhood of the town of Favara in Sicily. Farm Cultural Park⁴³ is a community model that in recent years has positively transformed the urban and social fabric through artistic and cultural projects, where the inhabitants co-exist among terraces, patios, squares and gardens in connection with public art works, murals, exhibition spaces and educational institutions such as the School of Architecture for Children.

The garden intervention recovers an ancient disused terrace and gives a new meaning to this place by providing a collection of plants that represent the heritage of the Mediterranean culture. The installation proposes an olfactory and pollinator area where the fragrances of various aromatic plants are mixed: lavender, thyme, rosemary, peroska, sage and mints - natural fragrances that attract diverse species of bees, butterflies and other insects by activating scent experience and memory. In this way, the project serves as an interactive and experiential space that appeals to the diversity of plant and animal life in urban habitats by activating different senses.

43 Farm Cultural Park, <https://www.farmculturalpark.com/>.

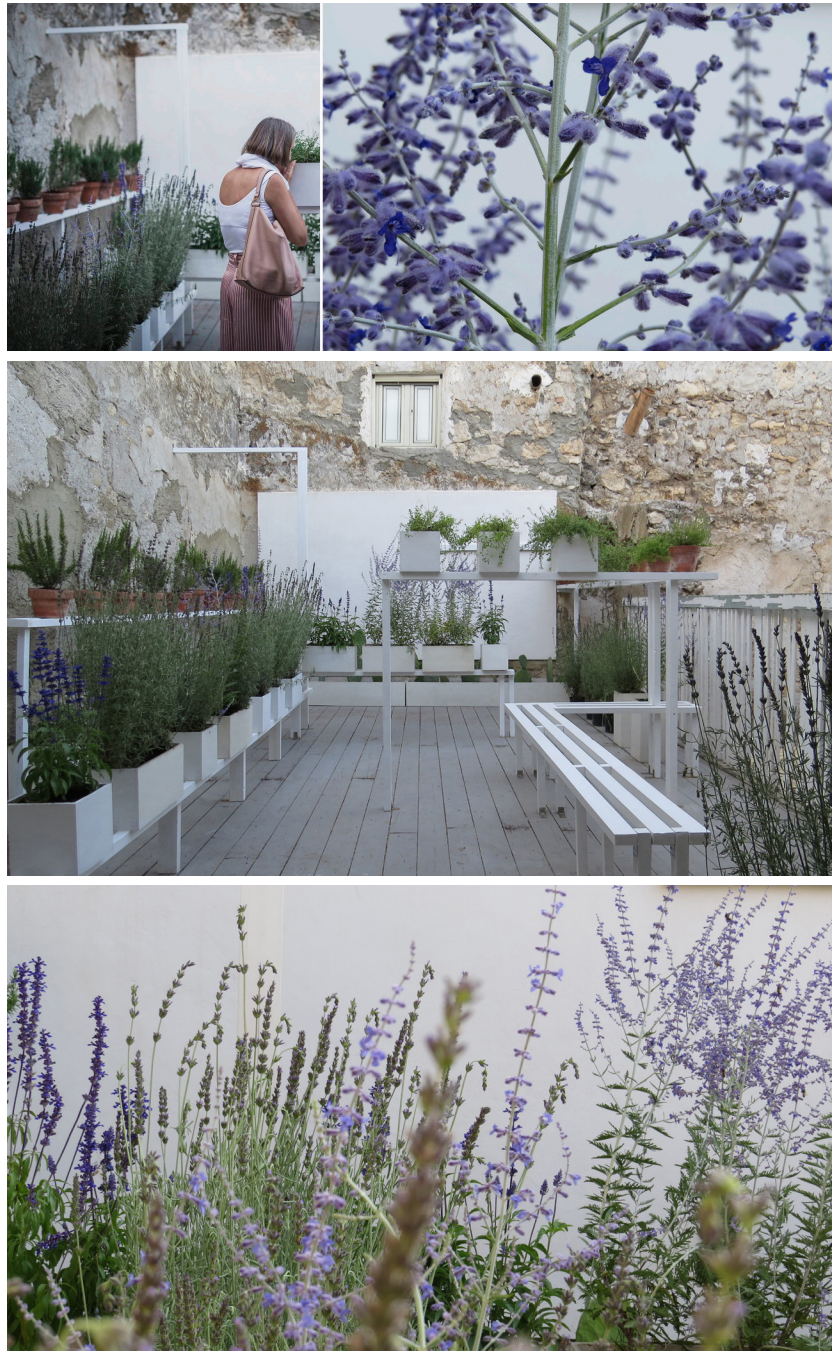


Fig. 10. *Pollinator space*, Farm Cultural Park, Favara, Sicily, Italy, artwork and photographs: Ivan Juarez.

Hapticscapes

Traces. Unveiling surfaces, Jørn Utzon's Can Lis House, Mallorca, Spain

Can Lis house⁴⁴ conceived by Danish architect Jørn Utzon in 1971, describes the expressive potential of materials to interpret the varied coastal landscapes of Majorca and vernacular details and building solutions that can be found in the local culture, in the stables and farmhouses spread throughout the island's countryside.

This is series of drawings that examine the significance of touching materials as a bodily experience. Traces from haptic surfaces are used as a poetic language to reflect how time passes and raise awareness of deterioration caused by exposure to the ocean. Rain, salty wind or sunlight; temperature and climate; natural factors that give the house a kind of sensitive materiality.

The drawings pay homage to the dialogue between time, matter and the Mediterranean landscape of Majorca. Drawing as an experience that unveils diverse tactile qualities -carving patterns, cavities, impurities, corrosion- or the direct traces of production, preserving the marks left by the process of fabricating tools.

It is a series of traces used as textural transcriptions in which the haptic perception of the hands explores tectonics, matter and diverse states: smooth, rough, soft, sharp, cold, warm. The materials express various perceptual properties: the warm, porous and rough surfaces of the Marès sandstone, used for exterior walls and pillars; Santanyi limestone on the beige color range; porous and denser for the house floor; or the warm-gray, cool-silver gray and reddish colors with perceptible year rings from Madera Norte, a Majorcan pinewood used for wooden doors.

The series of drawings have been made with various materials, such as graphite and charcoal from a pine tree, burnt by thunderstorm lightning, located in the surroundings of the house.

The project was implemented with the support of the Utzon Foundation and the Danish Arts Foundation Committee for Architecture.

44 Utzon Center, Can Lis house, <http://utzoncenter.dk/en/content/can-lis> [accessed: 17.11.2021].



Fig. 11. *Traces. Unveiling surfaces*, Jørn Utzon's Can Lis House, Mallorca, Spain, artwork and photographs: Ivan Juárez.

Visualscapes

Sky-Cabin, Pyrenees, Andorra

The Pyrenees mountain range, in the principality of Andorra, embraces a complex landscape of forests, high mountains and hilly meadows, with diverse landforms and distinctive natural and cultural values. The site intervention *Sky-Cabin* pays homage to this landscape, as well as the medieval chapels and mountain shelters. Pyrenean rural architecture is characterised by small and simple constructions that form a kind of dialogue with the natural environment.

The *Sky-Cabin* is located on the eastern slopes of Coma Pedrosa, the highest mountain in Andorra. This intervention emerges from the horizon through a wooden enclosure that absorbs the beholder into the landscape of the Pyrenees, directing his or her gaze towards a fragment of the sky. From the inside, this frames and creates a scenery as well as an inner space of light and shadow where the atmosphere transforms constantly: a different sky color for every moment and a unique experience for each person. The intervention seeks to create a place for self-reflection by expanding the limits of the space through people's sensory experiences. From the inside, it is possible to hear the surrounding landscape and recognise the symphony of the mountain forest that adds soundscapes to the site.



Fig. 12. *Sky-Cabin*, Pyrenees, Andorra, exterior and interior view, project and photographs: Ivan Juarez.

Final thoughts / Summary

The purpose of the concepts, experiences, processes and examples described above, which highlight the connection between perceptual experience and approaches to given sites, is to raise awareness of and promote open dialogues between artistic practice and landscapes. From diverse experiences developed throughout my artistic practice, which have been enriched and inspired by the vision of various theorists and practitioners, this article does not exactly provide answers to any questions; instead, it proposes a series of reflections on how to form a dialogue with our landscape by being receptive to it as we explore our senses. The creative research process emphasises the importance of how, since its conception, the artistic project should be closely joined to its surroundings, developing a connection with the landscape by exploring natural cycles, local knowledge, materials and techniques. In this way, the site work interacts with the environment, generating new forms of co-existence. With this in mind, *Sensory Landscapes* seeks to explore sensitive forms of co-existence between human beings and nature by promoting artistic attitudes to environmental issues. This raises a series of questions as to how the phenomenological approach could become an artistic design medium to understand and intervene in the cultural and natural environment, and how we can shape our reflections, concepts and attitudes towards reflective thinking and practice.

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SCREEN WINDOWS – ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON THE ARCHITECTURAL ROLE OF SEAMLESS SCREENS IN PUBLIC INTERIORS

Art research paper

Translation PL-EN: Ireneusz Sojka, MA

Contents

The screen window as part of the structure and
interior space 109

The use of screen windows – the social dimen-
sion 114

Conclusion 119

References 121

Abstract

Multidisciplinarity in interior design is no longer only a commonplace but also a necessity. Digital technology, which is in the daily use of the information society, affects the way of designing contemporary interiors, their mental perception and the aesthetic and functional requirements set for them. It is difficult to find an interior without a screen or display today, and these are increasingly becoming a conscious tool, a means of creation in the hands of interior designers, especially in the field of public spaces. This article presents academic research and student projects on the problem of the deliberate use of screens as contemporary windows, their involvement in a compositional game in which screens are openings to another space in the architectural sense. They open the solids and transmit the exterior. The aspect of changes in the social perception of the interior using seamless screens, emitting images adapted to the interior category, expanding the usability and creation of the rooms, was also discussed. Ten student projects were presented, created as part of one research project, proposing different applications of seamless screens, defining their new roles in the creation of specific public spaces. This collection of ideas is a proposal for a change in the treatment of screens as elements of interior furnishings in favor of treating them as one of the integral parts of the architectural composition.

Keywords

screen window, multimedia interiors, seamless screens, academic research, screens in interiors

The screen window as part of the structure and interior space

Seamless screens are increasingly often hosted in public spaces, fulfilling various information and advertising functions, and among them one can distinguish one specific utilitarian and compositional value: the role of the window. This specific treatment of the screen has its own separate characteristics, predispositions and technical requirements. It is a continuation of the architectural idea of combining the interior and exterior spaces, although the external space in this case does not have to be adjacent to the building, and even does not have to be a real space. Increasingly, the screen is treated as a significant part of the architectural composition, not only an element of interior design, but consciously used visual opening of rooms, intentional building blocks of interior architecture, active and glowing planes taken into account from the beginning of conceptual work.

The window is an inseparable element of contemporary architecture: starting from modernism, often so extensive that it takes over the façades of buildings completely. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret list

horizontal windows among the five points of new architecture. Together with the ceilings, the supports form a rectangular system of openings in the façade through which light and air can travel. The window extends from one support to the other and thus becomes a horizontal window. Unnatural, vertical windows consistently disappear, as do unpleasant posts. In this way, the room is evenly lit, from wall to wall¹.

A similar evolution, although of a different origin, can be observed in the applications of screens in interiors. From a small window of the CRT TV set, the screen has transformed into a luminous material covering entire walls, opening ceilings or floors, an element of active lighting replacing ambient light. The current prevalence of displays and the accustomedness to the information they emit give rise to a new mental perception of the screen. It now seems to make better contact with architecture. It is a part of the overall relations of the interior and not a hegemonic point of concentration of attention as in previous decades. Since the idea of an opening in the wall, the window has also mediated human contact with nature, introduced an extremely important psychological aspect into the interior: living according to the seasons of the day and year and the vegetation of the natural world. In urbanized urban agglomerations it is not always possible to provide the desired views from the windows or any visual contact with open space and nature. On-screen windows then become a justified alternative, a way to move a view from anywhere, importing attractive and cropped landscapes, selected for the composition and specific needs of the interior and the user.

The research project carried out by the E. Geppert Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław in cooperation with SLX, a company specializing in audiovisual systems, was aimed at analyzing possible and future

1 Le Corbusier, P. Jeanneret, *Five Points for a New Architecture*, [in:] *Bau und Wohnen*, Stuttgart 1927, transl. Łukasz Stępnik, <http://teoriaarchitektury.blogspot.com/2011/02/le-corbusier-i-pierre-jeanneret-piec.html>.

applications of seamless screen walls, understood strictly as windows to another existing space, as visual openings in the structure of architecture.

The taking over the role of the window by the screen plane puts a number of guidelines that authenticate the viewer's realistic impression, such as the compatibility of the perspective and scale of the image with the interior, the fixed point of the camera, proper lighting, limiting the emission of information to the pieces that we associate with the view through the window, the location of the screen in the compositional place of the interior, where you can expect an opening, and other functionalities of the window, such as the ability to preview a given space in real time. It should be noted that these are completely different tasks in relation to a TV, information or advertising monitor, also different than any interface or touch screen.

As an example of this difference, let us use the design concept of the interiors of the foreign language school by Julia Jeziorna, where the screens connect the common spaces of several branches of the school located in different countries (Fig.1).



Fig. 1: Foreign language schools designed by Julia Jeziorna.

Screens in this space allow you to observe a distant, but twin, situation and establish international social contacts between students. Young people in the recreation areas can communicate in different languages with adjacent tables displayed on screens. We have other zones here, for example communication zones, in which there can be a stop to the traffic or a cacophony of sound with many users, so the screen windows are deliberately devoid of sound. Paradoxically, this limitation enriches the forms of contact, because it encourages gestures, telephone contact in front of the screen or passing on social media addresses to one another. In less formal situations, a silent window can be as attractive in establishing contacts as the multimedia-rich teleconferencing technology.

An additional issue of the presented solution is the styling and material compatibility of the neighboring interiors. Well, large screens to a large extent transfer the action of forms, space and atmosphere of the room behind the screen window. One of the ways to integrally connect these rooms is a convergent range of compositional solutions or the use of identical equipment and colors. This gives an impression of coherence and even continuation of the interior space. The next step is to design both the interiors simultaneously to coordinate their mutual impact on each other through screen transmission, not only as the influence of adjacent interiors or the view outside the window is predicted in traditional architecture, but also using impossible assemblies, for example straight from Escher's architectural graphics² or endless extensions that completely change the character of the place, in other words: a collage of any telepresent spaces thanks to a global communication.

Such a distant transfer of space is taking place in Anna Aksamit's project, in which the author proposes a set of screens in the form of sliding wall modules, with direct transmission from a majestic spruce forest. The interior for relaxation provides the option of moving the screens along the black lines of the rails on the ceiling, i.e. the possibility of reconfiguring the planes surrounding the user with a beautiful view (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: The "Forest Room" by Anna Aksamit.

The optimal layout would assume the placement of four cameras facing the different directions of the world from one point in the forest, filming four panoramas of the same virgin place. On the other

2 M.C. Escher (1898 –1972), graphics *Convex and Concave*, 1955, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/pedrosimoes/739316167761>.

hand, moving the screen walls in the interior would recreate subsequent fragments of the forest, in accordance with the movement or rotation of the wall modules.

A similar dismemberment of the live landscape broadcast was used by Aleksandra Boska in her project of the mountain bike shop. In this case, the screens are to introduce an atmosphere of movement in the open air, slightly revive the technical and mechanical assortment of the store with the dynamics of adventure and images of what traveling cyclists interact with. The screens remind us of the essence for which the store's customers buy equipment displayed in adequate sections of the room (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: The bicycle shop by Aleksandra Boska.

Horizontal strips of seamless screens scattered around the interior present a shot from one wide-angle camera, filming a mountain bike trail, which ensures the consistency of movement of passing cyclists for the entire room and the sensational effect of the client's presence between the mixed spaces of the interior and the distant exterior. Significant in this project is the method of distributing transmissions into strips of seamless screens, breaking with the aspect ratio scheme of the TV screen, as well as high resolution, thanks to which the precision of imaging is not inferior to the precision of the bicycle components viewed.

The possibility of a complete change in the perception of the cubic capacity of a given space thanks to the screen window is best presented by Iryna Kulaha's design of the nightclub built in a reinforced concrete shelter from the Second World War. The shape of this military building is a cylinder completely devoid of windows, with walls over a meter thick and low floors making a claustrophobic impression. The screens used by the designer imitate a large arched window that shows a panoramic view of New York from a certain height and completely changes the perception of this interior. The object now seems to be an oval observation tower with a huge space open to the viewers, the lighter

because the view is reflected both in the water and in the mirrored ceiling of the interior. The strips of ceiling mirrors and lighting, repeating the roundness of the building, additionally create a visual openwork in the ceiling plane, which eliminates the impression of a large, low-hanging plane (Fig. 4).

In the first stages of the concept, the possibility of placing the camera on a high mast placed on the roof of the building and projecting the panorama of the city of Wrocław, which really surrounds the object, was considered. In this case, a change in only the ceiling of view would be combined with a certain unity of the place, the real environment of the building, closer to the spatial truth. However, the designer decided that the lack of transmission distance restrictions and the presentation from a more surprising location of the camera would be a greater experience for the club's guests and a sensation attracting new customers.

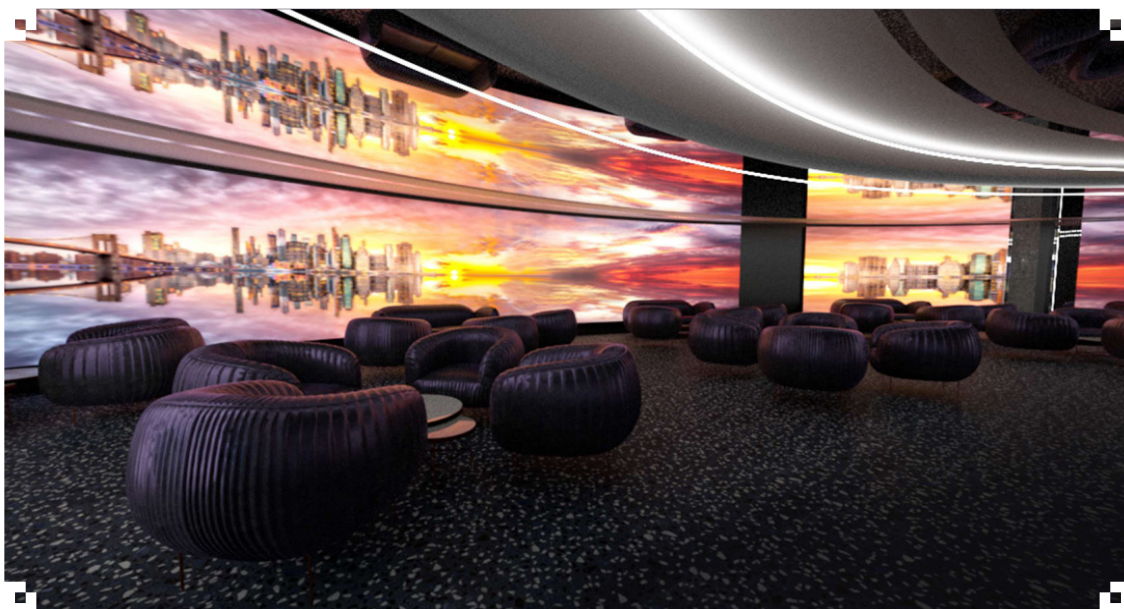


Fig. 4: The club in a former air raid shelter, designed by Iryna Kulaha.

The last example of the innovative use of the seamless screen system is the design of the restaurant with molecular cuisine and a demonstration preparation zone in the central part of the dining room. Designer Julia Hołoś noticed attractiveness of the molecular food preparation processes and decided to provide an opportunity to watch this spectacle to the entire clientele of the dining room. She blinded the circle of windows of the semicircular outer wall of the premises with screens and, in exchange for the view of the yard, she broadcast in real time the image from cameras placed in the canopy of the kitchen island. In this way, the screen windows provide both satisfactory information about the preparation of meals that will soon be served on the customers' tables, as well as diversify the space of the premises with appetizing views (Fig. 5).

A certain looping of the space is proposed in this solution: the moving of one part of the interior by means of screen transmission to another place of the same interior. The dynamics of the cook-scientist's activities, colors and graphic compositions created on plates are copied in parallel on the screens. The yellow color of the table top is a deliberate color dominant, repeating throughout the composition of the interior for consistency and accentuation of the main role of screen transmission in the arrangement. Other materials are the background, also in the case of walls covered with aluminum sheets crumpled like a sheet of paper, which will probably reflect the image of screen windows many times.

