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UNCOMPROMISING? THE SPACE OF THE ABSTRACT WORLD OF EMOTIONS

BEZKOMPROMIS? PRZESTRZEŃ ABSTRAKCYJNEGO ŚWIATA EMOCJI

An architect creates a setting for a long, slowly unfolding action, so it must be flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen improvisations. During the design phase, a building should be ahead of its time whenever possible to fit the period of its life.¹

Steen Eiler Rasmussen

Abstract

Space is an abstract term encompassing a complex set of concepts. People living in different cultures differ in the way they divide and interpret the world. The methods of dividing space are individual, varying in complexity and sophistication. However, there are fundamental similarities stemming from the fact that humankind is the measure of all things. Uncompromising architecture reveals a futuristic, detached image of the creators' abstract world of emotions – a madness, a desired avant-garde. Analyzing the structure of reality and the immediate human environment within it, the study was based on subjectively selected works by the group of artists: Coop Himmelb(l)au and Andrea Palladio. The research adopted the method of logical argumentation. The research process is a search for the space of the abstract world of emotions. The research results present an uncompromising architecture of living space.

Keywords: avant-garde, living space, Andrea Palladio, Coop Himmelb(l)au

Streszczenie

Przestrzeń to termin abstrakcyjny, obejmujący złożony zespół pojęć. Ludzie żyjący w różnych kulturach różnią się sposobem, w jaki dzielą i interpretują świat. Sposoby wydzielenia przestrzeni są indywidualne, zróżnicowane pod względem stopnia skomplikowania i wyrafinowania. Istnieją jednak zasadnicze podobieństwa, wynikające z faktu, że człowiek jest miarą wszystkich rzeczy. Architektura bezkompromisowa ujawnia futurystyczny, oderwany od rzeczywistości obraz abstrakcyjnego świata emocji twórców – szaleństwo, pożądaną awangardę. Analizując strukturę rzeczywistości i bezpośredniego w niej otoczenia człowieka badanie oparto na subiektywnie wybranych pracach grupy twórców Coop Himmelb(l)au i Andrea Palladio. W badaniach przyjęto metodę logicznej argumentacji. Proces badawczy stanowi poszukiwanie przestrzeni abstrakcyjnego świata emocji. Wyniki badań przedstawiają bezkompromisową architekturę w przestrzeni zamieszkiwania.

Słowa kluczowe: awangarda, przestrzeń zamieszkiwania, Andrea Palladio, Coop Himmelb(l)au

¹ S.E. Rasmussen, *Odczuwanie architektury*, Karakter, Kraków 2023, p. 11.

1. INTRODUCTION

A world of emotions, a world of beliefs and clashes. A world of abstractions, new challenges, intertwining cultures, interfering with the image of urban spaces. A world of modern identification of contemporary mentality, interacting with the historical urban fabric. A powerful desire for new experiences or changes that engages users' attention and interest. What is new today is old tomorrow. Do we pursue the new – but is it not that just commercialism?

We are tired of seeing Palladio and all the other masks of history. That is because we do not want to separate anything uncomfortable from architecture. We want architecture that gives more. Architecture that bleeds, struggles, falls, and, for me, breaks. Architecture that sparkles, stings, tears, and breaks if stretched.²

Humans, as social entities, create habitation within their own spatial and temporal dimensions, determined by the course of biological functions and liminal moments: birth and death. Urban space combines physical features and human experiences. How we perceive it is a conscious choice of color and shape – elements previously remembered through experiences that bring us joy. According to Heidegger, forms shaped in this way constitute the crucial point of the philosophy of being – as an entity that relates to being and reveals the being hidden behind it. Heidegger termed this mode of *existence*, thus proposing a new philosophy of thinking about art and architecture.

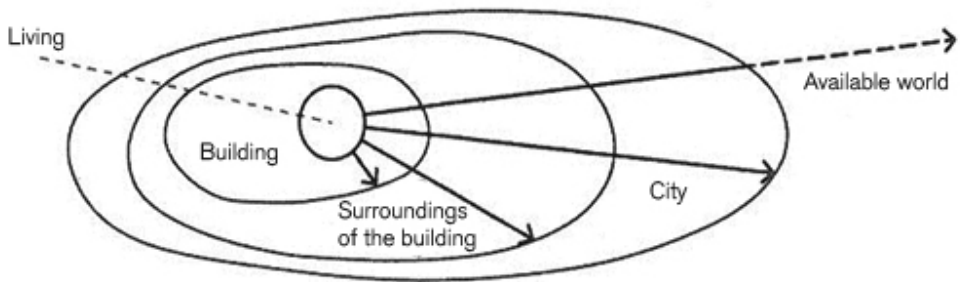
2. INTERPRETATIONS

Identifying with the environment, understood as a long-term stay in a familiar space, can be described as act of dwelling, which refers to the state of an entity existing within its surrounding space. We live not only in our home, but also on the street, in a neighborhood, in a city, at work. A dwelling defines a place in the material space that is most inseparable from a person as a three-room apartment. Dwelling/living – expands the scope of the concept and outlines its meaning in a spatial context, moving into a state of subjective awareness and felt emotions³.

