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BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY – CONCRETE REINTERPRETATIONS OF THE ARCHETYPAL FORM OF THE HOUSE IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

MIĘDZY TRADYCJĄ A NOWOCZESNOŚCIĄ – BETONOWE REINTERPRETACJE ARCHETYPU FORMY DOMU WE WSPÓŁCZESNEJ ARCHITEKTURZE

Abstract

While analysing examples of single-family houses constructed with the use of fair-faced concrete technologies in recent decades, one can find cases referring directly to archetypal forms of houses known from traditional construction. They are an aesthetically interesting phenomenon, which, through certain syntheses or simplifications resulting mainly from the use of monolithic concrete technologies, create a new quality in today's architecture. This play with a culturally established iconic model of the form of the house draws its impact from contemporary design trends and doctrines originating directly from the modernist thought of shaping space. The aim of the study is an attempt to describe the phenomena of reinterpretations and transformations of the archetypal form of the house conducted by contemporary creators, which take place with the participation of the aesthetics of concrete matter. It allows one to create an emotional dialogue between tradition and modernity of the architecture of a contemporary house.

Keywords: house, archetype, reinterpretation of form, concrete architecture, aesthetics of concrete

Streszczenie

Poddając analizie przykłady budynków jednorodzinnych realizowanych w technologiach betonów elewacyjnych, odnaleźć można na przestrzeni ostatnich dekad przypadki odwołujące się swym kształtem wprost do archetypicznych form domów znanych z tradycyjnego budownictwa. Stanowią one estetycznie interesujące zjawisko, które poprzez pewne syntezy czy uproszczenia, wynikające głównie z zastosowania monolitycznych technologii betonu, tworzą nową jakość w dzisiejszej architekturze. Ta zabawa z kulturowo utrwalonym, ikonicznym wzorcem formy domu, czerpie siłę oddziaływania ze współczesnych tendencji i doktryn projektowych, wywodzących się wprost z modernistycznej myśli kształtowania przestrzeni. Celem badań jest próba opisanego zjawiska reinterpretacji i przekształcania archetypu formy domu, dokonywanych przez współczesnych twórców, które odbywają się przy udziale estetyki betonowej materii. Pozwala to stworzyć emocjonalny w odbiorze dialog między tradycją a nowoczesnością architektury dzisiejszego domu.

Słowa kluczowe: dom, archetyp, reinterpretacja formy, architektura betonowa, estetyka betonu

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1. INTRODUCTION

Looking for inspiration or a pretext to design the body of a contemporary single-family house, creators of architecture often reach for the archetype of the house, which is deeply rooted in social perception and which identifies in itself the features of a commonly recognizable sign – a cultural icon. This desire to retrospectively recall the forms derived from historically established building rationalism and local traditions of erecting structures does not boil down to quoting the existing shapes literally, but it is an object of creative polemics embedded in the contemporary context, in which the return to the past in a new perspective is the basis for reinterpretation of the principles of creating the contemporary body and function of the house. The use of unconventional solutions in transforming the archetypal form of a residential building and the organization of human living space on the basis of canons derived directly from the modernist trends resulted in solutions based on the search for compromise between the past and modernity. The result of these pursuits was the architecture that aroused controversy and often extreme feelings, both among supporters of building in the so-called “traditional spirit” and creators referring to the ethos and consequences of modernism. This phenomenon is accompanied on the one hand by attempts to introduce synthetic simplifications, reduction of detail and giving purist character to structures by using non-traditional material – exposed concrete – as the main means of artistic expression. On the other hand, one can see the introduction of composition exaggerations and contrasts, often giving grotesque or even ironic character to buildings, which sometimes grows in its form to the rank of an “architectural joke” intended by the creator, which allows one to perceive such a method of shaping architecture in an incidental way in the overall creative attitudes of individual architects rather than a long-term widespread tendency in today’s architecture. It is difficult to judge whether the appearance of structures executed in the technology of architectural concrete in the last decades, in which one can find clear connotations and references to the archetypal form of the house, has any pioneering resonance in attempts to find a permanent trend in contemporary residential architecture. Perhaps this phenomenon is of ephemeral nature, oriented towards the immediate effect of short-term fashion, or it is the result of interest in the aesthetics of concrete in a new – not modernist, but referring to tradition – version. Nevertheless, with the years that follow, one can observe that there is an increase in the number of projects of single-family houses that are clearly inspired by archetypal forms made in fair-faced concrete technologies, which usually gain the status of a local recognizable icon, balancing between tradition and modernity. The archetypal image of such a monolithic house is popularized quite quickly both in professional magazines and in those describing current trends and tendencies in architecture.