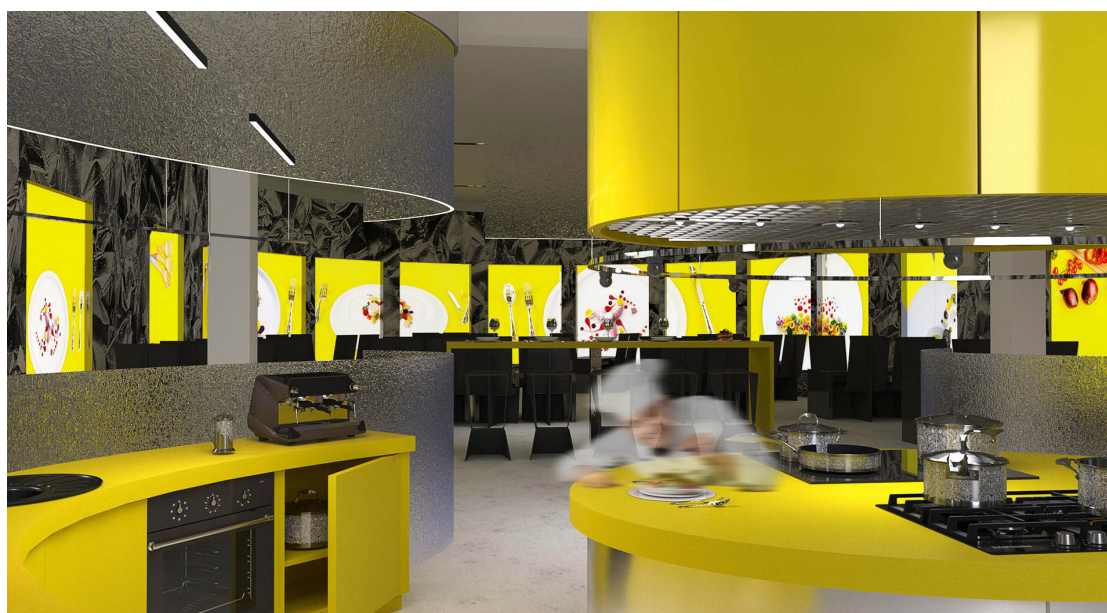


Fig. 5: The molecular restaurant by Julia Hołoś.

The use of screen windows – the social dimension

We are currently witnessing an intensified process of evolution of the role and understanding of multimedia techniques. Associations with innovation and innovative thought of designers proposing interiors containing ideas integrated with new technologies have become much more common. Multimedia communication has become the basis for creating social awareness. In addition to the obvious information motive, there is a need to create forms of entertainment, attractions in a world that, accepting an unexpected period of limitations, is still functioning, suppressing the basic needs necessary for the proper existence of humans.

Elliot Aronson, in his book “The Social Animal”, already 50 years ago argued that people are not passive containers for gathering information and that the way they receive and interpret information depends on how deeply they are involved³. The assumed verification of the perception of the

environment by a person gives consideration to the role assigned to multimedia. The acquisition of transmitted content should take place consciously, the required readiness to receive stimuli, depending on the situation and context, must be assumed to be voluntary.

According to Aristotle, “man is by nature a social animal and that one who does not partake of society is either a beast or a god.” We now have an opportunity to return to this proposition again, reflecting on how modern society seeks to remain united, where it seeks the means to return to cultural and social life at least half-heartedly.

On-screen interactive windows-images, which are increasingly becoming an attempt to satisfy cultural needs, needs of belonging, aesthetic and cognitive needs, have a chance to silence today’s insufficiencies and deficiencies of a person accustomed to a cosmopolitan lifestyle.



Fig. 6: The “Close to Nature” restaurant designed by Wiktoria Wieczorek.

The assumption aimed at meeting the cognitive need was adopted by Wiktoria Wieczorek who, in the restaurant by her design, transports guests to the Amazon forest (Fig. 6). The assumption that the space is complemented every day by a new set of unusual images gives the object an infinite possibility of aesthetic creations. The videos of exotic landscapes are complemented by sounds of virgin forests native to the “lungs of the Earth”. The natural materials used – wood, wicker, living plants – and harmonious colors harmonize with the character of the paintings surrounding the space. The name given to the restaurant, “Close to Nature”, clearly refers to the biggest deficiencies in everyday human life.

A kind of compensation for the lack of the possibility of traveling freely allows, to some extent, to satisfy the cognitive aspirations of man. At the same time, it is an accurate way to create a modern public space. A restaurant of this type, in addition to standard catering services, meets the aspirations of man, satisfying also higher needs.

The union of the human and the non-human with the bonds of technology is driving post-humanism towards trans-humanism. This discourse is based on the assumption that man as a species, by merging with technology, will achieve a higher degree of development both in the spiritual and physical domains⁴.

This claim of Katarzyna Nowaczyk-Basińska, a theatre and media expert, also refers to the role of multimedia in human self-improvement. There is a noticeable trend of directing new technologies to pioneering adaptations, while, at the same time, looking for an alternative role for them, more and more distant from the characteristics typical of the mass media. Students Paulina Smalec and Natalia Piksa, in their proposals to approach the subject, opened a clear correspondence with the opinion of Katarzyna Nowaczyk-Basińska, showing that modern technology currently has an invaluable impact on the physical and spiritual development of man.

Natalia Piksa proposes in her project, “The Mine Zone”, an unusual entertainment in the form of a visit to Polish mines where we can trace in detail the development of the domestic mining (Fig. 7). Although the information provided is of a scientific nature, the form of its transmission, developed based on historical sources, using large-format interconnected seamless screens, allows us to reach for inspiring knowledge without analyzing volumes of literature. Małgorzata Szabacik and Mariusz Ausz thoroughly examined the perspectives of this phenomenon, presenting them in the publication entitled “Multimedia and historical sources in teaching and research” where they highlight

a wide panorama of the possibilities offered by multimedia in historical education and archival work, as well as in the use of the latest IT capabilities, for various forms of sharing historical sources⁵.

4 K. Nowaczyk-Basińska, *Nieśmiertelność – nowy performans kulturowo-technologiczny XXI wieku*, [in:] *Technokultura. Transhumanizm i sztuka cyfrowa*, red. D. Gałuszka, G. Ptaszek, D. Żuchowska-Skiba, Kraków 2016, pp. 63–82.

5 M. Ausz, M. Szabaciuk, *Multimedia a źródła historyczne w nauczaniu i badaniach*, Lublin 2015.



Fig. 7: Educational “The Mine Zone” by Natalia Piksa.

“The Mine Zone” project, apart from the indisputable value of the historical message, gives each user an unusual opportunity to freely walk around selected mines. Selected screens corresponding with the cameras allow you to feel the character of an intriguing, dangerous space, which only a handful of people may actually access.

Also Paulina Smalec uses in her project screens as a medium for transferring knowledge (Fig. 8). The content is addressed to the youngest, proposing an educational center expanding children’s mathematical competences. The planes of seamless screens connected with one another lead to a virtual author’s world based on issues related to the “queen of sciences”. A broad approach to the topic and an offer to deepen the issues through various interactive games is a well-thought-out educational alternative and an interesting form of spending free time. The original aesthetics of the interiors of the premises located in the underground parts of a building boosts the effect of the innovative ideas in its futuristic structure

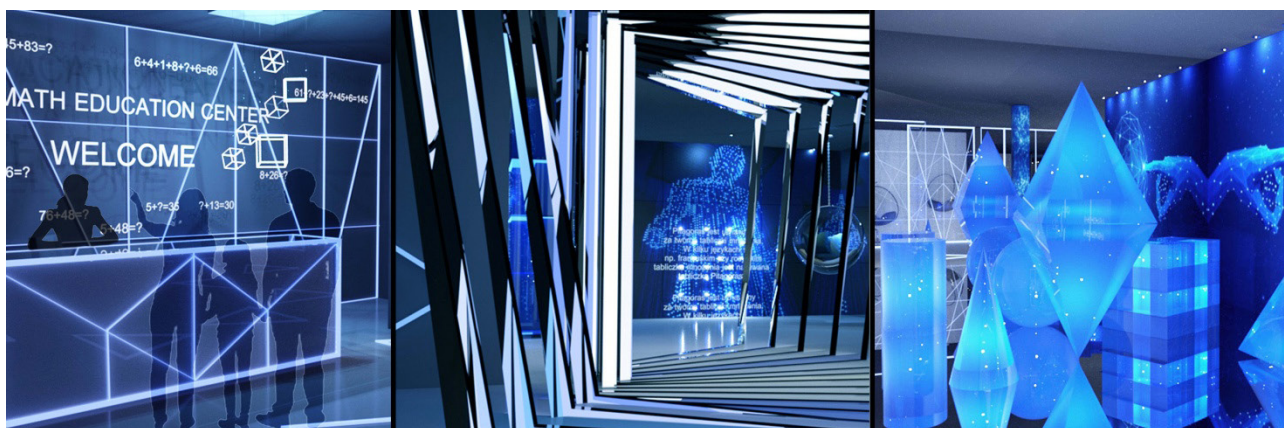


Fig. 8: The center for Mathematical Education by Paulina Smalec.

The evolutionary impact of the use of multimedia walls on human physical improvement is presented in her project by student Maria Błasiak (Fig. 9). Proposing a wellness center, she offers zones (a fitness room and a salt cave) in which windows created from screens allow you to combine stylized transmission with other facilities branded with this idea. Exercising and relaxing together with friends and acquaintances on the other side of the country or world could be a new form of effective spending of time without having to move physically. The offered concept also allows to avoid crowd, while maintaining a sense of belonging to a selected social group.



Fig. 9: The wellness zone by Maria Błasiak.

Services as an economic activity permanently connected with everyday human life in an accurate way have a chance to derive multidimensional benefits from the use of interactive windows, created by seamless screens.

A completely new concept presenting the use of screens in services is the version of a hairdressing salon where the illuminated are not intended to convey specific content (Fig. 10). The basic assumption of the author, Joanna Grzelińska, was to give the selected walls of the interior an active and variable virtual structure which, in an unobtrusive way, makes this form of spending time more attractive. Mesmerizing abstract shapes do not engage the recipient in a specific action. In this way, the assumptions presented in the project inspire a moment of casual relaxation, rest from everyday life and constant haste.



Fig. 10: The hairdressing salon for ladies by Joanna Grzełińska.

The intensification of the presence of multimedia technologies in our environment makes us aware of the ease with which we currently adapt it to various zones of everyday life.

“In everyday life, we are not yet able to blend so seamlessly with innovative technologies,”⁶ claimed a few years ago Drew Ayers who analyzed the situation in the world of technological novelties at that time. The scientist emphasized that man is able to identify with the virtual world only through film. Today’s situation clearly disproves this claim. Gradually, we accept the deepening dualism of the environment, getting rid of prejudice and distrust of the ever wider range and availability of technological facilities.

Conclusion

The presented examples show the undeniable potential of using seamless screens in interiors. Existing applications of the, not so new, technology will change and expand, mainly due to the decrease in device prices and the increase in the ease of access to any off-shelf screen package with ready-made software for individual customers. This fact means that screen windows are already within the reach of small entrepreneurs, but they have also found their way to design workshops of a large number of interior architects, creative designers with artistic imagination. The presented studio projects are forerunners of the flowering of the use of screens with surprising functions and unprecedented forms, for which manufacturers and designers will have to introduce new names in order to precisely define the

6 A. Drew, *Chimeras and Hybrids: The Digital Swarms of the Posthuman Image*, [in:] *The Palgrave Handbook of Posthumanism in Film and Television*, red. M. Hauskeller, T.D. Philbeck, C.D. Carbonell, Basingstoke 2015, pp. 99–108.

desired functions of screens in interiors, no longer only combining the interior with the exterior⁷. The screen window, thanks to its separate properties, deserves a separate definition, indicating its properties: transmission of another space, specific values for the architectural composition of the interior and intentionally limited and adapted to the room content and image convention.

The social context is significant, which is an important justification for the development of new technologies. The need to reorganize human relations and the change in the form of spending free time have contributed to the expansion of the spectrum of possibilities of screen windows. Society adopts pioneering initiatives with unprecedented openness, which motivates designers to look for new and increasingly more pioneering solutions.

It is worth to follow ideas of young designers because their imagination precedes social needs, the development of technology or changes in customs. It may happen that screen windows will become one of the arrangement standards, a material as popular as wall photo wallpapers or controlled LED lighting, but with much greater creative possibilities for the wide market of public interiors.

⁷ B. Jakubicki, *Wnętrza multimedialne – hybrydy miejsc i przestrzeni*, [in:] *Wnętrze – zewnątrz. Przestrzeń wspólna*, Wrocław 2019.

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LANDSCAPE-INSPIRED ARCHITECTURE - THREE DESIGN METHODS. FROM THE SERIES *FOUND IN THE LANDSCAPE*

Art research paper

Translation PL-EN: Rafal Michalski, MA

Contents

Introduction 125

The River Building 125

The house-tree 129

A pavilion or a hill? 132

Epilogue 136

Summary 138

References 139

Abstract

The third article in the series *Found in the Landscape* published in the „inAW Journal – Multidisciplinary Academic Magazine” presents the results of research on sources of inspiration by elements of nature in selected architectural projects. Buildings designed in the last decade by Japanese architectural offices have been characterized in terms of idea, structure, quality of architecture, taking into account the biophilic features described in the previous issue of the journal, as well as differentiated perceptions of users. As a result of the analysis of the above-mentioned features, three types of inspiration have been classified: referring to the external appearance, applying the principle of operation, and at the same time referring to and undermining the inherent features of the object of inspiration.

Keywords

inspired by nature, inspired by landscape, found in the landscape, Japanese architecture, SANAA, Sou Fujimoto, Junya Ishigami

Introduction

The research project „Found in the landscape – inconspicuous/desired – imagined spaces”, of which this article is a part, is based on the idea of finding micro-spaces in the landscape – spatial configurations and/or images from which other worlds emerge, or rather that encourage processing and creating imaginary spaces on their basis, which in turn are the beginning for further interpretations. Imaginary spaces will probably remain in the conceptual phase, while the architectural realizations described in the article, constituting the basis for the analysis of three design methods based on inspirations of nature, were in fact created as interpretations of specific features of nature, and are or were subject to the best judgment of users.

There are many architectural projects inspired by nature, which I wrote about in issue No. 1 of the „inAW Journal”¹. For the purposes of this article, designs from three Japanese architectural studios: SANAA, Sou Fujimoto and Junya Ishigami + Associates, realized across three continents have been selected. Each of them uses original means and methods, thanks to which the projects are completely different, despite a common resource of inspiration sources.

The River Building

In the affluent suburbs of New Canaan, Connecticut (USA), where Philip Johnson built his Glass House 65 years ago,

A little river flows and twists,

A shiny ribbon in the mists,

Here it glitters, there it fades,

A weaving brook between the glades².

The *River Building* designed by the Japanese architectural firm SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa and Associates) is blended into the undulating landscape of the estate belonging to the ecumenical Grace Farm foundation, flowing down the hill across a long, gentle slope in a series of bends, creating pond-like surfaces along the way³. Among the greenery of meadows and wetlands, architecture becomes a part of the landscape, it does not give the impression of a building with an area of almost 8,000 square meters located on the plot, with specific utility functions. On the contrary, it blends in with its surroundings, like other productions by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryūe Nishizawa, regardless of whether

1 J. Łapińska, *Odnalezione w krajobrazie – początek*, „inAW Journal – Multidisciplinary Academic Magazine”, 1 (2020), pp. 13–15, <https://system.inawjournal.pl/index.php/inaw/article/view/23/65>, [accessed: 27/11/2021].

2 Tuwim J., *Rzeczka*, Translation by Marek Kazmierski.

3 See: <https://gracefarms.org/river-components/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

they are located in the center of a metropolis, such as The New Contemporary Art Museum in New York, or in suburban green areas, as it is in the case of the described *River Building*.

The significant relationship between the designed objects and the location, as well as the inextricable relationship between the surroundings and the buildings, which they call „mountains in the landscape”, are a showcase of the Japanese architects⁴. Their work is characterized by a high degree of sensitivity to landscape and topography, which was recognized in 2010 by the jury of the Pritzker Prize.

The buildings by Sejima and Nishizawa seem deceptively simple. The architects hold a vision of a building as a seamless whole, where the physical presence retreats and forms a sensuous background for people, objects, activities, and landscapes. They explore like few others the phenomenal properties of continuous space, lightness, transparency, and materiality to create a subtle synthesis⁵.

The award ceremony speech recognized the space continuity in SANAA's projects. Referring to the Rolex Learning Center in Lausanne, the jury called this quality the „internal landscape for people”⁶, the fullness of which can be appreciated by users thanks to the separation of zones by floor undulations, while keeping the walls to a minimum. A similar approach has been used in the *River Building*, where visitors to the property can enjoy the beautiful surroundings and the natural landscapes changing with the seasons thanks to spaces where the visual boundary between the inside and outside ceases to exist, the view is variable and undisturbed.

The building won 13 awards, including the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize (MCHAP) 2014/2015 for architectural works built on the North and South American continents for „the radical way in which the line between architecture and landscape is blurred by the *River Building*”⁷.

In early 2010, just before the Pritzker Prize winners were announced, the Grace Farms Foundation approached the SANAA office with a request to realize the vision of a multifunctional place teeming with life, „where visitors could experience nature, encounter the arts, pursue justice, foster community, and explore faith”⁸. According to the founders of the foundation, the way in which space was created by Japanese architects corresponded to the goals of Grace Farms: the smooth interpenetration of the interior and exterior, characteristic of the Japanese, creates an environment with social and spiritual potential, and the nature and the landscape in New Canaan are to help visitors understand the place of an individual in the universe.

4 See: <https://www.pritzkerprize.com/laureates/2010> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

5 Excerpt from the jury's justification, <https://www.pritzkerprize.com/laureates/2010> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

6 Excerpt from the jury's justification, <https://www.pritzkerprize.com/laureates/2010> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

7 P. Lynch, *SANAA's Grace Farms Wins the 2014/2015 Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize*, <https://www.archdaily.com/797712/sanaas-grace-farms-wins-the-2014-2015-mies-crown-hall-americas-prize> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

8 <https://gracefarms.org/river-building-2/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

The head of the foundation, Sharon Prince, writes:

Our goal with the River is to make the architecture become part of the landscape. We hope that those who are on the property will have a greater enjoyment of the beautiful environment and changing seasons through the spaces and experience created by the River⁹.

Although the foundation is religiously motivated, the New Canaan facility is not strictly a place of religious worship. It is a place of cultural importance intended to arouse curiosity through open spaces, architecture, art and design. Sharon Prince describes them as „a place for people to just come and ‘be’”¹⁰. „It’s a gift.” – she adds.

A place for people to experience nature, foster community, pursue justice and explore faith – with artistic expression as a common thread [...]. It is not a church. It is a place to make good things happen, for people to come and make a difference¹¹.

One of Grace Farms’ primary tasks is to encourage people to experience nature with all their five senses. According to the originators of the project, it is enough to let nature arouse our curiosity and amazement. In the *River Building*, out of 32 hectares of land, 31 meadows, wetlands, trees and ponds have been left to stimulate the senses of the users of the facility. The landscaping design firm OLIN invited to cooperate on the project preserved and enhanced the natural flora and fauna of the property, while adding the surroundings gardens, sports fields and paths and playgrounds designed by SANAA. In addition, 70% of the plot has been reclaimed and restored to a natural meadow by Larry Weaner Landscape Associates.

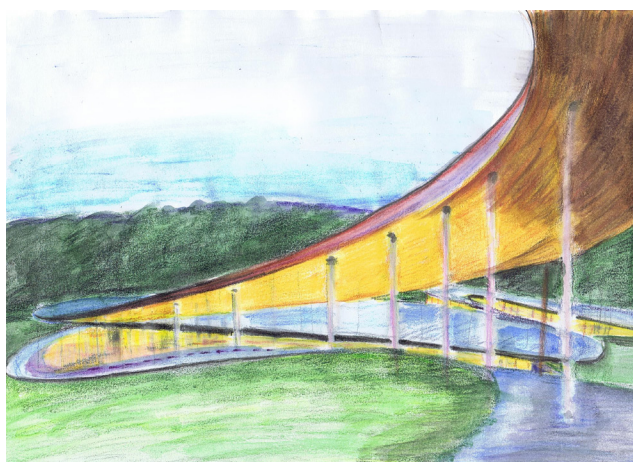


Fig. 1. SANAA, *River Building* – Grace Farms, based on photography by Dean_Kaufman, <https://www.archdaily.com/775319/grace-farms-sanaa/5722917ee58ece152e00003a-grace-farms-sanaa-photo> [accessed: 23.09.2021].

9 <https://gracefarms.org/river-building-2/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

10 O. Wainwright, *‘It’s a gift!’ Inside America’s miraculous new centre for arts and faith*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/oct/09/grace-farms-americas-miraculous-new-centre-for-arts-and-faith> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

11 O. Wainwright, *‘It’s a gift!’ Inside America’s miraculous new centre for arts and faith*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/oct/09/grace-farms-americas-miraculous-new-centre-for-arts-and-faith> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

The River Building itself stretches over 7,710 square meters. It is a centrally located under one long reflective roof giving the impression it is floating above the ground. Winding like the ribbon of a river, it crisscrosses the terrain and descends downhill following its topography. The difference in slope end to end is about 13 meters. The bends create closed and half-open courtyards, and the interior space is flanked by transparent walls, thanks to which the facility draws in the vast natural environment surrounding it. Some of the rooms are adjacent, others are located at some distance from each other.