The interpretation of Abraham Moles and Elisabeth Rohmer finds the space of the dwelling in the context of territorialism – as successive spheres (*les coquilles*) that humans create around themselves.

² T. Kozłowski, *Architektura emocji i przypadku: przeciw tradycji architektury*, “Technical Magazine, Architecture” 2009, no. 1-A/2, p. 351.

³ For Otto Friedrich Bollnow “(...) living means to be at home”, source: O.F. Bollnow: *Eigenraum* (after Nold Egenter, *Individual space*). For Leon Battista Alberti “(...) home is a small town”, source: L.B. Alberti, *Książ dziesięć o sztuce budowania*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1960, p. 149.



III. 1. Classification of Moles and Rohmer's theory of vectorial space acquisition, based on a multi-stage continuum – frames for events functioning in subsequent shells of the opened world, source: G. Nawrot, *O współczesnych formach zamieszkiwania w mieście*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej Gliwice 2015, p. 111

Andrea Palladio viewed the space of a building as a separate entity, independent of others. All parts, when combined, create harmony and tranquility^{4,5}.

The place of living can express a semantic or functional definition as: *locus, nidificium, praesaepium, aedicula, conceptaculum*⁶.

Sławomir Gzell undertook research on urban space and the living space it contains, demonstrating that space is an individual good and commonly used. Therefore, it must have the status of a public good. This establishes criteria for qualifying urban space, obliging public authorities to plan and implement urban planning projects⁷.

The creation of space can be accomplished using material or immaterial means. Shaping residential space occurs in two ways: as a *place* or as a *state*, defined by a set of activities defining its character. Understanding a living as a *place* refers to the assumptions behind the design of physical space. Understanding living as a *state* of being refers to the design of a set of activities that define that state⁸.

Architecture does not serve only utilitarian purposes; it serves abstract purposes⁹. A series of activities that create elements commonly considered *abstract* – directs its

⁴ “Beauty will result from beautiful forms and the proper relationship of the whole to the parts among themselves and the parts to the whole, because the building should present itself as a complete and finished organism, in which each member speaks to the other, and all are necessary for the intended whole”, source: J. Wujek, *Mity i utopie architektury XX wieku*, Arkady Warszawa 1986, p. 100.

⁵ “In every construction project, three things must be taken into account, without which no building will deserve recognition: (...) utility or comfort, durability and beauty (...)”, utility is function, durability is construction, beauty is form, source: A. Palladio, *Cztery księgi o architekturze*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1955, p. 116.

⁶ Each word in Latin denotes a *place*, while at the same time defining a different interpretation.

⁷ S. Gzell, *Wykłady o współczesnej urbanistyce*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Warszawskiej, Warszawa 2015, p. 23.

⁸ A. Gąsowska-Kramarz, G. Nawrot, *Kwalifikacja przestrzeni w kontekście czynności określających stan mieszkania* [in:] Nowe wyzwania dla polskiej nauki: Edycja VIII, Kraków, 5 i 12 12. 2020. Materiały konferencyjne. Streszczenia wystąpień, Creativetime., Kraków 2020, p. 11.

⁹ S. Syrkus, *Preliminarz architektury*, “Praesens” 1926, no. 1, p. 6.

perception. Abstract perception, in relation to an object's function, may result from the direct need to meet technical, technological, and legal requirements for use.

Architectural building space is shaped by specific activities, methods, and objectives. It takes place within a psychological, sociological, technological, technical, economic, and legal contexts. A synergy of construction exists between humans and their place of existence. A house or apartment – offers the possibility of new conditions for understanding actions in space, in the context of activities defining the state of being. Architecture begins to be subject to interpretation and spatial assignment. As an image of the creation of a mental idea, it is the transmission of shaped thought. The diversity resulting from social, economic, cultural, technical, and technological changes indicates the directions of development in a given period.

The essence of perceiving the actual image of Architecture does not stem solely from a superficial perception of its material dimensions, referred to as *form*. This *form* – shape, color – conceals the spatial structure of content created by the author¹⁰.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research adopted the logical argumentation method. Reality was interpreted using selected examples to understand the existing conditions. The analysis allowed for a focus on the meaning and significance of the obtained data. The research techniques employed included descriptions, explanations, and the author's logical interpretation¹¹.

4. RESEARCH

4.1. SEARCHING FOR A SUPERMODERN ADVENTURE IN SPACE – SYMMETRY AND BEAUTY – THE MADNESS OF THE HISTORICAL AVANT-GARDE ANDREA PALLADIO

A state-of-the-art adventure, a complete innovation in the design of ancient architecture. Through his design approach, Andrea Palladio became one of the most important Renaissance architects, whose works had a profound influence on the development of architecture in Europe and worldwide. As an architect of his time, he became a pioneer of innovative ideas. He demonstrated that existing architecture could become the material for exceptional works of art, changing the way we look at buildings and inhabited spaces, and transforming traditional perceptions. In buildings wrapped in plastic, everyone can find their own content and meaning, creating architecture – now a historical avant-garde.