2. DETERMINANTS AND CREATIVE MOTIVES

One of the leading and recognized theorists of postmodernism – Léon Krier – points to the coexistence of real world-view dualism in contemporary architecture. In the book *Architecture: Choice or Fate*, he claims that: *In fact, there exist today two kinds of modern architecture. An official, standardized, international-style architect’s architecture that may be perceived as arrogant or even provocatively aggressive; and a private architecture, often based on regional models, that attempts to blend naturally and harmoniously with the architecture of existing*

landscapes and cities"². While analysing at least a part of the completed projects selected from the circle of the so-called "concrete architecture", which constitute examples referring to the iconic image of the archetype of the house in their form, one could not but notice that architects often tried in a more or less intentional way to face the task of combining both these worlds, different and often contradictory in the aesthetic and ideological expression, in order to find a rational compromise – "golden mean" – allowing one to satisfy ambitions of creators, fulfilling the official dogma of modern architecture and social expectations connected with the so-called "private architecture" trend. The motives accompanying such creative actions seem to be different: from total pragmatism dictated by local conditions (including legal restrictions), the need to blend in harmoniously and respond to the existing cultural context of the environment, through the search for compromise solutions that meet the investor's expectations and are related to the need to create a new living space in line with the spirit of the times, but stemming from a sense of nostalgia for forms and solutions derived directly from the building tradition. Finally, the motives heading towards a complete, thoughtful and deliberate confrontation, or an attempt at polemics between the creator-architect and the existing iconic image of the archetype of the house that is strongly rooted in social perception. In these naturally justified and creative explorations, consisting in reinterpretations of old forms, there would not be anything especially arousing extreme feelings and controversy if it were not for the fact that the whole is complemented by the use of exposed concrete as the main means of artistic expression, provoking and enhancing the recipient's aesthetic experience. This (for many controversial) contrasting of the tradition of shape with the non-traditional character of the applied matter seems to be the main impact of this type of architecture on the recipient – the observer.

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AESTHETICS OF CONCRETE MATTER

The use of non-traditional material in a simplified shape, referring to the archetype of the house, emphasizes the visual contrast – a contradiction that challenges common stereotypes concerning the appropriateness of using unusual matter to execute the architectural form based on traditional solutions and patterns. The sophisticated styling of the concrete façades is emphasised by the use of monolithic technologies that allow for the possibility of creating a casting on the construction site, thus elevating the impression of the building to the rank of an architectural sculpture. The use of architectural concrete has provided an opportunity to realize artistic visions based on the archetypal form of the house in a manner appropriate to the contemporary artwork, dissociating itself from the need for the historical continuation of the tradition of building craftsmanship. This matter has gained special recognition among many contemporary creators of architecture due to its unique quality, which is indispensable for the artist-sculptor's technique. And this *resulted* – as Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński writes – *from the possibility of casting a kind of an architectural sculpture – resembling a bronze or cast iron casting. Acceptance and use of this first phenomenon: sculpting, became the realization of one of the architects' dreams*³. As a result of the development of concrete technologies, especially

² L. Krier, *Architektura, wybór czy przeznaczenie*, Arkady, Warszawa 2001, p. 15.