This configuration creates a varied atmosphere and views, such as a bright room overlooking a lively courtyard or a tranquil room with sunlight filtered through the leaves of the surrounding trees. The designed space meets the conditions of biophilia (described in more detail in the issue 1/2021 of „inAW Journal”). It is both majestic, with gardens and a distant outlook, and intimate, with shelters and places for meditation; provides visual and tactile contact with nature, uses natural systems and materials, and uses biomorphic forms and patterns.

The building is divided into five zones. The first, called the sanctuary¹², with an area of 1940 m², is an internal amphitheater for 700 people, which turns into a space for religious worship once a week. This room is equipped with, among others, „mats for multidimensional prayers” designed by Olafur Eliasson¹³. The next one is the library (422 m²) with a glass-covered conference room, a fireplace facilitating discussion and creating an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality, and housing the foundation’s offices. The commons¹⁴ for 300 people feature 5.5-meter-long tables made of wood from the surrounding trees cut down during the construction of the River, as well as sofas and a fireplace. The lecture hall and auxiliary rooms constitute its lower level. The whole area spans 1,337 square meters. The pavilion with an area of 88 m², which is the reception area, provides the possibility of organizing small concerts. And the last zone with an area of 1570 m² located under the roof ribbon is a partially underground multi-purpose court¹⁵, with a laboratory and a games room

Next to the River there is a free-standing fully renovated original barn, which houses educational rooms, an art studio, an exercise room, offices, a room for children and more. The sanctuary and court – as the largest zones – are located at the opposite ends of the river. The building, as requested by the founders of the foundation, is open, there is no single main, privileged entrance.

The SANAA design is characterized by traditionally uniform, consistent aesthetics. The reflective ribbon roof spans across five glazed rooms with no columns. Outside, delicate white steel poles with a diameter of 13 cm are supported by glued-timber beams, which support an anodized aluminum roof

12 <https://gracefarms.org/river-components/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

13 R. Bianchini, *Grace Farms River Building by SANAA – New Canaan, CT*, <https://www.inexhibit.com/case-studies/grace-farms-river-building-sanaa-new-canaan/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

14 <https://gracefarms.org/river-components/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

15 <https://gracefarms.org/river-components/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

with a semi-gloss pearl finish reflecting the light and sky. The floor and ceiling are lined with wood, while the outer walls are made of bent glass panels with the thinnest possible joints.

American architecture critic Fred A. Bernstein in the article *Grace Farms by SANAA*¹⁶ points out that perfection has its price - not only financial, but also ecological. The outer walls are made of 203 of the world's largest bent *insulated glass unit* (IGU) panels, 2.5 meters wide and 4 meters high, with an asymmetrical top edge that had to be adapted to the curve of the roof. The glass for these panels, manufactured by the British company Guardian Industries, was bent in Spain and then fitted into frames in Germany, before it could be shipped to the United States. The amount of energy used for this project far exceeds the benefits the world will receive from the recultivated 31 hectares of grassland over the coming decades.

The criticism of the building does not end there. Bernstein raises the issue of felled trees, enormous financial costs (about \$ 83 million), or the new-age combination of Jesus, yoga and Rainforest Alliance certified coffee. The most blunt, however, is his description of the shape:

Despite its name, the building looks less like a river than a snake – specifically, a boa constrictor that has swallowed five rooms, ranging in width from 9m to 50m¹⁷.

Looking at the photos of the *River Building*, one could agree with this interpretation - it all depends on your attitude.

The house-tree

The second architectural design inspired by the elements of nature is *House NA* – it is a radical house designed by Sou Fujimoto for a young couple, located in a quiet suburb of Tokyo. It is a transparent rectangular block boldly contrasting with its surroundings. The glass walls stand out from the concrete houses that constitute the majority of the landscape of residential neighborhoods in Japan, yet its overall form alludes to them.

16 F.A. Bernstein, *Grace Farms by SANAA*, <http://www.designcurial.com/news/grace-farms-by-sanaa-4766122/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

17 F.A. Bernstein, *Grace Farms by SANAA*, <http://www.designcurial.com/news/grace-farms-by-sanaa-4766122/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].



Fig. 2. Sou Fujimoto, *House Na*, author: J. Łapińska, based on photography by Iwan Baan, <https://www.archdaily.com/230533/house-na-sou-fujimoto-architects/50180b3528ba0d49f5001698-house-na-sou-fujimoto-architects-photo> [accessed 23/09/2021].

The idea behind the creation of this building was the need to be a nomad in your own home. Fujimoto fulfilled it in an original way, arranging 85 square meters of space on 21 independent platforms with a floor area of 2 to 7.5 square meters, placed at different heights across three standard floors interconnected by stairs and ladders. These platforms, with a loosely defined function, are in the scale of furniture, not rooms, so together with elements of vertical communication, they can take on different roles, such as a passage, desk, seat or partition, but also like leaves in the treetops they can filter light, painting shimmering shadows on the surfaces.

The inspiration for this configuration of inner space was the shape of a tree. According to Fujimoto, living in a densely built-up house can be like living in a tree with many branches that provide both the place and source for countless activities of all kinds. An intriguing aspect of such living is the „unity of separation and coherence”¹⁸, where many rooms become one single space. The plates designated in this space are not separate, detached, but all exist in different relations to each other.

The intriguing point of a tree is that these places are not hermetically isolated but are connected to one another in its unique relativity. To hear one's voice from across and above, hopping over to another branch, a discussion taking place across branches by members from separate branches. These are some of the moments of richness encountered through such spatially dense living.

These are just a few of the “moments of richness encountered through such spatially dense living”¹⁹, assumed by the famous architect. The house not only can provide privacy for the couple, but it can also accommodate a larger group of people dispersed across the different levels. Fujimoto admits that

The white steel-frame structure itself shares no resemblance to a tree. Yet the life lived and the moments experienced in this space is a contemporary adaptation of the richness once experienced by the ancient predecessors from the time when they inhabited trees²⁰.

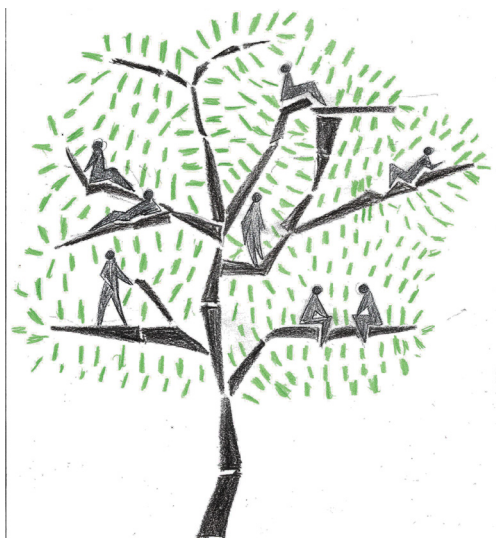


Fig. 3. The tree principal diagram being the inspiration for *House NA*, author: J. Łapińska based on https://www.archdaily.com/230533/house-na-sou-fujimoto-architects/50180b0028ba0d49f5001690-house-na-sou-fujimoto-architects-diagram-01?next_project=no [accessed: 23/09/2021].

The delicate white steel frames, made of small diameter tubing (possible thanks to the dense arrangement of the platforms) were supplemented with thin white-tinted birch floors. The structure has been additionally braced with a bookshelf reaching the full height of the building and lightweight concrete panels on the side elevations. Comfort is provided by some platforms that are heated, as well as strategically placed windows make the most of the air flow, and provide ventilation and cooling in the summer. Plumbing installations and storage spaces are hidden in the north wall.

Most of the negative comments that appear in the context of this building refer to an overly open space that does not provide any sense of intimacy. For Fujimoto himself, the space of *House NA* is also too open, but its owners are happy with it, because it corresponds with their way of life. To increase the sense of intimacy, they decided to install hand-sewn curtains, which are by themselves „small works

19 *House NA / Sou Fujimoto Architects*, <https://www.archdaily.com/230533/house-na-sou-fujimoto-architects> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

20 A. Frearson, *Cloud building by Junya Ishigami team to provide floating landmark in Copenhagen harbour*, <https://www.dezeen.com/2012/05/08/house-na-by-sou-fujimoto-architects/> and <https://www.archdaily.com/230533/house-na-sou-fujimoto-architects> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

of art”. They were hung not next to the windows, but at a distance from them, corresponding to the vibrant structure of the platforms²¹.

House NA has been designed as a whole. Even the blue Citroën 2CV, which is visible in the implementation photos, had already appeared on working models. According to architect and professor, Dan Hill, author of the article *House NA* by Sou Fujimoto, the vehicle that has become an integral part of the home forms an interesting contrast to the materials and geometry that surround it. In addition, it is an expression of *wabi-sabi*, the Japanese design principle that emphasizes the value of natural aging of materials. In addition to an appropriate vehicle, the house is also equipped with potted trees at key locations throughout. These plants, visible from the street, seem a bit unreal, like young twigs sprouting from a tree. According to Hill,

The house stands on the street like an idea that is about to materialise – and in the process eliminate the conventional notion of a house²².

A pavilion or a hill?

The third nature-inspired project was created under the most unfavorable circumstances of all those described here. In 2019, the year when the fate of Great Britain was at stake, Japanese architect Junya Ishigami was invited to design the Serpentine Gallery pavilion in Kensington Gardens, known for creating bold, experimental structures being on the verge of the laws of physics that reinterpret the traditional conventions of architecture while being reflections of natural phenomena. He became the 19th and one of the youngest architects working on the pavilion.

Junya Ishigami worked for SANAA until 2004, but left the team to establish his own design studio, Junya Ishigami + Associates. In 2014, he won two competitions for new nature-inspired infrastructure concepts. He won the first competition for the design of a „symbol of peace” in the Copenhagen port in cooperation with Svendborg Architects. The House of Peace (HOPE) in their vision is white, ephemeral cloud emerging from the sea. Despite the lightness of the visage, this huge white block hides an entire boating lake inside. The designers describe their idea as „a journey of the senses” that can „never twice be experienced as the same”²³.

21 See comments under A. Frearson, *Cloud building by Junya Ishigami team to provide floating landmark in Copenhagen harbour*, <https://www.dezeen.com/2012/05/08/house-na-by-sou-fujimoto-architects/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

22 D. Hill, *House NA, by Sou Fujimoto*, <https://medium.com/iamacamera/house-na-by-sou-fujimoto-25a75839025a> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

23 A. Frearson, *Cloud building by Junya Ishigami team to provide floating landmark in Copenhagen harbour*, <https://www.dezeen.com/2014/07/21/junya-ishigami-svendborg-architects-copenhagen-harbour-peace-symbol-cloud/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

The second award-winning project of 2014, was the passenger terminal of the port of Kinmen, Taiwan. An artificially shaped mountain range with a length of about 500 meters is meant reflect the natural landscape of the island and be visible from mainland China.

The aforementioned projects speak a lot about Ishigami's unique approach to shaping architecture by incorporating the natural environment (landscapes, forest, clouds) into the world of culture. His designs are dreamlike, unreal, and yet completely tangible. This was also true for the Serpentine Gallery pavilion in 2019, which rose from the ground surrounding Hyde Park like a rock formation. The author says:

I wanted to create a pavilion that felt primitive and ancient, (...) something between building and landscape. Slate roofs are found all over the world, so anyone coming here will be able to identify with it as a basic, archetypal form²⁴.

The description of the pavilion on the website of the Serpentine Gallery reads:

My design for the Pavilion plays with our perspectives of the built environment against the backdrop of a natural landscape, emphasizing a natural and organic feel as though it had grown out of the lawn, resembling a hill made of rocks. This is an attempt to supplement traditional architecture with modern methodologies and concepts, to create in this place an expanse of scenery like never seen before. Possessing the weighty presence of slate roofs seen around the world, and simultaneously appearing so light it could blow away in the breeze, the cluster of scattered rock levitates, like a billowing piece of fabric²⁵.



Fig. 4. Junya Ishigami, Serpentine Gallery Pavillion, 2019, autor: J. Łapińska, author: J. Łapińska, based on photography by Laurian Ghinitoiu, <https://www.archdaily.com/919342/first-look-at-the-2019-serpentine-pavilion/5d095371284dd13726000801-first-look-at-the-2019-serpentine-pavilion-photo> [access: 23.09.2021].

The Serpentine Gallery pavilion from 2019 can be described as a canopy that gave the impression of a natural form found in nature. The shape was described on a projection similar to a triangle, the rounded angles of which were in contact with the concrete base. The incredibly thin roof, covered with dark gray Cambrian slate, was mounted on a steel mesh resembling a woven basket in structure.

24 O. Wainwright, *Serpentine Pavilion 2019: Japan's great conjuror falls foul of health and safety*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jun/18/serpentine-pavilion-2019-review-junya-ishigami> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

25 J. Ishigami, <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/serpentine-pavilion-2019-designed-junya-ishigami/> and <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/junya-ishigami-serpentine-pavilion-slate-roof-london-06-18-2019/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

The roof was supported by a „forest” of 106 loosely spaced, visually lightweight, white slender steel columns. In order to achieve the vision of a seemingly „unstable” structure supporting a supposedly light roof, Ishigami collaborated with AECOM design office. The engineers managed to make it possible for the structure supporting the 60-ton roof to be almost six times lighter²⁶. Between the columns were only simple tables and seats designed by Ishigami to resemble the petals of water lilies. The dark, thin round surfaces of the tops and seats were supported on single legs. Inside, the experimental space was to resemble a cave or a shelter for contemplation. As Ishigami described it,

A stone creates a landscape, and a landscape usually sits outside of a building. I wanted to create the landscape inside the building, as a theory of the landscape that the stone creates outside (...) In that sense, I tried to create this landscape that exists outside, inside the building itself²⁷.

The idea was beautiful, as were the initial sketches, but when faced with reality, there were voices of criticism. English art critic, Veronica Simpson, writes that the idea may have looked good on paper, but in reality the pavilion was oppressive and repulsive. Especially on rainy days, when the slate tiles, supported on the unstable-looking structure, darkened due to moisture, and made a very depressing impression.

The heft and overhead presence of the slate – 62 tonnes of it, each piece stitched into a supporting cage by individual wires – feels precarious, unstable, as if the roof could teeter and fall at any moment, snapping or buckling the spindly steel supports that uphold it²⁸.

The pavilion, which was supposed to express the idea of “free space”²⁹, in which Ishigami searches for harmony between artifacts of culture and nature, has also been limited by reality. Calculations by AECOM engineers showed the need for more columns than anticipated in the first sketches. In addition, the analysis of the wind flow forced the use of transparent plastic walls, thanks to which the lightweight furniture was not blown away, but at the same time blocked the possibility of free communication and the flow of space, which made the architect sad. As Oliver Wainwright points out in his article in *The Guardian* that history tends to repeat itself in the Japanese Serpentine Gallery projects. When SANAA started building its pavilion in 2009, the designers were forced to use thicker columns and similar transparent screens as in the Ishigami pavilion to protect against the wind, and the volatile structure by Sou Fujimoto from 2013, had to be equipped with plenty of railings and handrails.

26 See: A. Frearson, *Junya Ishigami unveils rocky Serpentine Pavilion made out of slate*, <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/06/18/serpentine-pavilion-2019-junya-ishigami-slate-mountain/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

27 A. Frearson, *Junya Ishigami unveils rocky Serpentine Pavilion made out of slate*, <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/06/18/serpentine-pavilion-2019-junya-ishigami-slate-mountain/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

28 V. Simpson, *Serpentine Galleries, Hyde Park, London, 21 June – 6 October 2019*, <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/junya-ishigami-serpentine-pavilion-2019-review> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

29 J. Ishigami, <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/junya-ishigami-serpentine-pavilion-slate-roof-london-06-18-2019/> and <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/serpentine-pavilion-2019-designed-junya-ishigami/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

Junya Ishigami's Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, like Fujimoto's, follows the Japanese principle of borrowed landscape, scenery from beyond the garden³⁰ – *shakkei*. Just as a distant mountain becomes an inspiration for precisely raked gravel, as in the case of the pavilion from 2013, where the structure borrowed the outline of the main gallery building, and in the pavilion from two years ago discussed here, this principle was expressed in the slate roof, which alludes to the roof covering of the main building. Oliver Wainwright noticed that "the slate roof of the 1930s Serpentine Gallery (originally built as a tea pavilion) does poke up behind Ishigami's swelling sea of slate"³¹. JAs you can see, Simpson was not alone in her critical words about the pavilion when she noticed that „the idea of this pavilion as a new kind of landscape emerging from this building"³² could only be appreciated by a drone or helicopter, not by a bystander, unless that bystander suddenly grew wings.

There are more bird references in statements about the Serpentine Pavilion from 2019. The author of the project described it this way himself:

My image is of a flying black bird in a rainy sky, with the stones as feathers, the roof as the wings and the columns as streaks of rain³³.

Wainwright's impressions are even less positive: „Squatting on the lawn like a moody crow..."³⁴ or „Part bird, part spoil heap"³⁵. Simpson likewise believed the pavilion resembled the unfolded wing of a raven or crow, which she thought was favorable. Although black birds have a bad reputation in European tradition, in Japan the crow is worshiped as a symbol of rebirth and guidance³⁶, especially the three-legged crow (*yatagarasu*) in the Shinto tradition is evidence of divine intervention - and at the time of Simpson writing her article, the situation in Britain needed some of that.

More heavy words of criticism fell on the pavilion. The first allegations that the office did not pay its employees surfaces already at the design stage. Even more followed the scandal involving the director of the gallery, Yana Peel, as a result of which a critic for The Observer wrote that the building by Ishigami is „an ominous stone cloud... an apt metaphor for the noxious conflation of contemporary art and big business"³⁷.

30 *Estetyka japońska. Antologia*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków 2008, p. 229.

31 O. Wainwright, *Serpentine Pavilion 2019: Japan's great conjuror falls foul of health and safety*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jun/18/serpentine-pavilion-2019-review-junya-ishigami> [access:ed 11/09/2021].

32 V. Simpson, *Serpentine Galleries, Hyde Park, London, 21 June – 6 October 2019*, <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/junya-ishigami-serpentine-pavilion-2019-review> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

33 A. Frearson, *Junya Ishigami unveils rocky Serpentine Pavilion made out of slate*, <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/06/18/serpentine-pavilion-2019-junya-ishigami-slate-mountain/> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

34 O. Wainwright, *Serpentine Pavilion 2019: Japan's great conjuror falls foul of health and safety*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jun/18/serpentine-pavilion-2019-review-junya-ishigami> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

35 O. Wainwright, *Serpentine Pavilion 2019: Japan's great conjuror falls foul of health and safety*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jun/18/serpentine-pavilion-2019-review-junya-ishigami> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

36 See: H. Murakami, *Kronika ptaka nakręcacza*, Warszawa 2004.

37 V. Simpson, *Serpentine Galleries, Hyde Park, London, 21 June – 6 October 2019*, <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/junya-ishigami-serpentine-pavilion-2019-review> [accessed: 11/09/2021].

Whether an ominous cloud or a spoil heap, undoubtedly, Ishigami's architecture alludes to elements of nature - mountains, trees, lakes or birds. This was the architect's assumption:

I want to evoke people's imagination, (...) like when you look at the clouds, you might see some shapes of animals or something³⁸.

Epilogue

Ishigami's cloud also appeared in Tokyo this year, where all three of the aforementioned architectural offices participated in the design of pavilions for the Olympic Games. *Kokage-gumo* – literally „wooden clouds” – was a burnt wood structure spread out over the garden of a 1927 mansion, known as the *Kudan House*. The cracks and openings created by the arrangement of the wood filtered the light, cast shadows and framed the view, obscuring the tall office towers surrounding the residence.

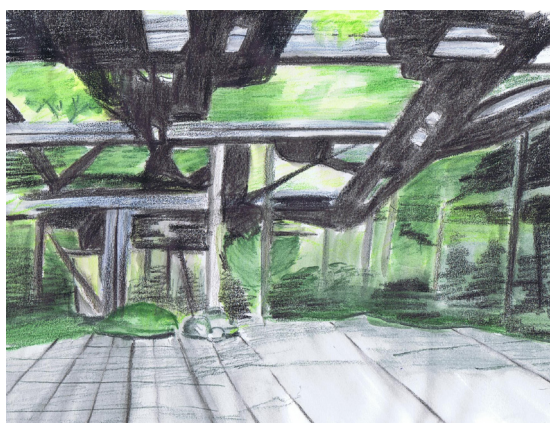


Fig. 5. Junya Ishigami, *Kokage-gumo*, author: J. Łapińska, based on photography by Shuji Goto, https://www.archdaily.com/965902/renowned-japanese-architects-and-artists-create-a-series-of-pavilions-in-tokyo-in-celebration-of-the-olympics/6101c8a6a604170165dbbf02-renowned-japanese-architects-and-artists-create-a-series-of-pavilions-in-tokyo-in-celebration-of-the-olympics-photo?next_project=no [access: 23.09.2021].