Palazzo Valmarana, with its interior full of innovative solutions, spiral staircases, passages, and corridors, and Villa Rotonda, with its symmetry and madness of detail, became

¹⁰ G. Nawrot, *EHTIC Zabrze. Inspiracyjne konstruowanie przestrzeni architektonicznej*, "Builder", 2022, no. 7, pp. 34–38.

¹¹ E. Niezabitowska, *Metody i techniki badawcze w architekturze*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej, Gliwice 2014, p. 186.

a medium for philosophical reflection, in which design is not limited to form but touches upon the essence of being – of human existence in the world. Space is not merely the physical backdrop of human life, but an active participant in its existence – shaping emotions, identity, and social relationships.

Palladio's uncompromising Renaissance architecture demonstrates an approach to building design based on harmony, proportion, and classical beauty. It reveals a space that is part of the building, intended to be an independent entity, yet at the same time, all parts of the building form a harmonious whole. Functionality and classical monumentality become an icon.

4.2. THE MADNESS OF RAPTURE – TEARING APART AND UGLINESS – THE MADNESS OF THE CONTEMPORARY AVANT-GARDE COOP HIMMELB(L)AU

Rip-offs and ugliness, the introduction of freedom of artistic expression, and creative freedom that rejects all canons – the Coop Himmelb(l)au group represents a contemporary creation of artistic provocation. The forms they create are an expression of a contemporary interpretation of utility, durability, and beauty, in which the effect is more important than the idea and concept. The madness and detachment from reality reveal the most striking madness. More fractured, more effective.

The Musée des Confluences presents a world full of contradictions, where symbols, archetypes, the beauty and ugliness of shapes, life and death collide. The dynamic, progressive technical openings and closures are not so much evolutionary as revolutionary. Villa S demonstrates durability, utility, and beauty, taking on new meaning through immutable and timeless forms that break with tradition and embrace modernity. The dynamic and unconventional characteristics of the building contribute to a consumer-driven method of defining space, which may be regarded as irrational within architectural discourse. The space expands infinitely when left incomplete. Creation begins to rely on obsessive eccentricities.

The uncompromising architecture represented by the work of the Coop Himmelb(l)au group reveals the potential of space as a form of expression of emotion, tension, and the avant-garde.



Ill. 2. Villa Rotonda, Andrea Palladio, photo by author

Ill. 3. Palazzo Valmarana, Andea Palladio, photo by author



Ill. 4. Villa S, Coop Himmelb(l)au, photo by Gerald Zugmann, source: Coop Himmelb(l)au, <https://coop-himmelblau.at/projects/villa-s-1/> (access: 7.07.2025)

Ill. 5. Musee des Confluences. The Crystal Cloud of Knowledge, Coop Himmelb(l)au, photo by Raimund Koch, source: Coop Himmelb(l)au, <https://coop-himmelblau.at/projects/musee-des-confluences/> (access: 7.07.2025)

5. SUMMARY

The response of today's architecture and perceived beauty, the essence of their philosophy, is the creation of contemporary space as a result of eco-fascism among hundreds of pairs of Christian Louboutin shoes, an artificial creation of torn, cut, and broken facades, a surreal mystification to satisfy inner needs related to possession while forgetting about caring for the environment and people themselves.

On the other hand, Architecture appears when the project goes much further than its ordinary usefulness would require¹². The examination of space as an emotional, social, and philosophical concept yields several important conclusions:

Architecture can serve as a medium for philosophical consideration, where design not only encompasses form but also addresses aspects of human existence in the world.

The uncompromising architecture, represented by the work of Coop Himmelb(l)au, reveals the potential of space as a form of expression of emotion, tension, and the avant-garde. In contrast, *Palladio's harmonious concept* presents space as a source of order and classical beauty.

Space is not merely the physical backdrop of human life, but an active participant in its existence, shaping emotions, identity, and social relationships.

Living becomes an abstract world of emotions, understood not only as physical presence, but as a dynamic process of identifying, experiencing, and co-creating place – both materially and symbolically.

Contemporary design should therefore consider the multidimensionality of space: its physicality, emotionality, historicity, and social responsibility. Only then is it possible to create architecture that not only responds to needs but also inspires, provokes, and engages with people.

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¹² D. Kozłowski, M. Mozga-Górecka, *Zawód Architekt: Dariusz Kozłowski*, "Architektura Murator", 2014, no. 5, <https://architektura.muratorplus.pl/inicjatywy/zawod-architekt-dariusz-kozlowski-aa-ovJX-LeJv-RYUm.html> (access: 12.10.2025).

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