Sou Fujimoto also used the topos of cloud in the design of the *Cloud Pavilion* which is like white balloons floating over Yoyogi Park - the site of the 1964 Olympics.



Fig. 6. Sou Fujimoto, *Cloud Pavilion*, author: J. Łapińska, based on photography by Laurian Ghnitoiu, https://www.archdaily.com/965902/renowned-japanese-architects-and-artists-create-a-series-of-pavilions-in-tokyo-in-celebration-of-the-olympics/6101c92ba60417162fa87d20-renowned-japanese-architects-and-artists-create-a-series-of-pavilions-in-tokyo-in-celebration-of-the-olympics-photo?next_project=no [access: 23.09.2021].

Kazuyo Sejima, the co-founder of SANAA, reiterated the theme of the meandering river this time in the historic Hama-Rikyu Gardens. The Sumei of her own design was an installation rather than a pavilion. It reflected the nearby skyscrapers, embracing both ancient and modern Tokyo.

The world is changing, and staying in place. Just like water. If the flow stops, the water will become stagnant. Likewise, Tokyo is always on the move, which we hope will lead to a pure future³⁹.



Fig. 7. Kazuyo Sejima, *Sumei*, author: J. Łapińska, based on photography by Kazuyo Sejima and Associates, <https://www.archdaily.com/965902/renowned-japanese-architects-and-artists-create-a-series-of-pavilions-in-tokyo-in-celebration-of-the-olympics/6101c99b02cade30ce7068ed-renowned-japanese-architects-and-artists-create-a-series-of-pavilions-in-tokyo-in-celebration-of-the-olympics-photo> [access: 23.09.2021].

Summary

Design method	synthesis of external appearance features	application of the "principle of operation" found in nature	questioning the basic feature being the point of reference
Name (location)	Grace Farms, <i>River Building</i> (New Canaan, CT)	<i>House NA</i> (Tokyo)	Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2019 (London)
Designer	SANAA	Sou Fujimoto	Junya Ishigami
Impression	In terms of aesthetics, the building is perceived positively. Its ecological impact is controversial.	Positive reception of the design. The functional properties of the house raised some doubts.	The pavilion was perceived ambivalently. It evoked many negative emotions, not only concerning its aesthetics.

Table 1. Comparison of design methods derived from nature, author: J. Łapińska.

The analysis of the above projects made it possible to identify three design methods derived from nature. The first is a synthesis of the exterior features that led to the creation of the *River Building* – a building that, through its reflective, winding roof, expresses the shape of a river, resulting from movement and slope, reflecting the sky just like water - similar to the *Sumei* installation in Tokyo. The second method is applying the „principle of operation” found in nature, which led to the creation of *House NA* by Sou Fujimoto - a house that does not look like a tree, but the way it is used reminds of it. The third method was noticed during the analysis of Ishigami’s Serpentine Gallery pavilion. Although the architect refers to a natural phenomenon, which is a rocky hill, he also challenges the basic feature of stone, which is its weight. A similar impression is found in the *HOPE* project in Copenhagen (white, massive „clouds”) and the *Kokage-gumo* installation in Tokyo (wooden clouds).

All the designs described in this article were made by Japanese architects who are distinguished by the ability to subtly draw inspiration from nature. This sensitivity has touches the understanding of the notion of space in the Land of the Rising Sun, as containing both the inside and the outside, embodying its surroundings. The characterized architectural realizations owe their uniqueness not only to the nature and beauty of landscape, but mainly to the creativity of the architects who chose to draw inspiration from an given fragment of the landscape and transformed it into an original, fully usable space that is unique in its own way.

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FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTIONS - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY VERIFYING THE CONCEPT OF FOUR PRODUCT FUNCTIONS DERIVED FROM JOCHEN GROS' THEORY OF PRODUCT LANGUAGE

Art research paper

Translation PL-EN: Władysław Bibrowski, MA

Contents

1. Introduction	144
1.1. What is followed by form?	144
1.2. Semantic issues relating to the practice and theories of design	147
1.3. Form follows functions	149
1.4. Theory of product language	150
2. The study of functions derived from the theory of product language	152
2.1. Hypothesis	153
2.2. Methods	153
2.3. Procedure	153
2.4. Results	154
2.5. Discussion	156
References	159

Abstract

At the end of the 20th century, it turned out that the principle of functionalism is not sufficient as an approach to design and does not describe all the relationships of users to objects in their possession. Since the 1960s, new concepts began to be formed enabling better understanding of design as a creative discipline that plays an increasingly important role in the modern world, as well as the attitudes and decisions of groups creating the “designed world” - designers or producers, and those who benefit from the effects of their activities - consumers, users etc.

One of the interesting concepts is Jochen Gros’ theory of product language. This paper presents a research experiment verifying the concept of four product functions derived from the theory of product language, conducted during the master’s course for students of design at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław. The text is made of two parts - an introduction constituting a literature review and a report from an empirical study.

Keywords

design, product semantics, theory of product language, content analysis

1. Introduction

1.1. What is followed by form?

Functionalism, as a design principle derived from Louis Sullivan's thesis that form follows function, dominated design practice throughout much of the 20th century. Searching for a new style in design, corresponding to the needs of a new society, rebuilding after World War I and then after World War II, functionalism seemed to be the most appropriate tendency for an ever more dynamically developing creative discipline: design¹.

Modern experiments with form were conducted by one of the most important design academies in history, the Bauhaus. Although the design style at this school changed significantly during the 14 years of its existence (1919-1933), in the most important period of its operation, the main goal was to prepare patterns for mass production:

Gropius [...] believed that Henry Ford's type of industrial capitalism could benefit workers and that, in order to survive, the Bauhaus needed to adopt an industrial approach to design, in the conviction that a better society could be created by the application of functionalism².

Among the means leading to this goal were to be formal experiments - searching for product forms best suited to the new world, striving for machine aesthetics. The Bauhaus influenced the history of design, inter alia, as a laboratory of bold creative and educational experiments, intensive intellectual work and a place where ground-breaking projects in terms of formal and technical solutions were created.

The legacy of the Bauhaus, however, is characterized by a certain contradiction which casts a shadow over its widely appreciated achievements. Despite the Gropius' manifesto foretelling changes, that art and technology are to create a new unity, the sales results of Bauhaus products were not high, moreover, a relatively small number of projects were suitable for mass production.

Marcel Breuer's furniture, symbolic designs of the school, began to be produced after the designer left the Bauhaus, and the metal studio, the place where some of the most famous projects-icons of this institution were created, did not cooperate with companies producing on a larger scale³.

A good example is the so-called Bauhaus lamp, designed by a student attending this school, Wilhelm Wagenfeld and engineer Karl J. Jucker in 1923-1924. The industrial appearance is ensured by the choice of materials - metal, glass, displaying functional elements and reducing it to basic geometric

1 Ch. Fiell, P. Fiell, *Industrial Design A-Z*, Köln 2016, p. 62.

2 Ch. Fiell, P. Fiell, *Industrial Design A-Z*, p. 62.

3 P. Sparke, *Design. Historia wzornictwa*, tłum. E. Gorzadek, Warszawa 2009, p. 86.

shapes – but at that time the lamp was not suitable for mass production⁴. The Bauhaus did not have much of an influence on German industrial production⁵.



Il. 1. The so-called Bauhaus lamp, Wilhelm Wagenfeld and Karl J. Jucker, 1923–1924, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O116634/mt8-table-lamp-wagenfeld-wilhelm/> [accessed: 11/07/2021].

After World War II, a second design school was established in Germany, the fame of which spread all over the world: Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm (1953–1968). For the second time design was used as a tool that would allow to build reality based on new principles and would change social relations. Efforts were made towards the social responsibility of design that would strive to create

simple, practical, and efficiently produced furniture and objects of everyday use to improve the general standard of living in an increasingly technological world, and that equated technology with simplicity of appearance and function⁶.

The Ulm School of Design played a significant role in international design and influenced the change in the approach to industrial products of both manufacturers and users, but the design style derived from it, that is simplified shapes, narrower colour range and the conceptualisation of form, made the products designed in accordance with the “Ulm model” difficult to accept by the general public. Electronic equipment, furniture and kitchenware were appreciated by connoisseurs with a sophisticated

4 J. Strasser, *50 Bauhaus icons you should know*, Munich–London 2018, p. 76. See also: *Historia designu*, ed. E. Wilhide, translated by A. Cichowicz, D. Skalska-Stefańska, Warszawa 2017, pp. 130–131.

5 D. Raizman, *History of Modern Design*, London 2003, p. 201.

6 D. Raizman, *History of Modern Design*, p. 288.

taste, who were able to recognise the avant-garde concepts and the cultural themes contained in them. This is clearly confirmed by David Raizman, a design historian, who wrote that

[...] Braun products and design policy were not directed toward a mass market but rather to a discriminating audience with a more conscious awareness of abstract aesthetics and a belief in the connection between simple, undecorated forms and uncluttered, efficient modern living⁷.

A good example is the Braun Phonosuper SK4 radio-turntable hybrid designed by Ulm lecturer Hans Gugelot and Braun collaborator Dieter Rams, in 1956. At that time, this technically innovative device with a rational form, bold material solutions and a minimalistic use of colour, acquired the somewhat mocking nickname „Snow White’s coffin”⁸. Braun’s designs applied the principle of functionalism, but were also the result of the architectural, social and aesthetic theories of their time⁹, which could have posed a challenge to consumers.



Il. 2. Braun Phonosuper SK55, 1963, Hans Gugelot, Dieter Rams, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O168285/phonosuper-radiogram-sk55-radiogram-rams-dieter/> [accessed: 11/07/2021].

Because of these and other experiences from the practice of post-war design, the surfeit of the „black box”, the requirements of the capitalist market saturated with goods and the human nature’s natural need for changes, functionalism lost its dominant role in design practice.

Klaus Krippendorff, designer, professor of cybernetics, language and culture at the University of Pennsylvania, while pointing to the aforementioned discrepancies between theoretical assumptions and the practical implementation of design ideologies, he also added that the statement „form follows function” contains the assumption of the hierarchism of society, that is becoming outdated at an increasing pace and which no longer reflects the social reality of the 20th century, and even more so

7 D. Raizman, *History of Modern Design*, p. 289

8 P. Sparke, *Braun SK4, 1956*, [in:] *Historia designu*, pp. 270–271.

9 D. Raizman, *History of Modern Design*, p. 289.

of the 21st century. Because if “form follows function”, then who decides what kind of function it should be? Who determines this function in an unquestionable and non-negotiable way¹⁰?

In a hierarchic society, the functions were determined by the principals, that is producers, industrialists, company owners. It also happened that the exact specification of the function was done by designers, but they were hired by manufacturers and implemented the requirements and ideas of the latter. Internal contradictions in the design output, which could be seen in the works of two aforementioned German schools, had already occurred before, for example, in case of William Morris (the idea of telling designing as a way to improve the quality of life of representatives of all social classes, confronted with the practice of producing luxury goods purchased by wealthy representatives of society).

The sense of imperfection and crisis of the dominant design concepts induced designers and design theorists to search for new theories, new approaches to design resulting from different social conditions, a change in mentality, other than previous expectations in relation to the immediate environment, as well as different market conditions. The sacramental statement that „form follows function” was changed by experimental designers from Milan and Los Angeles into „form follows fun”. The increasingly deeper understanding of the relationship between humans and the “artificial” environment they have created allowed for several modifications of the original Sullivan’s sentence (among others as a result of the theory of product language, discussed in subsection 3), up to the 21st-century declaration that “form follows meaning”¹¹ – because in our times meaning turned out to be a key determinant of the interaction between humans and the designed artifact.

1.2. Semantic issues relating to the practice and theories of design

The development of research on product semantics is a continuation of the 20th-century interest in language, communication and signs. Semiotics, that is the science of signs and symbols, was introduced to the curriculum at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm by its second director, Tomas Maldonado¹². The school tried to renew its approach to design and, while continuing some didactic assumptions of the Bauhaus, enriched the curriculum with new subjects and issues, such as economics, psychology and semiotics. As one of the founders of the school, Otl Aicher, wrote,

The Ulm model was born: a design model strengthened by science and technology. The designer is no longer a great artist, but an equal partner in the decision-making process accompanying industrial production¹³.

However, designers who studied at Ulm were of the opinion that Max Bill’s, the school’s first principal, approach to semiotics was too superficial, based on the representational aspect of signs. A deep

10 See K. Krippendorff, *The semantic turn: a new foundation of design*, Boca Raton 2006, pp. 5–7.

11 Zob. <http://www.ctrlzak.com/projects/form-follows-meaning> [accessed: 05 /07/2021].

12 K. Krippendorff, *The semantic turn...*, pp. 305–310.

13 D. Rinker, B. Stempel, *HfG, Ulm School of Design. 1953–1968*, Ulm 2007, p. 9.

analysis of contemporary design and the experience gained during the creation of various design projects, led several German designers and design theorists to formulate their own design theories, in which the main emphasis was placed on the semantic aspects of design. Thus, the semiotic interest in signs was deepened by reflection on the meaning of signs - semantics.

In the 1970s, this subject was taken up by Jochen Gros, who, after graduating from the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Brunswick, started working as an academic teacher at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Offenbach am Main¹⁴. It was there that he began to develop the theory of „extended functionalism”, solidified in the form of the so-called product language theory, in German: *Der Offenbacher Ansatz*. Jochen Gros’s student and continuator of his work on language and semantics is Dagmar Steffen, the author of the book *Design als Produktsprache, Der Offenbacher Ansatz in Theorie und Praxis*, widely used as a textbook for students¹⁵.

Richard Fischer, a graduate of the Ulm School of Design, also a designer and design theorist was Jochen Gros’ collaborator. Fischer focused in particular on studying the so-called signalling functions of a product based on humanistic cognitive methods¹⁶.

In the 1980s, Klaus Krippendorff and Reinhardt Butter explored the issue of product semantics. Both of them, like Fischer, graduated from the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, but pursued their professional lives in the United States. They were the first to use the term “product semantics” in the “Design Issues” journal published in 1989¹⁷. Krippendorff presented his theory more meticulously in a monumental work *The semantic turn: a new foundation of design*¹⁸.

In this book, Krippendorff recognizes product semantics as a basic concept for human-centred design and, deriving the described changes from the philosophical theories of Ludwig Wittgenstein (language revolution), discusses the sense, meaning and context of design, among other issues. The author also deals with the meaning of artifacts at different levels of their life, at the level of use, at the linguistic level, in life cycles, and in the so-called ecology of artifacts.

Not only German researchers contributed to the development of the science of product semantics (although the fact that some concepts were written only in German made the dissemination of knowledge about them somewhat more difficult). Semantics, as an important aspect of human-centred design,

14 <https://www.smow.com/en/designers/jochen-gros/> [accessed: 18/06/2021].

15 <https://www.hslu.ch/en/lucerne-university-of-applied-sciences-and-arts/about-us/people-finder/profile/?pid=790> [accessed: 29/06/2021].

16 <http://www.designlexikon.net/Designer/F/fischerrichard.html> [accessed: 18/06/2021].

17 K. Krippendorff, R. Butter, *Product semantics*, „Design Issues”, 2 (1989), no 5.

18 K. Krippendorff, *The semantic turn...* Krippendorff updated his version of the history of artifacts as the beginning of the semantic revolution in the jubilee publishing house of the university in Offenbach: K. Krippendorff, *Design Discourse*, [w:] *Der Offenbacher Ansatz. Zur Theorie der Produktsprache*, ed. T. Schwer, K. Vöckler, <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-5569-8/der-offenbacher-ansatz/> [Accessed 5 May 2021], pp. 334–340.

has gained interest in various parts of the world. Since the 1980s, design schools in Finland, India and Japan have been using the achievements of product semantics in design and theoretical work.

The issues of product semantics are also tackled by Dutch schools. For example, one of the leading design schools in Europe, the University of Technology in Delft, conducts research on the semantics of sounds made by products. A book by Gerhard Heufler, an Austrian designer and academic teacher - *Design Basics. From Ideas to Products*¹⁹ - which describes the basic issues related to product design from the point of view of the consumer, designer and producer, and refers to Jochen Gros' theory of product language, is also used by this university.

1.3. Form follows functions

Heufler presented an analysis of the designed product from different points of view using the example of interaction with cutlery. Guests invited to someone's home for a party for the first time sit down at the table and start eating. Picking up the cutlery, they make their first assessment. They notice more or less consciously that, for instance, the bowl of a spoon is too shallow, so it is difficult to eat soup with it, and that it does not allow you to get the right portion of soup, but that the handle fits well in the hand, while the fork's teeth are too sharp and even perilous.

This is the so-called user level where the physical aspects of the product are experienced, enabling recognition of its practical functions.

When the guests are satiated they begin to look around, taking a closer look at the surroundings. They also look at the cutlery, and conclude that their overall shape is nice, but over-decorated, which spoils the impression of elegance. The spoon and fork are well proportioned, but the handles do not match the whole arrangement.

Thus, at the observer level, guests experience the sensual aspects of the product, which allows them to define aesthetic functions.

At some point, the guests start to look more widely at the space in which they find themselves. The reflections that come to their mind are now of a different type. They realize that the room is quite modest, so they start to be baffled by the fact that the cutlery was so expressive, even ostentatious. They wonder why such open, direct hosts put such ostentatious table service. There can be several conclusions. For example, cutlery can be a family heirloom or can reveal the owners' aspirations to achieve a higher status.

At this point, the artifacts are analysed from the owner's point of view, who allows to perceive their symbolic functions related to social aspects²⁰.

All these three aspects: practical, aesthetic and symbolic, determine the manner in which an object functions during its life, during the processes of its use. The fact that practical function comprises physical experience seems quite obvious. Meanwhile, sensory experience also performs an important function not only in terms of pleasure or joy of using the object. Scientists have observed that products that we perceive as aesthetically pleasing also seem to be easier to use and therefore more likely to be used, regardless of whether they are actually easy to handle or not. This phenomenon called *Aesthetic-Usability Effect* plays a significant role in the acceptance of projects and the tolerance of recipients in relation to design solutions²¹.

On the other hand, symbolic functions relating to the reception of a product in the social context are arousing more and more interest nowadays. The meanings that products acquire during their use, the issue of whether these processes can be controlled or designed, may turn out to be the key to gaining market advantage in times of market saturation with similar goods.

The thesis „form follows function”, transformed by postmodernists into „form follows fun”, turns into „form follows functions”. This is an extended concept of the usage process.

1.4. Theory of product language

According to Heufler, Jochen Gros defined product language as human-object relationships that are transmitted through our perception channels, our senses, as the emotional effects of the product. Gros compares them with the practical functions that arise as a result of the direct physical impact of the product.

According to the dictionary of the Polish language, one of the meanings of the word „language” is

a socially consolidated set of signs relating to some human actions or expressing human emotions, and each arrangement of elements of reality to which a person has given some substance²².

In the case of the product language, the signs are human designed artifacts, mediating his/her interaction with the world, constituting an important element of the surrounding reality.

20 See G. Heufler, *Design Basics...*, pp. 21–24.

21 W. Lidwell, K. Holden, J. Butler, *Universal Principles of Design, Revised and Updated: 125 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design*, Beverly–Massachusetts, 2010, p. 30.

22 <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/jezyk;2468170.html> [accessed: 24/06/2021].

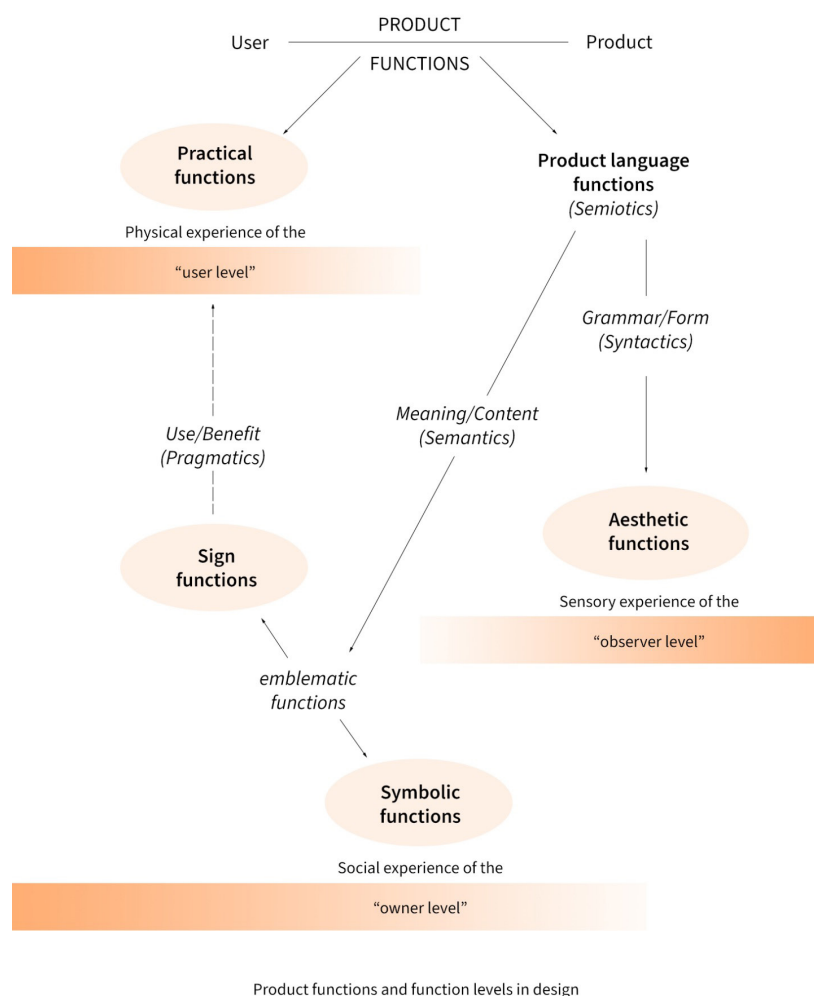


Chart 1. Four functions of products in the theory of product language, source: G. Heufler, *Design Basics*. From *Ideas to Products*, Berlin 2004, prepared by Beata Ludwiczak

Like in any language, the function of a product language requires structure that is grammar and meaning or put it otherwise, semantics. This is a simplified approach, but it well illustrates the issue under discussion.

Grammatical aspects relate to formal aesthetic functions, that is, the form of the product, thus the shape, colour, material and surface as well as the structure of the form, oscillating between opposing poles of the arrangement of form, that is order versus diversity²³.

Recently, more and more attention has been paid to aspects called by Heufler as emblematic functions²⁴. According to the theory of product language, these functions convey additional meanings,

²³ G. Heufler, *Design Basics*, p. 42.

²⁴ „Emblematic functions”.

not related to practical functions. The emblematic functions are divided into signalling and symbolic functions.

In his book, Heufler used an example of a door handle. The ergonomic-looking handle is a sign that it will well fulfil its practical function, which means that it will be easy to hold it in your hand and open the door, and it signals that it should be pressed down and not, for example, pushed, as in the case of a vertical handle. On the other hand, the gilded door handle will be a symbol of wealth or ostentatious pretentiousness. We can conclude that this is not about an isolated view of the product features, but about their impact on the observer.

There is a great diversity of these human-object relationships. The signals relate directly to the product and its practical or technical functions, so they demand certain reactions from the observer. Typical signalling functions are the result of stability, precision, orientation, durability or flexibility. On the other hand, the symbols do not refer directly to the product; rather, they evoke cultural, social or historical connotations. Typical symbolic functions are luxury, modesty, eroticism, freedom, nostalgia, etc.

In practice, analysing signalling functions is not difficult, as logical reasoning leads to the conclusion as to whether practical or technical functions are reflected in the language of the product.

Interpreting symbolic functions is much more complex. For some, the Birkin purse will be an example of great design, for others, of a licentious wealth and capitalist inequality in the distribution of goods. Various interpretations are influenced by upbringing, worldview and social position.

However, recognition of the different ways in which products function enables better understanding of the human-object relationship and a more conscious design process. This was the goal of the experiment carried out at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław in the 2020/2021 academic year.

2. The study of functions derived from the theory of product language

As part of the Semantics of Form subject covered by the Department of Design at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, a research experiment was carried out, based on the theory of product language. The aim of the study was to determine whether the four product functions derived from Jochen Gros' theory of product language, presented in the book *Design Basics. From Ideas to Products* by Gerhard Heufler, take place in everyday interactions with artifacts. The study was based on the analysis of the relationships of the studied group of users describing their attitude to selected artifacts.

2.1. Hypothesis

Jochen Gros's theory of product language distinguishes four functions that products can fulfil: practical, signalling, aesthetic and symbolic. Therefore, when conducting a research experiment among students of the Academy of Art and Design and their acquaintances, it seems interesting if by analysing the reasons for which a given object plays an important role in their lives, the respondents will indicate all four functions, and what will be the quantitative ratio of the results obtained in each function category. Moreover, it was decided to explore whether there is a significant difference between reporting the above-mentioned types of functions by people studying design or working in a design profession (hereinafter referred to as "designers") and people not professionally related to design (hereinafter referred to as "non-designers"). The proposed hypothesis assumed that in the assessment of products, designers pay more attention to practical functions than non-designers.

2.2. Methods

The research material was collected using oral or written interviews. The initial assumption was to persuade the respondents to write down their responses, but in some cases it was more effective and faster to record the statements of the interviewees and then write them down. All the students conducting the study expressed their opinion in writing. The research method used in the study was content analysis.

2.3. Procedure

The study was conducted during the Semantics of Form classes at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław. Three female and two male master's programme students participating in the research were tasked with writing a report in response to the following instruction: "Choose an object that is important to you, such that you take with you every time you move, or you would take to a desert island, such that you always know where it is, one that accompanies you in your daily life, etc. Justify your choice in writing, the text cannot have more than 1000 characters".

Responses were given spontaneously, without any knowledge of the theory of product language. Then, to increase the amount of material for analysis, the students and the teacher collected comments on the same topic from their families and acquaintances. A total of 14 people took part in the study. All responses were recorded in writing (some took the form of an oral interview, later written down by a member of the research team).

Then, during the course, students listened to a lecture on the theory of product language and began to analyse the content of the transcriptions²⁵. The first stage was selective coding, which consisted in identifying text fragments that could be assigned to particular categories, that is functions resulting from the theory of product language. It was therefore a qualitative analysis, the results of which were quantified, which allowed for statistical processing²⁶ and drawing conclusions presented in the form of a report. According to Aldona Glińska-Neweś and Iwona Escher, “it is possible to combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the analysis of the content²⁷”.

The students’ work with the theory of product language and analysis of the content was of an educational nature, not all conclusions drawn by them were justified by the theory of product language. The following discussion and conclusions were written by the author of this paper.

2.4. Results

Fourteen people took part in the study, including 8 people studying design or practicing a profession related to design (hereinafter referred to as designers) and 6 people not related to design (hereinafter referred to as non-designers).

The respondents mentioned the following artifacts: 4 telephones (3 cell phones and 1 satellite), 5 items of personal use attached to the body (ring, glasses, watch) or kept close to the body (key ring and pocket knife), one item of clothing (sweatpants), one means of transport (a bicycle, or actually two bicycles, as both were mentioned in one interview), as well as a hair dryer, a notebook and a notebook with recipes. It must be admitted that the mobile phone is also an object carried close to the body, however, it has been mentioned separately due to the complexity of its functions, as well as the role it plays in the life of modern person, which is reflected, inter alia, in the fact that it is an artifact listed as the largest number of times.

25 This procedure consists in generating, for example based on the transcription of an interview, categories (codes) covering the conceptually studied area, assigning properties to them and combining these categories with each other by looking for relationships between them, see A. Glińska-Neweś, I. Escher, *Analiza treści w badaniach zjawisk społecznych w organizacji. Zastosowanie programu IRAMUTEQ*, “Studia Oeconomica Posnaniensia”, 6, (2018), no 3, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325946878_Analiza_tresci_w_badaniach_zjawisk_spolecznych_w_organizacji_Zastosowanie_programu_IRAMUTEQ_Content_analysis_in_the_research_of_social_phenomena_in_the_organisation_Application_of_IRAMUTEQ_software?enrichId=rgreq-56648c492e2e1fb6fb03d94ac46c6a8f-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzMyN-Tk0Njg3ODtBUzo2NzUwOTk2NDg3MzMxODRAMTUzNzk2NzcwNzA2Mg%3D%3D&el=1_x_3&_esc=publication-CoverPdf [accessed: 20/02/2021], p. 10.

26 A. Glińska-Neweś, I. Escher, *Analiza treści w badaniach zjawisk społecznych...*, p. 10.

27 A. Glińska-Neweś, I. Escher, *Analiza treści w badaniach zjawisk społecznych...*, p. 10.

	practical function	esthetic function	signalling function	symbolic function
pocket knife	3	3	0	4
phone I	5	0	0	1
glasses	3	1	0	3
key ring	2	1	0	2
notebook with re- cipes	0	0	0	4
watch	0	0	0	4
phone II	4	0	0	1
sweatpants	5	1	0	4
notebook	8	0	0	2
phone III	1	0	0	0
ring	0	4	0	3
phone IV	8	0	0	0
bicycles	5	2	0	1
dryer	7	1	1	0
	51	13	1	29

Table 1. Number of functions mentioned by the owners of individual artifacts, source: own materials.

Overall, the respondents mentioned 94 functions, including 51 practical functions, 29 symbolic functions, 13 aesthetic functions and 1 signalling function.

The designers listed 38 practical functions, 5 aesthetic functions, 11 symbolic functions and 1 signalling function. The non-designers mentioned 13 practical functions, 8 aesthetic functions and 18 symbolic functions. Signalling functions were not mentioned by non-designers.

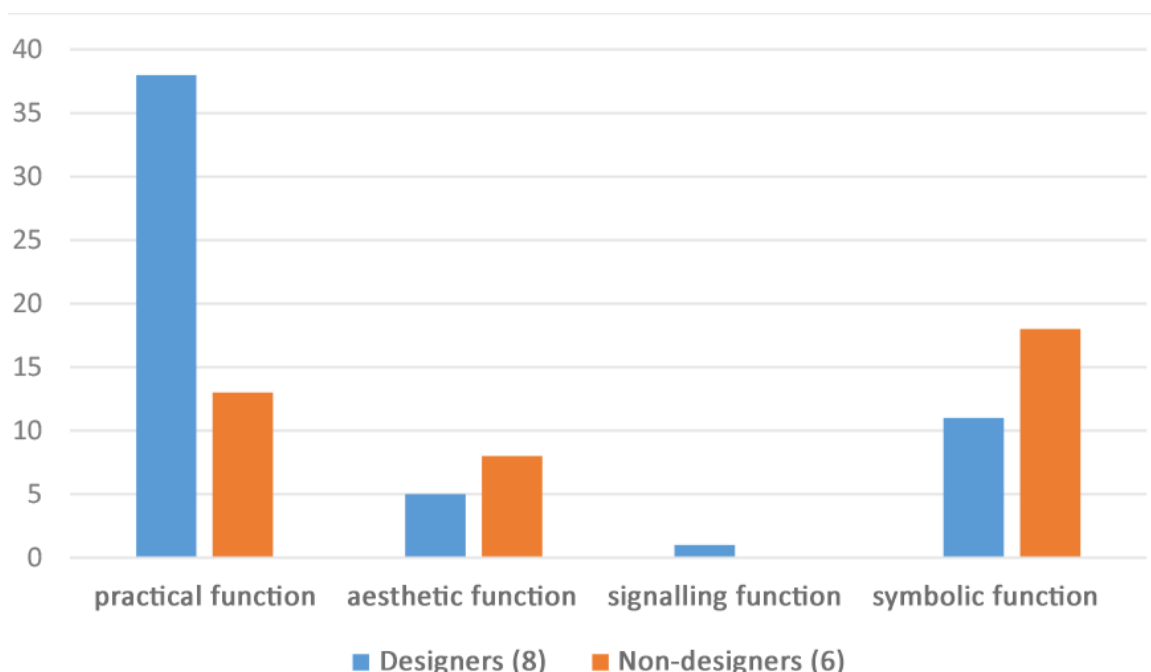


Chart 2. The total number of individual product functions mentioned by designers and non-designers, prepared by the author based on author's own material.

As can be seen in the presented chart, the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of the study, assuming that designers pay more attention to practical functions, has been confirmed.

2.5. Discussion

The qualitative research method - content analysis - was used to analyse the statements written by the owners of the artifacts or by the interviewing them students-researchers. One of the drawbacks of this method is its subjectivity, because it consists of coding the transcriptions²⁸. Researchers have to make their own decisions concerning the classification of individual fragments of the text, which is why some theorists consider content analysis as reactive research, "that is research where there is some researcher's interference in what is being studied"²⁹. It should be noted that making their own decisions and discussing them helped students participating in the Semantics of Form course to better understand the issue of functions considered in the theory of product language - an example would be the statement about sweatpants: "they cuddle me when I am lying", first classified as a symbolic function, finally assigned to a practical function.

28 A. Glińska-Neweś, I. Escher, *Analiza treści w badaniach zjawisk społecznych...*, p. 10.

29 A. Glińska-Neweś, I. Escher, *Analiza treści w badaniach zjawisk społecznych...*, p. 8.

From the perspective of the conducted experiment, it seems that the research question could be formulated a bit differently. Instruction: “Choose an object that is important to you, such that you take with you every time you move, or you would take to a desert island, such that you always know where it is, one that accompanies you in your daily life” directed the attention of some respondents to the conditions prevailing on a desert island and, as a result, they focused on such functions of objects that could satisfy the specific needs of such a situation (no Internet, need to defend oneself against a group of native cannibals; about the pocket knife: “On a desert island it would not be so handy. I would exchange it for a kitchen knife or some machete”). The phrase “desert island” has also been treated metaphorically: “lockdown is a kind of my desert island”.

Also, the lengths of statements, although limited (“Justify your choice in writing, the text cannot have more than 1000 characters”), were varied, depending on the respondents’ temperament or their ease of expressing themselves in writing.

Nevertheless, the choice of objects made by the respondents is interesting. The telephone was mentioned four times (three times cell phone, one time satellite phone, due to the expected lack of internet). The importance of this device in everyday life is clearly demonstrated by the following sentences: “It has everything I could need”, “It is such an item that I do not leave home without”. This connection with the telephone raises even “self-critical” comments: “My motivation, as well as probably of many young people, is the downright excessive attachment to this device”. Nowadays, the mobile phone has become a part of the human body: “Without a phone, I feel like without a hand”.

As it was said, practical functions were the most numerous, referring to individual objects, the owners were able to list several functions from this category. An owner of a cell phone listed eight practical functions (including “ease of communicating with each other through it”, “the ability to take photos of cosmic quality”, “access to current information”), similar to an owner of the notebook (including “taking notes”, “drawing elements that aroused my curiosity”, “writing down my thoughts”). An owner of a hair dryer listed seven practical functions (“it helps to look after personal care”, “it dries up hair”, “it can be folded in half”, “it can be hung in a convenient place”, “it can be easily transported”).

Aesthetic functions almost always appeared in the description of the meaning of artifacts kept on or close to the body (the exception is the telephone, which was never mentioned in the context of aesthetic functions). Most of these functions were listed in the case of the ring, an object, by definition, decorating the body (“minimalist, beautiful form”, “it fits my taste perfectly”), and then a pocket knife (“red, beautiful, shiny”), which, although carried close to the body, was probably treated as a nostalgic object (“I got one like this from my dad”, “my friends from the yard were jealous, because it was something in those times”, “I felt like MacGyver”). In the remaining reports there are mentions of one aesthetic function (e.g. „softness of the material” - about sweatpants, „the aluminium frame is

made of pipes with much thicker cross-sections than steel frames, which gives it the appearance of off-road machines” - about a bicycle, “aesthetic dimension - if you have cute glasses, then you are also a cute person”).

Interestingly, symbolic functions were listed for as many as 11 out of 14 artifacts. Only one phone “deserved” the mention about its symbolic function: “without a phone, I feel like without a hand”. The third artifact, which had no symbolic meaning for its owner, was a hair dryer. Examples of phrases relating to symbolic functions are as follows: “its sentimental value makes me always want to have it with me and I take care not to lose it” (ring), “they are expensive, so this is also an important reason for taking care of them” (glasses), “I have a special fondness for it, because I assembled it myself from parts bought online and in bazaars” (bicycle), “sense of freedom” and “sweatsuit is the best friend who is always there when I need it” (sweatpants).

The only one mention of the signalling function was in the description of the dryer - a semi-circle shaped hook suggests that the dryer can be hung.

The study was conducted on a small research sample (14 statements). It does not therefore seem reasonable to draw more precise conclusions based on the quantitative results. A significant, more than two-fold difference between the number of practical functions mentioned by designers versus non-designers indicates, however, differences in the perception of these functions, confirming the proposed hypothesis.

The minimum number of reported signalling functions is also striking. In the study, the signalling function was mentioned only once - by a professional designer. The signalling function is related to the practical use of the product, to the physical interaction with the product, and its mention by the designer also seems significant.

It would be interesting to analyse the differences in how men and women perceive functions. However, for such an analysis to be worthwhile, it would have to be carried out separately in a group of designers and non-designers. Too few statements were available for such an analysis.

The author intends to continue this research in the future. Undoubtedly, however, the additional goal of the experiment, that is familiarizing students with the theory of product language and disseminating knowledge about the functions of artifacts covered by this theory and signalled in the phrase “form follows functions”, was achieved.

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INTERMEDIATE FORMS. A SPACE FOR REFLECTION, HERE AND NOW

Art research paper

Translation PL-EN: Maciej Jęczyński, MA

Contents

Introduction 163

An Intermediate Thought 164

The house in Bordeaux. On a *venustat* element from the Vitruvian triad 166

On a function that has lost what it held most dear 169

References 171

Sources of photographs 171

Abstract

This article focuses on the issue of functionality in architecture and gradually analyses it, from the nearest to ourselves, most minor, to the most capacious scale. Our living space, our home, our local public spaces, our cities, but have they always been ours? Did they not belong to past generations, hold other contexts, and occupy another time? What saved these spaces from becoming forgotten, lost and ultimately destroyed? Intermediate Forms are architectural reflections on times in between the past and the future, the moments that occupy the present. They are a specific links between what was and what is yet to come. In their provenance, they were created as a precise response to the needs of the past. Needs that have changed or even vanished as time progressed. They are the relics of the past; their affordance reaffirms their quality.

This is not only functional architecture.

These interiors are not just static.

These are evolving forms.

It is all that has grown beyond need.

Keywords

architecture beyond function, intermediate forms, affordances of function, ethics, dialogue, evolution, adaptation

Introduction

We live in a radical present, in which few ponder the future. The future of our planet, the future of the next generation, the future of our city, backyard or inhabited building. It engulfs us here and now. I often think about such ideas through the lens of my field of specialization, architecture, and find similarities. More specifically, we are losing our roots, our identity and our originality. We are building functionally and ad hoc. We are erecting ever-greater monuments of function. What will happen to these monuments in the face of accelerated change? The change we have recently witnessed – Covid-19 - has entered our daily lives unannounced, and also without our approval, has begun to induce spatial revolutions.

The years of Covid-19 are times of enormous spatial disparity. We left office buildings, schools, galleries, theatres and gyms empty. Places with extraordinary capacity were left vacant, while our dwellings were forced to quickly absorb the function of those places. Living space has been limited for economic reasons. For many, what mattered was not dwelling size, but instead proximity to city centre was favoured. We worked in offices, exercised in numerous sports complexes, we met with friends in restaurants and bars. We used the city as an extension of our modest, private spaces.

Our dwelling was an intimate space, that virtually only served us. It was a place of relaxation and preparation for our next outing. It was the sole witness to our physical imperfections and mental weaknesses. However, what happens when this space becomes the background to our professional lives? How should we frame our webcam? Is the backdrop we choose for our professional encounters an orchestrated scenography or an invasive slice of our privacy? What does this display divulge about us? Can we liken the experience to losing a layer of clothing on our body; a kind of outer cloak where the colour, texture and thickness define our tastes and individualities?

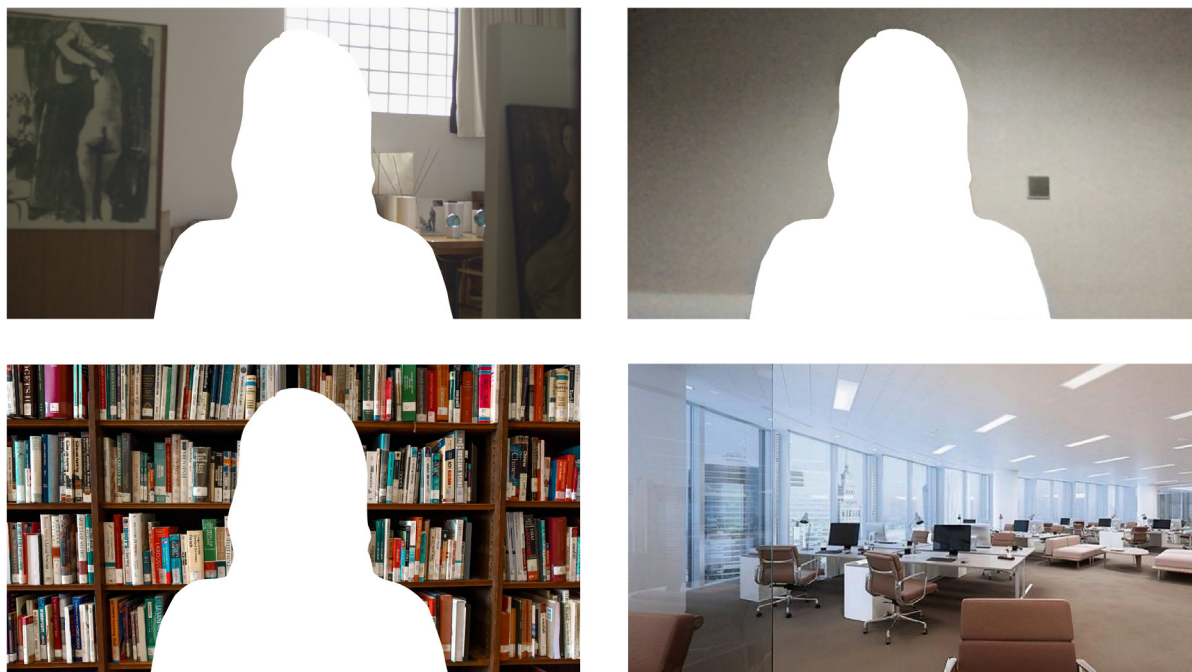


Fig.1. Snippets of privacy: exposed privacy (top left, illus. by the author); hidden privacy (top right, illus. by the author); privacy filled with attributes of knowledge (bottom left, illus. by the author); empty office space (bottom right, illus. by the author), <https://www.rp.pl/Ekonomia/309159909-Plany-na-razie-krotkoterminowe.html> [accessed: 10/07/2021].

Our present must redefine the relationship between private and public space, between indoor and outdoor space, become safe but not isolated.

Changes are happening, that require architecture to be highly flexible in its focus. Flexibility is needed to look beyond the main function of a space. This article focuses on non-functional aspects of architecture that provide complement to architecture with ethics towards the place and the Other¹, ecology, aesthetic values and finally the ability to change. Change of ownership, surroundings, climate and function.

An Intermediate Thought

Intermediate Forms is an exhibition presented by Martyna Rajewska in cooperation with Jolanta Kwarciak². *Intermediate Forms* are negatives that were discarded in the process of laser cutting

1 „The Other is also sometimes the building. Behind its appearance is the realisation of someone's plans and dreams. What also stands is the ethical ability to coexist with what is built next door” (J. Dominiczak, *Miasto dialogiczne i inne teksty rozproszone*, Gdańsk 2016, p. 143).

2 *Formy pośrednie*, wystawa, J. Kwarciak, M. Rajewska, curator: S. Gałuszka, Kolonia Artystów, Gdańsk, 05/11/2020 - 04/12/2020.

model-making elements. *Intermediate Forms* became a record of the void between being and non-being. The exhibition was created to give a new form to what has been rejected. Its final form was centred around a framework designed to support, organise and distribute these negatives.

Intermediate Forms obtain their context not only from their initially lost form but also from the perspective of being a link between a closed institution (lockdown) and the passers-by looking in its windows.

An impulsive response to the Covid situation forced the closing of all galleries immediately after the vernissage of *Intermediate Forms*. The result was a loss of an exhibition for conscious viewers, and a new form was born; an exhibition for accidental observers and curious eyes. It is a relationship full of potential affordances.

Several features of the gallery were initially thought to be problematic to the design of the exhibition: the non-standard, unenclosed, daylight-filled, ground-floor gallery. These features later became pillars of how the project was presented. The Gallery building is the corner of the development quarter at Grunwaldzka Avenue, in the central part of Gdańsk Wrzeszcz. It has large windows facing the Avenue on one side and the square at Waryńskiego Street on the other. This unique location allowed spectacle of light filtered by the installation became a property of a public space. Unlike the private and often obscured windows of dwellings, the gallery windows encouraged passers-by to look in. The exhibition itself became the property of the exterior (street, square) rather than the interior of the building itself. It was turned towards passers-by rather than patrons. The exhibition emphasised the value of the city, the city as a space for actual contact with culture – however shaken during the pandemic.



Fig. 2. *Intermediate Forms*, through the window, photo by the author.

The city's culture is contained not just within academies, galleries, opera houses or theatres, but also within buildings that grow out from their local tissues. Buildings shape an architecture that cannot be found anywhere else. An architecture coupled to the surrounding landscape, climate, specific human needs, based on local materials. Authentic architecture builds its originality based on its origin.

The house in Bordeaux. On a *venustat* element from the Vitruvian triad

This is the story of a space designed on the basis of a particular need. The client, Jean Francois Lemoine, lost his mobility in a car accident, and ever since needed a space that would improve his everyday life. In a conversation with the architect (Rem Koolhaas, OMA), he spoke of his requirement: to create a space that is more than functional and not only sprung from the need to improve his mobility: „Contrary to what you would expect, I don't want a simple house. I want a complex house, because the house will define my world”³. The architect undertook this task.

Furthermore, the frames he designed became a metaphor for the picture frame, which limits and aesthetically complements the work itself. He framed the views, filtered and gave rhythm to the light,

3 J.F. Lemoine, conversation with architect, Rem Koolhaas, 1994, online: <https://archeyes.com/maison-house-bordeaux-oma/>, [accessed: 08/08/2021].

and created an everyday life without routine, though full of rituals. Despite the rational solution of a single-storey house, three houses are built, one on top of the other.

The lowest level is a series of caves carved into the hill, designed to bring the family together. The ground floor, at garden level, is an almost transparent space, a little inside a bit of outside; and the upper floor is a space dedicated half to parents and children with an essential separation of their separate parts⁴.

In the centre of the dwelling is its mechanical heart, a 3x3.5m platform designed as an office for the owner, Jean Francois Lemoine. An office which, thanks to its hydraulic structure, moves between all building floors, and the Owner is the only one who has full access to the library organised over the entire height of this establishment.



Fig. 3. The House in Bordeaux, <https://www.oma.com/projects/maison-a-bordeaux> [accessed: 16/06/2021].



Fig. 4. The House in Bordeaux, <https://www.oma.com/projects/maison-a-bordeaux> [accessed:16/06/2021].

This project did not make a problem out of the owner's disablement, but instead challenged the architecture to create a situation in which the owner is most privileged. It is only he who fully benefits from the performative possibilities of this architecture. Only for him, the platform is moving up and down. He is the director of the daily spectacle - a spectacle not of fiction, but complex realities.

However, what happens when that director goes missing? Jean passed away after 2 years of finalising the design of this intriguing house. A house that owes its appearance to its owner's mobility „handicap”; one might be tempted to say that the house learned to move for him or that they moved because the owner's will that transferred into the building's mobility. Since 2000, the house which had such functional purpose, has become non-functional due to the loss of its owner. Non-functional, but not untrue. It is a spatial record of an individual's history. A beautiful case realising the thought formulated by Tadao Ando:

After having secured the functional basis of a building, I search how far it can be detached from function. Architecture lies in the distance between it and function⁵.

The House in Bordeaux has detached itself significantly enough to be called art. Art that fulfils various functions, but which do not constitute its essence. For me, art is the possibility of affordance, often an affordance of function, a well-designed space enables rather than restricts. It's extraordinarily capacious, and when left to itself, forms the air in an incredibly poetic way.

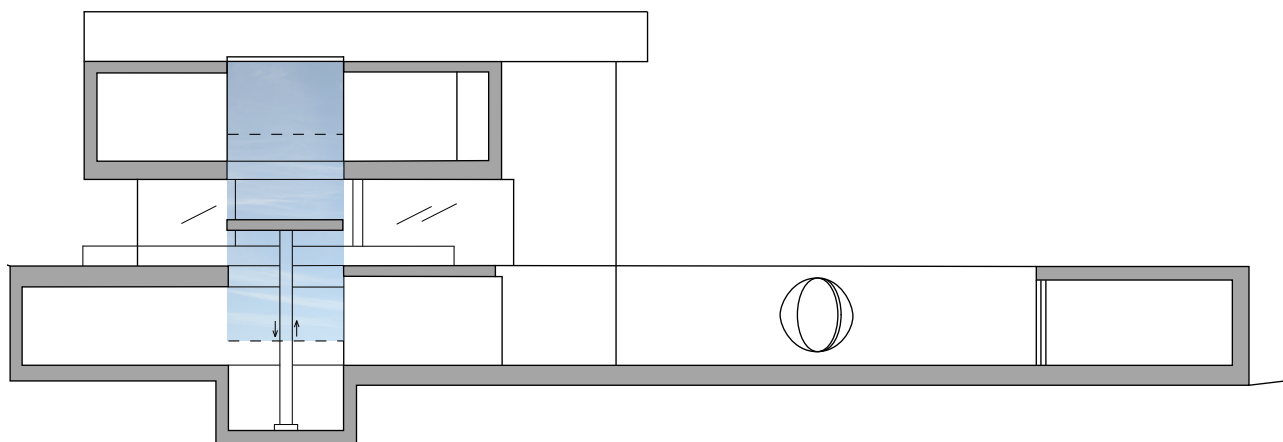


Fig. 5. Cross-section through the house in Bordeaux, illus. by the author. The blue area defined by the platform moving on the hydraulic lift is the „beyond function” space. The dashed boundary lines define the extremes of the horizon line variation for a seated platform user. This is the space of an expanded horizon.

On a function that has lost what it held most dear

Loss of function is the case for many factories, post-military buildings and, more recently, sacred architecture. In response to the trend towards secularisation, Dutch and German churches have for some time been transformed into cultural institutions. The abandoned buildings of the Gdańsk shipyards, former German factories, and bunkers have become the stage for many festivals and artistic events. What makes us give them a proverbial second chance and not let them go? In the words of the Finnish architect and writer Juhani Pallasmaa, buildings that show us their imperfections, corrosion, decay and general aging arouse our empathy and a sense of compassion. At the same time, perfect structures appear self-sufficient, not in need of our affection.

In the inherent tendency towards rationality, perfection and timelessness, buildings tend to remain outside our emotional and empathic reactions. The layering of traces of use, wear and time usually enriches the architectural image and invites our empathetic participation. Architectural ruins offer particularly potent images of nostalgic association and imagination, as if time and erosion would have undressed the structure of its disguise in utility and reason⁶.

Writing from the perspective of the Imperial Shipyard of Gdańsk, it was precisely the empathy cited above that saved its buildings from devastation and in some cases complete demolition. Thanks to local activists, photographers, architects, people who got to know the shipyard, spent time with it, built a relationship⁷, and fostered the discussion about its protection, subsequent revitalisation began. In the album *Stocznia Szlaga*, published in 2013⁸, the photographer and neighbour of the Gdańsk

6 J. Pallasmaa, *The Embodied Image, Imagination and Imagery in Architecture*, New York 2011, p. 77..

7 „[...] fall in love with what I see. Because what we love we will not harm. We are as good as we can for what we love” (P. Zumthor, *Myślenie architekturą*, Kraków 2010, p. 98).

8 M. Szlaga, *Stocznia Szlaga*, Gdańsk 2013.

Shipyard, Michał Szlaga, documents the slow collapse of the giant shipping structures in a graphically sublime way. Overturned cranes, falling gantries, the torn metal structure of the trusses, punctured walls, thousands of square metres of cut up metal pieces. All these factories, offices and warehouses were witnesses to monumental changes and freedoms that sprung from this place. They were also magnificent structures with sublime geometry, often exposing their structural framework. The shipyard is so deeply rooted in Gdańsk's history that the people of Gdańsk fought hard to keep it alive. The aforementioned album by Michał Szlaga, was originally intended as a photo-journalistic farewell to this place, but instead it became the motive for saving these colossal structures and their history. We can look at the album as a manifesto which refuses to accept another collapse of the giants. Today, these giants are zoned as historical and as such, protected. It's no doubt that had the changes been made earlier, more of them would have been preserved. Nevertheless, I feel an incredible satisfaction that the melancholic and very human-like decline of these architectural organisms, presented in Szlaga's album, has spurred us on to fight for their protection.



Fig. 6. Photo from the book *Stocznia Szlaga*, photo by Michał Szlaga, <https://culture.pl/pl/dzielo/michal-szlaga-z-ksiazki-stocznia-szlaga>, [accessed: 03/07/2021].

One cannot question the need to protect architecture that possesses historical, cultural and aesthetic importance. It seems difficult to extend this need to architecture that is purely functional. Revisiting an earlier idea discussed within this text, the pandemic times are times of change, both worldview and spatiality.

We have learnt to work, do our shopping and participate in events online. Though I do not worry that we won't return to cultural centres, I question whether the same will be true in the case of mono-functional office blocks and shopping malls. What will happen to them? What is next? Will they manage

to adapt to the new needs? It is this ability to adapt that for me, is the true measure of the buildings quality and the space contained within them. It's akin to evolution in nature, existence depends on ability to continuously adapt.

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INTERDISCIPLINARITY OF DESIGN ARTS

Art research paper

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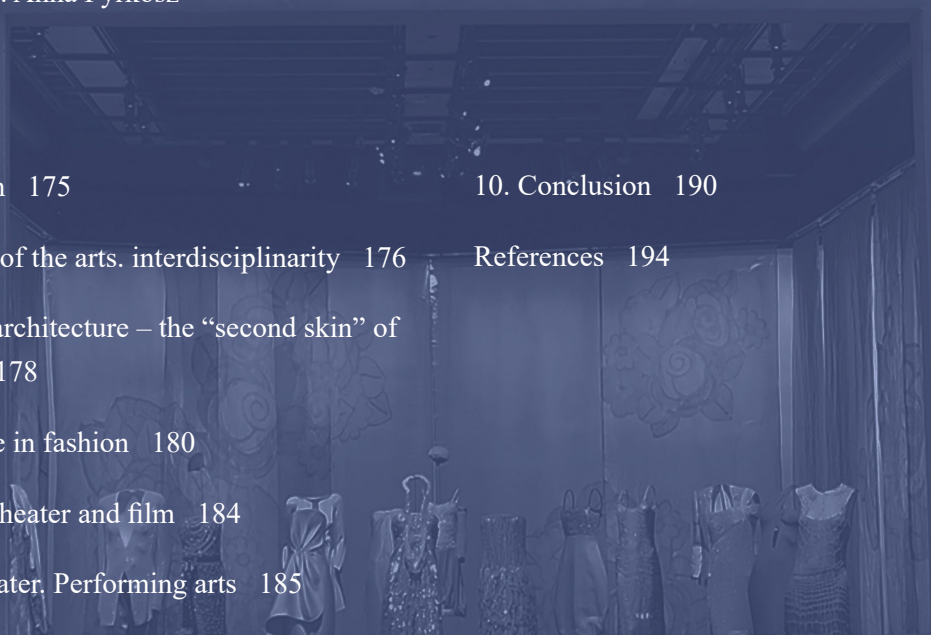
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Contents

1. Introduction	175	10. Conclusion	190
2. Syncretism of the arts. interdisciplinarity	176	References	194
3. Fashion in architecture – the “second skin” of the building	178		
4. Architecture in fashion	180		
5. Fashion in theater and film	184		
6. Fashion theater. Performing arts	185		
7. Crossing borders. Transgression	187		
8. Transculturality	188		
9. Site-specific art	189		



Abstract

The text takes up the problem of interdisciplinarity of fashion, architecture, exhibition, activities bordering on theatre or multimedia, pointing to the multifaceted relationship between fashion and broadly understood art. It shows that clothing design is a multi-media art.

Keywords

fashion, interdisciplinarity, clothing, show, architecture, space, exhibition, multimedia, art, science, aesthetics, creativity, education, culture, synergy, transdisciplinarity, transculturality, performance

[...] an architectural dream, an unrealized plan?

I would like to design something beyond conventional architecture – something between architecture and landscape or architecture and clothing.

Kengo Kuma¹

1. Introduction

In culture and modern art, what is important – because it is revealing, interesting, innovative and, at the same time, fundamental for the development and formation of future artistic attitudes – takes place between artistic conventions and preferences. These processes occur especially between the articulations of different media belonging to, or derived from, the visual and audiovisual arts.

In art and science, and in the design arts above all, the fundamental process should be interdisciplinary activity, dynamic interpenetration of disciplines and fields of science, art and technology in order to experience, experiment, to expand fields of creative experience and boundaries of knowledge about people, their place and space for life. In universities, the priority remains to set culture-forming horizons, develop tools to describe the world, change its rules, launch transformation processes in order to open up to the diversity of experiences and aesthetics, **to undermine, verify existing schemes limiting creative thoughts and activities.**

This idea is confirmed by the enormous potential of the interdisciplinarity of activities as unparalleled inspiring for the creative attitudes of contemporary designers. In an important way, its specificity is determined by the mutual overlap of different disciplines of art, science and technology.

The concept of interdisciplinary cooperation has a fundamental impact on the configuration of teaching units of higher (artistic) education, which develop and update their program guidelines on an ongoing basis, responding to the latest re-evaluations of contemporary art, science and culture.

Visual arts are a programmatic synthesis of media that simultaneously affect our different senses as recipients. The result is the combination of many fields of art using different means of communication in one realization, including also various scientific and artistic disciplines. With the development of digital forms of communication, there have been far-reaching changes that have their consequences in the ways of experiencing and understanding **the phenomenon of fashion in the sense of clothing**

1 Quoted from: Marcin Sapeta in: „Architektura-Murator”, 2009, N° 11.

design². Fashion projects are created in teams, often called “collaborations”, in cooperation with photographers, filmmakers, engineers or computer scientists. These ensembles reach for architecture, music or nanotechnology and, as a result, their activities also gain a performative character³. The process of these transformations is still ongoing. For example, at the beginning of the 21st century, a new type of **film, called “fashion film”**, developed. It shows fashion projects in the form of digital images. Fashion collections are exhibited together with works of art, they have their own museums and galleries. At the same time, artists and art curators, but also sociologists, philosophers and aestheticians, undertake research on the phenomenon of fashion as a socio-cultural and aesthetic phenomenon.



Fig. 1. Armani building, 2007 – Armani Silos Mediolan, photo: B. Gibała-Kapecka.

2. Syncretism of the arts⁴. interdisciplinarity

The phenomenon of blurring genre boundaries characteristic of art

The most difficult process taking place in the fields of science, art and technology, which binds together in coherent wholes elements seemingly or really contradictory, because they come from different disciplines or specialties, is the so-called “**syncretism of arts**”. One of its examples a creative combination of fashion, photography and multimedia.

Since the end of the 20th century we have been asking ourselves why there is a need for interdisciplinary design activities in the building of a work, object or artistic event. To convey the character of the contemporary world, the changing and dynamic reality that surrounds us, a one-dimensional medium

2 Bogna Dowgiałło (the University of Gdańsk), *Socjolog w szafie. Prezentacja techniki pomocnej w badaniu ubierania się jako działania*: “[...] it is fashion that makes dressing an important part of social life. It is thanks to it that social diversity gains not only a new expression, but also a new plane on which it can be formed and validated. It is not without reason that fashion as a full-fledged social phenomenon was the subject of investigations of such classics as Thorstein Veblen (2008), Gabriel Tarde (1904), Ferdinand Tönnies or Georg Simmel (1980)”; http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/PL/Volume22/PSJ_9_2_Dowgiallo.pdf

3 <https://www.google.pl/search?q=husan+chalayan+pokaz+wy%C5%9Bwietlenia+led&source>.

4 Syncretism is ubiquitous in art: the “synthesis of arts”, i.e. an attempt to find a common language for art despite various forms of expression, feeling art with more than one sense (E. Olinkiewicz, K. Radzymińska, H. Styś, *Słownik encyklopedyczny. Język polski*, Wydawnictwo Europa, 1999).

is no longer enough. **In order to be able to realize diverse, artistic and creative statements**, forms referred to as **“multi-media configurations”**. are necessary. These assumptions do not refer only to sublime forms of art and culture. Tendencies to blur the boundaries of media and sensory impressions and interactivity in creative processes **arouse interest** and the opportunities used, also outside the field of art, are perceived as fully legitimate activities⁵.

One of the essential elements of presentation of fashion in relation to clothing is the selected frame of the space. Its character, given by the shaping and composing in the aesthetic dimension, makes it both a kind of staging and exhibition with *theatrical* features, where various conventions of artistic expression, such as a collection of clothes, scene design, multimedia and others, enter into mutual relations, where everything has an impact on the reception of the whole spectacle, starting with costumes, background music, and ending with editing. Nowadays, it is becoming **a desirable skill** to construct newer and newer images for designed events. In response to these challenges, avant-garde forms of expression have emerged. These are, among others, multifaceted **artistic visual installations**. Their most important feature is visuality built based on the so-called “visual narratives” which we assume at the basis of creating artistic statements. As a consequence, we can experience events and objects from a broader perspective, in a more comprehensive dimension, perceived as **a more attractive, reflective message, because it engages our various senses**. As a result of such demands, an unconventional tool is created to present these creative activities, to communicate to others our judgments and sensory impressions and, thus, to process and create “things of the world” **anew**. The interdisciplinarity of the actions taken is inscribed in this process by all means, so that the recipient or user can interactively participate in the so-called “augmented reality”, experiencing the phenomenon of immersion⁶, to be **evoked** by the works, to immerse themselves in the real and virtual world, gaining **the opportunity to freely choose their viewing and experiencing**. For this purpose, **multi-directional** explorations are conducted, design takes place **in many aspects, on many levels of the process** of creation, **multi-threaded** compilations of various systems of combinations of ideas are created⁷, means of expression are selected and juxtaposed, and interdisciplinarity is an indispensable active state of these in-depth, complex in their structure, creative searches.

Contemporary art has no hesitation in borrowing from haute couture or prêt-à-porter fashion. An example is the artistic photographic works of Erwin Wurm made for the well-known clothing brand Palmers, which used visionary costumes by Walter Van Beirendonck⁸.

5 FLUXUS, eg. Grupa ETC, *Narracje estetyki geografie Fluxus w trzech aktach*, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.

6 The phenomenon of immersion (the process of absorption of the recipient) concerns multimedia arts, but it also finds references in other types of creativity.

7 Yves Saint Laurent, when designing the dress, was inspired by the painting by Piet Mondrian, one of his favorite painters. In 1965, the *Mondrian dress* was added to his collection, it is synonymous with the sixties and one of the most famous designs in the history of fashion (Kerry Taylor, London auction house); <http://www.blogdimoda.com/gli-abiti-la-storia-della-moda-foto-46948.html>

8 Erwin Wurm, the session for Palmers, 1996, suyhnc.tumblr.com.

Both the creators emphasize that in fashion they find great potential that allows them to manifest opinions and inspire change. Fashion shows, presentations or installations can **have such a strong and important message** as works of art, it is about creatively combining fields, while pointing to an interdisciplinary approach to fashion and art.

In the project entitled “13 Sweaters”, Erwin Wurm emphasizes the importance of clothing as a “second skin” which clearly shapes our image in the eyes of “others” and “our own”. The clothes of the exclusive Hermes brand, in turn, served him to transform the models into semi-abstract sculptures. The project with the intriguing title “59 Items” was intended to create gallery art objects, not a commercial campaign of market products. The beginning of the idea of reconfiguring clothes into artistic objects were much earlier projects by Erwin Wurm, entitled “Pedestals”⁹.

The artist reversed the order of things in them. Instead of setting the figures on a pedestal, he dressed the pedestals in knitted clothes to express the idea of combining geometric figures with the anthropomorphic idea of the body.

Marc Jacobs, the head designer at Louis Vuitton, designed the collections in collaboration with avant-garde Japanese artists: Takashi Murakami and Yayoi Kusama. Kusama’s characteristic dots covered Vuitton’s handbags, coats, and shop windows¹⁰.

By definition, working on complex **interdisciplinary projects** requires finding available tools and means, and inventing a whole spectrum of new ones, so that they result in original **visual-formal** projects (so-called “visual-formal messages”).

3. Fashion in architecture – the “second skin” of the building

All areas of life are subject to cultural and sociological conditioning, so it will not be surprising to indicate similarities and mutual formal connections or visual analogies between fashion, i.e. clothing, and, for instance, architecture.

Thanks to the digital design and the introduction of lightweight technologies to the market, architects have an opportunity to transpose techniques associated rather with textiles, such as prints or lace¹¹.

9 Erwin Wurm, Big Coat 2010, MURM CLLC, <http://www.erwinwurm.at/>.

10 Marc Jacobs, the exhibition of the Louis Vuitton store, collection design in cooperation with Yayoi Kusama, <http://exspace.pl/articles/show/1918>.

11 *Skin+Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture*, examples and comparisons: overprint – the architects transpose the features of patterns, openwork and textures, printing them on facades to give the structures a narrative dimension. The second skin, the “clothing”, reflects identity of context. 6a Architects, Eley Kishimoto, Hairywood Tower for The Architecture Foundation, Old Street, London, 2006; Hussein Chalayan, Architectural Print Dresses from Before Minus Now collection, Spring/Summer 2000..

Herzog & de Meuron uses braided structures (the Olympic Stadium in Beijing, 2008)¹² or **façade quilting** (Prada Epicentre, Tokyo, 2003)¹³. as a means of expression particularly zealously. A great example is also our Polish pavilion designed and set up at Expo 2010 in Shanghai. The young authors (W. Kakowski, M. Mostafa and N. Paszkowska), looking for cultural references, reached for folk cut-out as an inspiration. It is a design object, such as Marcel Wanders' „Crochet chair” which looks as if it was made entirely of delicate lace¹⁴.

In order to strengthen the experience at many levels of perception, at the end of the 20th and early 21st centuries, a direct way of linking the space of presentation of collections with the spectacular architectural spaces became an attractive concept for fashion brands. Fascinating settings for the most famous fashion companies are created by star architects including Herzog & de Meuron, Renzo Piano, Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel or Rem Koolhaas.

By transposing features, following characteristic shapes in the collections of a given brand, referring to the ideological concepts guiding them, visionary architects create unprecedented blocks of urban buildings. They create gallery spaces with surprising technological and formal solutions with sophisticated innovative material combinations. Exhibitions of clothes and accessories combined with architectural structures take on the dimension of works of art.

The concept of “interpassive shopping”, which is the result of research carried out by Rem Koolhaas, gave rise to architectural trends in fashion. In 1999, at Harvard University, the architect and his students developed guidelines for the concept of “interpersonal shopping”. Together, they proved that sales in stores increase when the shopping is done without pressures generated by the environment. It has been observed that the intriguing shape and interesting arrangement of store interiors, and the name of a recognized creator, add to increase popularity of the company, thus shaping its new image. Koolhaas, having presented the results, was able to verify them in practice almost immediately. He was offered to design Prada stores (New York¹⁵, Los Angeles) and the brand soon launched stores in this convention designed by other well-known architects and fashion companies. The trend has become widespread, which is why there have been so many recent ideas to transform modern retail space into cultural and exhibition centers. Architects use available high technologies and various possibilities of expression, especially in the expression of subtle transparencies, light and movement. Dior and Chanel department stores should actually be called “art galleries”. The same applies to Armani who commissioned the design of their store to Massimiliano Fuksas. It is also necessary to mention

12 Herzog & de Meuron using braided structures (the Olympic Stadium in Beijing, photo by T. Kapecki; Bird's Nest, stadium); architects: Ai Weiwei, Pierre de Meuron, Jacques Herzog, Li Xinggang in Beijing, photo by T. Kapecki (photo at the end of the article)

13 Prada Epicentre, Tokyo, 2003, photo: B. Gibała-Kapecka (photo at the end of the article)

14 Wanders Marcel, <https://www.marcelwanders.com/>.

15 Photo at the end of the article – Rem Koolhaas, Prada Epicenter, New York, 2000/2001.

P&C in Cologne by Renzo Piano's design studio, Frank Gehry's TriBeCa project in New York or Tod's store by Toyo Ito in Tokyo¹⁶.

The development of new commercial architecture is a trend particularly evident in Japan, where it is associated with fashion trends represented by many architectural gems designed by Japanese and foreign architects¹⁷.

The concrete ornament on the façade of Tod's Tokyo store designed by Toyo Ito, referring to the context of the place and synthetically transposing the appearance of neighboring trees, can be perceived as a mannerist, arbitrarily applied decoration, while it has been conceived as an essential structural element of the building. As a result of the use of fillings in the form of glazing in one plane, it is also a reference to the metamorphosis of openwork fabric. Considered together with the integrally designed element of lighting in LED technology, it generates transparency, which dematerializes and gives the form the effect of lightness, making the architecture a variable multimedia object with the characteristics of a work of art.

The closeness of links between fashion and architecture results from similar functions, and the perceived relationships are based on the fact that works in the both fields are based on form and construction¹⁸.

"The idea is to make a work of architecture and a work of tailoring art beautiful and functional at the same time." A good fabric, texture, which is a two-dimensional plane, is an essential requirement also when choosing an architectural material. The right form, construction and, finally, the cut model the external space, interior space or silhouette. In addition to the fact that it protects, providing a covering, it ennobles, as well as decorates, creates – whether it is an image, space or scale¹⁹.

4. Architecture in fashion

Changes in fashion also occur under the influence of evolution in architecture. Fashion has always been subject to evolution, but especially dynamic seasonal changes began in the 20th century. Such architectural styles as Gothic, Baroque, Modernism, Eclecticism or Postmodernism were also reflected in the fashion proposed by individual designers. However, in contrast to architecture, in which styles are transformed especially as a result of the development of technology and are not repeated so

16 Photo at the end of the article.

17 Ewa Maria Kido, <http://www.polenia-jp.jp/obserwacje-japonskie/item/855-architektura-i-moda/> [15/05/2017].

18 <http://inkultmagazine.com/blog/fashion-rei-kawakubo>, <https://pl.pinterest.com/modlar/frank-gehry/>.

19 *Skin+Bones...*, examples and comparisons: structures – Diller Scofidio + Renfro Alice Tully Hall Renovation, New York 2009; Slideshow, Gehry Partners Todd Eberle, Los Angeles 2003; Heatherwick Studio/ East Beach Café, Littlehampton 2007; Moda – Comme des Garçons Ensembles from Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body, collection Spring/Summer 1997; Stretch nylon-urethane fabric; down pad Courtesy of Comme des Garçons.

often, in fashion stylistic references or processed inspirations return much more often, e.g. the style of the 1960's 1970's.

Fashion creators also use elements characteristic of architectural objects. Wardrobe collections are presented on catwalks around the world decorated with elements of such "building" materials as metal, glass or wood, which make the clothes similar, or refer to, formal structural solutions or decorative elements characteristic of well-known buildings²⁰.

Recently, the fashion world has also been fascinated by the achievements of the latest technologies, reaching for multimedia and digital fabrics. The outer surfaces of clothes take on the function of coatings-screens to emit various images and patterns, as it happens with **media facades**²¹.

For the first time, using a technical trick, they were suggested to the Belgian duo Viktor & Rolf in a show under the eloquent title "Long Live the Intangibility" (the autumn 2002 / winter 2003 season). This time, the designers known for their sophisticated and careful designs of outfits made all the clothes from fabrics in the shade of blue used in the TV "blue box". Guests of the show could watch the models simultaneously on the catwalk and on screens where, in real time, various views and ornaments were applied in place of the blue fabrics. At the exhibition entitled "Skin + Bones. Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture"²² presented an intriguing para-architectonic project of Hussein Chalayan, considered the greatest experimenter in the world of fashion, intriguing in its correlation of artistic statements²³.

Hussein Chalayan has created a set of electronics and furniture, which consists of four armchairs and a table, and which in a few dozen seconds can be converted into clothes and suitcases useful in case of need for a quick escape. This "portable architecture" for wearing like clothes is an **intriguing work on the borders of fashion, architecture and design**, and, presented in the form of an exhibit and an instructional film, it fits into **the primal functions of the discussed fields: the protection of the human body from external influences**.

20 Paco Rabanne, Fashion and Architecture, Armored Space Princess Dress, *12 experimental and unwearable dresses in contemporary materials*, <http://www.mikapoka.com/2010/07/paco-rabanne-designer-and-rebel.html>. Paco Rabanne zawsze znajdował się pod wpływem architektury, jako że ukończył Wydział Architektury w École des Beaux-Paco Rabanne has always been influenced by architecture, as he graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. On February 1, 1966, a collection of *12 experimental and unique costumes made from contemporary materials* was displayed, which was an artistic manifesto.

21 <https://www.google.pl/search?q=husan+chalayan+pokaz+wy%C5%9Bwietlenia+led&source>, <http://edition.cnn.com/style/article/hussein-chalayan-innovation-and-the-fashion-industry/index.html>.

22 *Skin+Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture* is organised by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA) Somerset House Strand, London WC2R 1LA 020 7845 4600, info@somersethouse.org.uk, www.somersethouse.org.uk.

23 <https://architectureandfashion.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/huschal2.jpg>, <https://pl.pinterest.com/pin/473933560757918753/>.

The authors of the “Skin + Bones” exhibition have undoubtedly given a new perspective on the both fields. Using more than two hundred works by over fifty innovative architects and designers from the last dozen or so years, they showed surprising convergences and connections in the search, in relation to both the form and the technology, and common inspirations in the process of creative thinking of simultaneously used methods of work.

Analogies are shown on examples of formal solutions used in relation to the outer shells of architectural solids and costumes, or to the construction of clothing and the structure of a given object. The both fields have evidently emerged as signs of prestige and a tool for, or way of, expressing the authors’ identities. Based on collected and developed examples from the both disciplines, mutual relationships were demonstrated, manifesting themselves already **at the end of the 1980’s**, when minimalist trends became visible on the catwalks, giving rise to the same trend in architecture. A characteristic feature was the shaping of the form in such a way that the function, construction and outer shell constitute a single, synthetic, inseparable whole.

In the 1980’s, for the first time, fashion questioned the concepts of beauty and femininity and introduced concepts of the body in a conceptual dimension. It should be noted, however, that the beginnings of the transformation lie in the fashionable punk costumes from the late 1970’s, which already took the initiative in deconstructing clothing, while showing a “politicized tendency”.

In 1982, architect Bernard Tschumi won the international design competition for the Parc de la Villette in Paris. His work and the associated collaboration between architect Peter Eisenman and philosopher Jake Derrida introduced the ideas of “deconstructivism” into architecture.

On May 15 of the same year, the exhibition entitled “Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design” opened at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It was the first fashion exhibition treated as an equal discipline in the field of design, organized by curator Susan Sidlauskas. The exhibition presented achievements of eight designers called “fashion architects”, who share a tendency to minimalist design and conceptual tailoring: Giorgio Armani, Claude Montana, Ferre²⁴, Mandelli, Shamask, Issey Miyake, Yeohlee Teng and Stephen Manniello. During the vernissage, Issey Miyake said that fashion should not be separated from other design disciplines and pointed out that the fact that MIT had prepared this exhibition should inspire students to become not only computer but also fashion engineers.

This groundbreaking exhibition was the first public fashion presentation to explore the architectural aspects of contemporary clothing design while combining these disciplines into creative intercultural

dialogue. Since then, the mutual exchange of practices has provided a lot of inspiration for future architect designers²⁵.

In recent years, the relationship between fashion and architecture has been expressed even more strongly thanks to the already widely used computer technology, as a result of which there has even been a kind of “coexistential exchange, when costumes begin to resemble architecture and buildings resemble costumes”²⁶. Fashion designers create mobile, structural forms. Hussein Chalayan’s dresses have already gone down in history: remotely controlled, turning into angel wings or transforming into a flying snake.

Architects sensitive to fashion often engage in the design of clothes or jewelry. A well-known example is the Japanese architect Kengo Kuma who participates in the design of MaYu jewelry. Clothes, handbags or shoes reflect trends in construction, but also the aesthetic side of formal solutions of buildings, clearly noticeable in such directions as constructivism or minimalism.

Mutual influences, absorptions of architecture and fashion, can also be seen in the work of such fashion designers as Martin Margiela, Issey Miyake or Alexander McQueen and such architects as Tadao Ando, Kazuyo Sejima or Daniel Libeskind. In the both fields there are many outstanding figures. Among them the already mentioned Hussein Chalayan or Rei Kawakubo who admit how important inspiration fashion is for them. The influence of fashion on architecture is also reflected in the symbolic sphere of the work.

The use of metal, membrane structures, light glass, durable structural glass and plastics in contemporary architecture, as well as inspiration from deconstructivist or expressionist trends, has crossed the boundaries of architectural ateliers and construction sites to find themselves on the catwalks. It is clear that the development of modern fashion was also influenced by the development of textile technologies, which allowed to produce materials that, for example, are sensitive to ambient environment change thanks to built-in sensors. Materials resistant to climatic conditions also inspired the creation of clothes. Architects, in turn, continued to transpose traditional tailoring techniques of pleating²⁷, stitching, cutting, draping or applying transparent layers, which allowed them to design flexible,

25 *Skin+Bones...*, examples and comparisons: deconstruction – Ralph Rucci, autumn / winter 2005; Comme des Garçons, Junya Watanabe, Martin Margiela, spring / summer 2005, architects: Eisenman Architects Project for a garden design, Parc de la Villette, Paris, France Presentation model of first scheme, June 1986; Nigel Coates New Wing, Royal College of Art, London (competition design) 2000

26 *Skin+Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture* is organised by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), Somerset House Strand, London WC2R 1LA 020 7845 4600, info@somerset-house.org.uk, www.somerset-house.org.uk.

27 *Skin+Bones...*, examples and comparisons: pleating – Issey Miyake introduced an innovative technology of pleating fabrics, resulting in structural clothing, collection, Pleats Please material (Miyake’s most innovative project was considered to be a “self-transforming” outfit under the name A-POC – A-Piece-Of-Cloth – as well as the concept of Making Things – a new principle of giving the fabric form by the user himself – a proposal for the 21st century); architecture – Gehry Partners – IAC Building, New York Digital prints i Alber Elbaz – Lanvin Dress autumn / winter 2003–2004.

transparent, non-flammable, and even folding and portable buildings (such as the Chanel Mobile Art mobile pavilion designed by Zaha Hadid)²⁸.

Of course, the means of expression of architecture and fashion will always differ but both can be changeable, seasonal, universal or ephemeral. Progress and experiments in material technology and computer software make it possible to shift the boundaries between the two disciplines, making buildings more attractive and costumes more geometric, for example²⁹.

5. Fashion in theater and film

[...] the actor's clothing, characterizing a given character [...], the costume better reflects the era in question; it is such a transfer into another world [...], the set design and costume allow to properly introduce the viewer into the atmosphere of the performance [...].

Today, space is built with costume, prop, light. Glossy floors, mirrors, aluminum, colorful lights and effects "boost" the performance. Against this background, the costume associated with an actor must appeal to the viewer. It is a complement to the stage design: a creation, not a simple reproduction of historical truth. It defines the characters, talks about their profession, social status or character. The theatrical costume is actually the only external attribute that the actor can reach for, which is why it is very important that the stage dress allows the artistic concept of the performance to be realized. The fashion for costume in the theater is constantly changing.

Martin Margiela, a master of theatricality, **repeatedly emphasized that the most important is the vision that embodies in clothes: "cut, rework, deconstruct and draw fabrics from everything at hand". He is significantly interested in the texture of the material.** The designer uses unusual materials to produce his unusual creations. He likes to combine the softness of fabrics with hard materials, referring to the idea of a formal solution to the iconic dress of Yves Saint Laurent³⁰ inspired by the work of Piet Mondrian, testifying to how much **fashion owes to art.**

Digital fashion films³¹ are a form of (re)presentation of fashion, which has fully developed in the 21st century. They were started by Nick Knight, a photographer whose interests develop around the

28 <http://bubblemania.fr/pl/bulle-zaha-hadid-architects-art-mobile-chanel-art-contemporain-container/>.

29 *Skin+Bones...*, examples and comparisons: geometry – Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan 2004 and Yohji Yamamoto Whalebone Top and Skirt from Wedding collection Spring/Summer 1999; J. Meejin Yoon Möbius Dress, 2005, Felt Views of Möbius Dress Looped and Unlooped 2005 and Eisenman Architects Max Reinhardt Haus, Berlin (unbuilt) 1992–1993.

30 Zob. <http://www.blogdimoda.com/gli-abiti-la-storia-della-moda-foto-46948.html>. One of the most famous fashion designers of all time, Yves Saint Laurent, when designing a dress, was inspired by an abstract painting by one of his favorite painters – Piet Mondrian. The dress, which got the name in his honor, went to the creator's collection in 1965. *Mondrian dress* is synonymous with youth and fun of the swinging sixties. "It's one of the most famous designs in the history of fashion," says Kerry Taylor of London-based Kerry Taylor Auctions, which specializes in selling luxury vintage fashion (<http://www.tvn24.pl>).

31 A. Raciniewska, *Cyfrowy film modowy*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Bankowej w Poznaniu”, vol. 67, 2016, N° 2.

possibility of showing “clothes on the move”³². These “visual fashion re-presentations” are just as present in the fashion world as actual physical shows. Fashion films are made in cooperation with professionals from the industry and beyond, reaching for fine arts, music, architecture or performance backstage in order to explore new forms of aesthetic expression. They are to emphasize and strengthen links between fashion and art. The SHOW.studio.com platform created by Nick Knight and Peter Saville, which they based on values such as movement, time, duration, sound, participation and dialogue, enabled the creation of the subgenre of the digital fashion film called the “designer’s film”³³.

6. Fashion theater³⁴. Performing arts

Costume exhibitions often contain elements of a scenographic nature. Similarly, contemporary **fashion shows** have been raised to the rank of real shows³⁵ with sophisticated scenography, extensive scripts, sound and lighting effects. **In this way they emphasize links between theatre and the world of fashion, clearly showing the interdisciplinarity of activities in the areas of knowledge, science and art** more closely related to theatre, such as costume design, music, visual arts, multimedia or exhibition, and even textiles³⁶. **The form of the spectacle is art referred to as performance**, combining music, dance and theater interspersed with playing social and professional roles, with the use of media, as well as the Internet. So, in this form of creation, in the fundamental dimension, there is a simultaneous synthesis of image, sound, movement and narration.

Also fashion is a form of performance, although it is argued that this applies *strictly* to the “style of dressing”, which is a certain category of rebellion against what is personalized. By embracing symbolic forms, it affirms individual and cultural values. This type of art, artistic expression, assumes that fashion is a regulatory mechanism in the society, occurring in the form of performances played every day, and clothing is one of its most important elements. The way we dress, on the one hand, makes it possible to fulfill the need for belonging through imitation and, on the other hand, it becomes a means of emphasizing our individuality and creating identity.

Currently, fashion houses make spectacular shows, a kind of performance art³⁷, providing a variety of aesthetic experiences. These shows take place in an area arranged in an extremely visionary way, **at**

32 Ibid, p. 96.

33 Ibid, p. 98.

34 In order to prove that, despite the post-war crisis, Paris is still the capital of fashion, French designers proposed in 1945 an unusual form of presentation of the latest fashion creations. Instead of models, they used dolls that were exposed against the background of an extensive scenography.

35 “Life is theatre”. This is mentioned by E. Goffman in his work “Man in the Theatre of Everyday Life”. Each of us has a role to play, puts on masks and constantly plays, communicating with others. It is important to be aware of the subject and that he has to communicate something. In performatives, what is important is what happens between the viewer and the work of art.

36 Speaking of the complex relations between art and science, it is impossible not to notice the activities of artists drawing from science (cf. Victoria Vesna and her pioneering activities).

37 <https://kulturalnyswiatm.wordpress.com/2014/10/14/niezwykly-performans/> NIEZWYKŁY PERFORMANS [14.05.2017].

a specific time and place: site-specific. It is important that the subject of artistic reception is not only the presented collection but the entire performance consisting of the place, scenography, choreography, script and performers presenting creations.

Of course, one can agree that the real performance takes place on the street, where different people meet, becoming active participants in the ongoing process of arranging space, at the same time as presentation and observation. This definition of performance, the artistic situation, includes Lady Gaga's artistic performances. The artist also in her everyday life, through her stage creation "external in character", gives her actions a dimension of a street performance, playing a significant social role, e.g. assuming an eloquent creation in the form of a dress "sewn" from raw meat.

The vast semantic field of performance allows us to perceive fashion as interdisciplinary activities of a cultural nature.

Another example of an artist using fashion in his work is the Italian artist Vanessa Beecroft who engages models for her artistic projects (performances), turning them into motionless mannequins to record reactions taking place during contact with the audience³⁸.

In the space we are interested in, between fashion and art, there are also installations by Ewa Kulasek. The work entitled "Table with 12 Hats" consists of two tables, on which various colored and different-shaped felt hats are arranged in two rows. The hats, made by the artist, perform the function of sculptures but they are also purely functional and are suitable for wearing, which is visible at fashion shows presented under the SCHA brand. We find out how much fashion, art and performative activities, as well as social media, have in common, following the work of Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, called the master of color, a graffiti artist and an intriguing exhibitionist of the Facebook era, an avant-garde iconoclast, who in the 1970's and 1980's collaborated with such creators of contemporary art as Robert Combas or Loulou Picasso. The example of Castelbajac's work shows another way of combining fashion with art³⁹.

Fashion, in order to find inspiration and creative experiences, can cross all boundaries; for example, completely break with the scheme of classic presentation of clothes and models. During his shows, Hu Shenguang creates an atmosphere similar to that prevailing during a film adaptation of a horror, and the presented projects can hardly be called clothes: they are rather costumes behind which you can hide, but which you can not actually wear. These elaborate combinations of wire, leather, plexiglass and netting that the models wear make the whole thing look like moving sculptural objects taken from science fiction or horror movies. Often, by design, Hu Shenguang's shows abound in accents of horror. Studded with metal spikes, the costumes carry with them an aura of dark nightmares.

38 <http://www.radio-mazowsze.pl/index.php/moda-w-sztuce>.

39 <http://olkakazmierczak.com/blog/marka-jean-charles-de-castelbajac> [06/05/2017].

Artistic creation or performative activity, including fashion shows located in an interdisciplinary approach, consist in **crossing borders**. Fashion⁴⁰ is constantly expanding its borders, as a result of which it is consistently entering newer and newer territories.

7. Crossing borders. Transgression

Performativity is the work of imagination, permanently incarnating in new roles, contributing to the building of common experiences based on the need to simultaneously affect all senses (touch, hearing, taste, smell, sight or balance), because „the whole body is the perceptual organ”⁴¹. In these situations, space, having a fundamental impact on the reception, determines how and whether we experience it in the theatre of life, determines the distance between the stage and the audience, the object and the recipient, in order to touch our emotionality. Scenography understood as a broadly designed “visual narrative”, co-creating a performative space of assumed references and influences, and at the same time its reception, uses an evocative arrangement of spatial forms, matter and images. **Until now, philosophical concepts and artistic attitudes have largely assumed that it is the artist – the designer, architect, costumed – who decides what is to be seen and, to a large extent, how it is seen.** The designed reality defined by multimedia art in the field of exhibition accepts an increased expression of forms and means within possible equal areas of design, such as the exhibition of objects, 2D and 3D advertising projects, presentations from the video mapping category or animations. Therefore, with the advent of the 21st century, art is developing in many scientific fields, thus becoming an extremely dynamic area for research⁴². With the new century, important new issues have entered into life, which have given rise to different ways of thinking and, thus, stimulated intensive interdisciplinary scientific discussions and cooperation projects.

Among these issues, the most important are the latest **electronic technologies and the visual culture** which has been granted the status of a scientific discipline and which in many ways tries to understand what different types of images communicate and how they participate in building phenomena such as identity or dignity and freedom of the individual, important social and political values and concepts. We observe processes related to conducting multidirectional analyses in relation to various forms of popular culture – films, television programs, graphic novels – but also to fashion projects, using for this purpose theories and methodologies from the areas of such scientific disciplines as semiotics, sociology, psychoanalysis or reception theory (various models of coding and decoding media discourses; see Stuart Hall) and the important theory of view (the concept of “interpassiveness of

40 In the context of the suspension of “in between”, while for some fashion begins to become “art”, for others it has always been so

41 Edward T. Hall.

42 The author of the essay – Prof. Jean Robertson, Rector of the Department of Art History at the Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, <https://pl.khanacademy.org/humanities/global-culture/beginners-guide-contemporary-art1/a/art-in-the-21st-century> [20/05/2017]

view”; see: Jacques Lacan), which introduces a fundamental **change** for the creators **in the traditional logic of vision. In the Lacanian approach, “it is the image that designs and determines the coordinates of looking, it is the image that places the subject in the presented space”**⁴³. Creators of the 21st century, together with researchers of visual culture, dealing with images (projects) and media of various types, point to the complexity of the interactions between science and contemporary art, referring to scientific development. Inspired by the discoveries of mathematician and artist Ben F. Laposki, using the oscilloscope as a medium for abstract art creation, Kim Hagelind designs futuristic clothes. Hagelind creates outfits resembling sculptures made of laser-cut plastic (the “Oscillons” collection)⁴⁴. His creations kept in dark tones are created on the model of electronic abstractions.

Based on her research on the structure and history of tears, considered as a “private, intimate emotional experience”, designer Tomoko Hayashi creates **jewelry unique in the sensual dimension**. The artist places collected tears in a food substance traditionally used in the production of Japanese sweets, in order to create **a new kind of specific exchange of experiences**.

The presented collections of fashion objects have the dimension of works of art, aiming at visibility while implementing ecological and pro-social features, so in cooperation with various fields of industry and science, **clothes are created, for example, from paper that can be recycled, or from a whole series of super fabrics made from nanofibers of nickel, copper or silver**, textile fibers carrying electric microimpulses, or prototypes of clothes made of fibers from microcapsules, which cause the fabric to change its properties under the influence of temperature or light. In the fashion world, we are dealing with designers such as Olivier Lapidus who, using the latest technological achievements, creates, among other things, jackets that regulate temperature, while stylist Elisabeth Senneville is working on a project aimed at creating clothes that filter environmental pollution.

These avant-garde experiments with technologies, materials and form provide extraordinary feelings and bring reflection of an existential, philosophical nature. On the occasion of visual impressions, they question the usual patterns of thinking about fashion as a biased outfit.

8. Transculturality

The ever **faster** exchange of human activities and information in time and space – of course, thanks to the development of the Internet and mass media – means that the awareness of the vitality of contemporary art (21st century) in societies around the world is growing at a very **fast pace**. The constant

43 Katarzyna Swinarska, *Przemieszczenie. Interpasywność spojrzenia*, [http://www.asp.gda.pl/upload/private/przemieszczenie_streszczenie\(2\).pdf](http://www.asp.gda.pl/upload/private/przemieszczenie_streszczenie(2).pdf) [12/05/2017].

44 Kim Hagelind, *Oscillons* – the collection inspired by electronic abstractions and oscilions by Ben F. Laposki, 2011. Clothes made of plastic, photo by Alexander Dahl, <http://magazyn.o.pl/2013/zuzanna-sokolowska-czy-moda-jest-sztuka-cuda-niewidy/2/>.

intensive movement of artists results in the mixing of different influences and different artistic languages, and universal access to the network allows you to keep track of the achievements of artists from Tokyo, Seoul or Milan. As a result of this global, spreading at the speed of light, exchange of content, ideas and images, the implemented fashion projects also have a transcultural dimension⁴⁵. In the era of globalization, they grow out of multiculturalism, consciously using and combining cultural codes with experience and knowledge of the latest technological and scientific achievements.

The already mentioned Hussein Chalayan, through clothes, also tries to see the dependencies that determine the outfit and the reality that surrounds us. Presenting the video installations entitled “The Absent Presence” (2005) or “The Place of Passage” (2003)⁴⁶, **he forces us to consider fashion in aesthetic terms**, not limited to design. Words describing ideas, stylizations juxtaposing photographs and films in a mutual context, create a message about their purpose. The discourse and visual message, the introduced context of symbols raise clothes to the rank of **creative fashion** and clearly affect our idea of clothes.

This image is a product of our knowledge of similar forms, works of the same designer or creator with a similar style, but also the overlap of cultural clichés and, therefore, tradition which made the verbal and pictorial representation of exclusive costumes reach the audience in the right form.

9. Site-specific art⁴⁷

Today, fashion and related design activities refer to broadly treated artistic activity, addressing issues related to the coexistence of a person, recipient or user with his environment, considering important social issues and cultural development along with the changes taking place. Fashion issues identified by clothing or fabric and the technological processes associated with it also address **problems of the landscape environment**, referring to specific spaces and places of particular importance. Creative reference in the form of the formulation of the object, artistic expression is preceded by a study of the **“cultural matrix of the place”, the site-specific⁴⁸**, taking into account, among others, its historical, architectural, environmental or social aspects. So, there is an interdisciplinary and multi-discipline

45 Transculturality is a concept that was created by the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch. He says that today’s cultures are largely characterized by mixing, penetration and hybridization, cultures no longer have the previously suggested form of homogeneity and distinctiveness. The concept of transculturality as a new concept of culture arose in response to the lack of satisfaction with concepts such as multiculturalism and interculturality. Transculturality is a term representing contemporary tendencies in the philosophy of culture and in the area of cultural studies, dealing directly with the study of cultural spaces.

46 Hussein Chalayan, *Miejsce przejścia*, 2003. Color and sound, screenplay and direction of the film: Hussein Chalayan, 12’10”, courtesy of Galerist, Istanbul.

47 Site-specific art was initially described by architecture critic Cathrine Howett and critic Lucy Lippard as a movement.

48 The field of art that includes works of art created to function in a precisely defined place. This place is usually known in advance – it is already taken into account in the design stage of the work itself. It refers to architecture, interior architecture / show / scenography. Also, works using the achievements of blue box technology obtain the described feature.

cooperation. An example of this is the “Transfashional”⁴⁹ project based on an experiment of young artists and designers operating on the border of fashion and art with a goal of crossing the boundaries between the disciplines. From the search for alternative solutions, they work to develop a “production” of ideas. Many of their creations are characterized not so much by wearability (or rather by their distinctive feature is a functionality) as by a critical, **engaged conceptual character**. In this sense, **they can be read as symbols and symptoms of the spirit of our times**. Artist Lara Torres in her video essay “Unmaking” urges viewers to stop and think about what fashion will be created in the future. The visual narrative consists of a series of performative gestures such as ripping or tearing, as a result of which “awareness of the symbolic meaning of the thread, fragment and everything that becomes a material trace of human existence” is built. The works of another artist, Ana Rajčević, taking the form of sculptures that can be worn, were aimed at activating both ancient and futuristic connotations in the recipient. Kate Langrish-Smith has gone a little further in her reflections on the concept of wearability and functionality, encouraging viewers to interact. The performative objects-sculptures designed and made by her imitate the movements of characteristic body postures. Other projects, using the language of artistic analysis, look for a potential in the materials used, experimenting with their destruction, creating from them sets of a nature of systemic sets for creating a variety of composition layouts on the user’s body. Graphic designer Maximilian Mauracher, in turn, undertakes in his site-specific installation activities related to the translation of graphic signs and textures into fabrics. Noteworthy is the series of interactive video installations⁵⁰ reaching for work with the text, in this case inspired by Robert Musil’s novel “The Confusions of Young Törless”, focusing on civic and creative attitudes in relation to the broadly defined environment, including cultural and social ones. Intriguing ideological assumptions were adopted by the artistic project by Manory Auersperg. **The recipient participates in the process of tracking the transformation of the original structure of the fabric to its total destruction: then there is a complete change in its relationship with the surrounding environment. This multi-threaded and creative analysis has a deeply contextual background, with an indication of its significant role in the sustainable planning of our environment.**

10. Conclusion

A significant role in the current post-humanist culture is attributed to design, fashion and advertising, which make us “observe a systematic and intense esthetization of the everyday life of each of us”, including the environment closest to us: home, workplace or recreation⁵¹. The phenomenon of fashion

49 *Transfashional. Eksperymentalna moda w kontekście sztuki*, the Ujazdowski Castle’s Centre for Contemporary Art, <https://asp.waw.pl/2017/05/09/transfashional-pokaz/>.

50 Authors: Janusz Noniewicz, Dominika Wirkowska, Wojciech Małolepszy, Robert Pludra and students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. The organizers of the *Transfashional* show – the Austrian Cultural Forum in Warsaw in cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (Die Angewandte) and the London College of Fashion, with the support of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Constitution and Media.

51 B. Dziemidok, *Główne kontrowersje estetyki współczesnej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 306.

should therefore be looked at comprehensively, as an important means of expression regulating the social life of people and their interpersonal contacts.

According to Gilles Lipovetsky⁵², the French sociologist and philosopher, fashion already “at the end of the 19th century began to be a common form of socialization”⁵³, and now it consists in the taste for having all novelties. In our consumerist culture, every day there is an exchange or borrowing between different fields and disciplines of knowledge, science and art, as a result of which **fashion has also begun to “go beyond ready-to-wear clothes”**⁵⁴.

Iris van Herpen⁵⁵, considered to be an advocate of the digitization of fashion, creates her futuristic designs at the interface of art, architecture and technology. Using 3D printers and laser technology to process various types of polyurethane plastics and metal, she gives spectacular evidence of legitimacy of undertaking interdisciplinary explorations. Sophisticated, very complex laser cuts determine the matter and futuristic form of the objects designed by her. In cooperation with Isaie Bloch, an architect and graphic designer, she has realized one of the most valued hybrid creations: the “Magnetic Motion” depicting the result of the collision of two nuclear molecules. Using Mammoth’s new stereolithography technologies, an additive fabrication technique, a three-dimensional object was created layer by layer in a one-piece form that is the physical equivalent of a computer project. It should be emphasized that reaching for solutions and workshop possibilities brought by the latest technologies is dictated by the need to implement the most daring, often very complicated, projects.

Designer Nicolas Ghesquière is currently the greatest authority on futuristic fashion. Working for the Balenciaga fashion house, and then for Louis Vuitton, he became famous as a precursor of new technologies in fashion, designing futuristic creations in a “cyber” climate for “women from the future”, considering as a priority the need to combine virtual media with the realities of everyday life.

In avant-garde projects, fashion combines futuristic technologies with a conceptual approach to the role of cut and fabric, placing itself between work of art and creative engineering. Thus, fashion is activated as a visual art at the junction of various poetics, media and technologies with emotional potential, also presenting reflective and metaphorical searches. In such examples of creation, it seems obvious to say that fashion is an interdisciplinary art, and its vision sets the future directions for the development of visual arts and the broadly understood culture of society.

52 B. Dowgiałło, *Socjolog w szafie. Prezentacja techniki pomocnej w badaniu ubierania się jako działania*, „Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej”, vol. 9, 2013, no 2, p. 184–201, online: www.przegladsocjologiijakosciowej.org [26/05/2017].

53 P. Nowak, *W stronę Ja relacyjnego? Moda, autoprezentacja i tożsamość*, <https://books.google.pl/books?id=9pbFBgA-AQBAJ&pg=PA346&lpg=PA346&dq=badacze+o+modzie&source#v=onepage&q=badacze%20o%20modzie&f=false> [22/05/2017].

54 <http://magazyn.o.pl/2013/zuzanna-sokolowska-czy-moda-jest-sztuka-cuda-niewidy/#/>.

55 <https://www.google.pl/search?biw=1371&bih=679&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=van+Herpen&oq,> also the author of selected creations m.in for Björk and Lady Gaga.

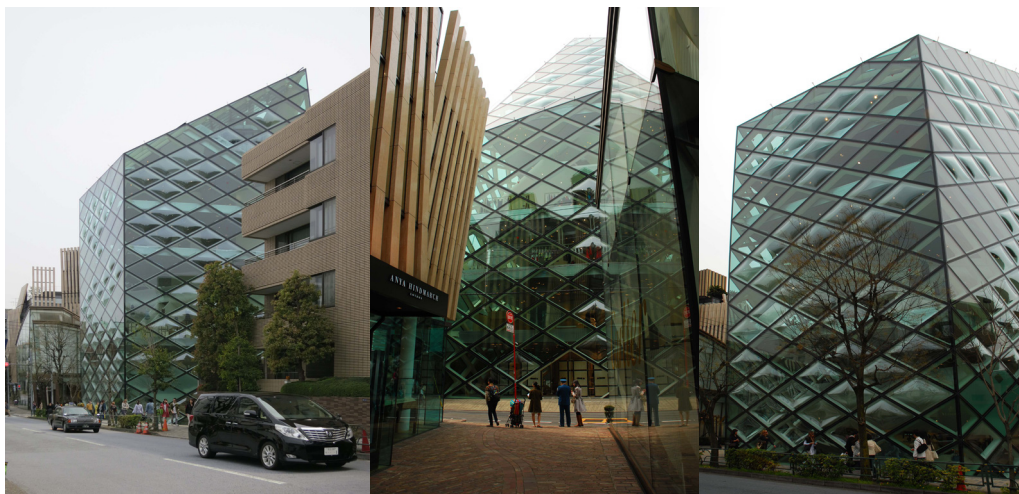


Fig. 2. Prada Epicentre, Tokio, 2003, photo: B. Gibała-Kapecka.



Fig. 3. Rem Koolhaas, Prada store in New York, photo: B. Gibała-Kapecka.



Fig. 4. Tod's store by Toyo Ito in Tokyo. photo: B. Gibała-Kapecka.



Fig. 5. Mikimoto Building by Toyo Ito in Tokyo, photo: B. Gibała-Kapecka.

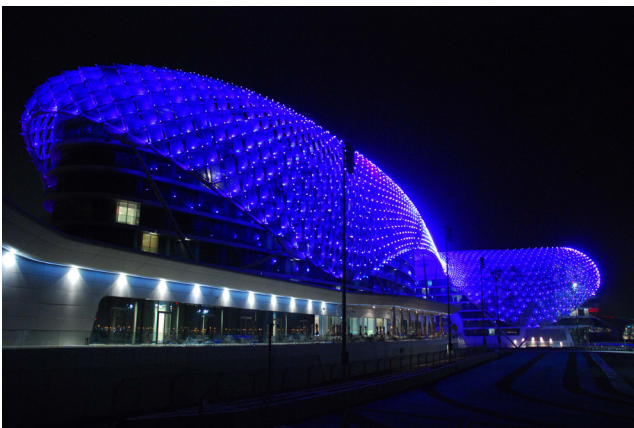


Fig. 6. Yas Hotel, Abu Dhabi, by Asymptote, 2009, photo: B. Gibała-Kapecka.



Fig. 7. Beijing National Stadium, „The Bird’s Nest”, by: Ai Weiwei, Pierre de Meuron, Jacques Herzog, Li Xing-gang, photo: T. Kapecki.

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