³ K. Kucza-Kuczyński, *Beton w architekturze mieszkaniowej*. Scientific conference: *Beton na progu*

in terms of the use of its aesthetic properties, architecture have again been able to become closer to the avant-garde of contemporary fine arts, and not only be perceived as a kind of craftsmanship associated with the construction of utilitarian things. Architects dealing with the subject of reinterpretation of archetypal forms of the house have gained an aesthetic tool in concrete matter allowing them to influence the emotions of the recipient. Owing to the selection of appropriate technology, creators can give the concrete form of the building raw aesthetics in expression, resulting from the brutalist texture of the pressed plank, or create a subtly smooth surface of the walls thanks to smooth-walled shuttering. Architects can also leave the natural grey colour of cement and reveal the aesthetics of the filler (aggregates). Concrete can also be coloured in mass, on the surface and through paint coatings. Its surface can be developed with exceptional care based on masonry techniques, or it can expose technological defects and flaws of casting, making them an intended means of architectural expression. Thanks to concrete, creators have gained the material that allows them to design and execute the sophisticated aesthetics of original works of contemporary architecture with the function of a single-family house. At this point it is worth recalling the moralistic statement of Steen E. Rasmussen from the book *Experiencing Architecture*, who wrote that: *Even the most noble materials lose their character if they are used without talent or understanding*⁴.

4. THE HOUSE

In the text of the lecture *Architecture*, published in 1910, Adolf Loos questions the assignment of a complete collection of things and phenomena accompanying the field of architecture to the “kingdom of art”, explaining and justifying the construction of a building as the result of a certain existential and cultural necessity, understood as the satisfaction of a specific rational human or social need. Loos claimed that: *A building should please everyone, unlike a work of art, which does not have to please anyone. A work of art is a private matter for the artist, a building is not. A work of art is brought into the world without there being a need for it, a building meets a need. A work of art has no responsibility to anyone, a building to everyone. The aim of a work of art is to make us feel uncomfortable, a building is there for our comfort. A work of art is revolutionary, a building conservative. A work of art is concerned with the future and directs us along new paths, a building is concerned with the present. We love anything that adds to our comfort, we hate anything that tries to pester us into abandoning our established and secure position. We love buildings and hate art. So the building has nothing to do with art and architecture is not one of the arts? That is so. Only a tiny part of architecture comes under art: monuments. Everything else, everything that serves some practical purpose, should be ejected from the realm of art*⁵. This statement by Loos, testifying to his radical convictions focused on pragmatism and his belief in the subordinate role of architecture in relation to the necessity resulting from the realization of overriding needs of man and society, became a clear voice in the change of creative attitudes

nowego milenium, 9–10 November 2000, Manggha Centre of Japanese Art and Technology, organizers: Polish Cement and the Association of Cement and Lime Producers, p. 2, http://www.dnibetonu.pl/archiwum-abstract/?pa_id=108 (access: 12.06.2019)..

⁴ S. E. Rasmussen, *Odczuwanie architektury*, Murator, Warszawa 1999, p. 165.

⁵ A. Loos, *Architektura*, 1910 [in:] A. Loos, *Ornament i zbrodnia. Eseje wybrane* (transl. by A. Stępnikowska-Berns), Centrum Architektury, Warszawa 2013, p. 153.

among architects at the beginning of the 20th century. The result was the marginalization of the significance of ornament, as one of the means of aesthetic expression of the building and the subsequent orientation of creative activities towards the principle of “material sincerity”. Loos gave this phenomenon a special expression in his essay *Ornament und Crime. Even today* – writes August Sarnitz – *Loos’s text has lost nothing of its ideological importance, since he has valued the ethical and moral aspects of architecture above all aesthetic and individual factors*⁶. In his publication *Revolution in Architecture*, Reyner Banham, in turn, draws attention to Loos’s introduction to the text of *Architecture*, whose positive resonance and universal acceptance of the contemporary avant-garde in architecture he paradoxically saw in *the apotheosis of rural design*⁷.

There is a certain analogy between the content of the Loos’s lecture and the contemporary and still relatively marginal concept of designing the architecture of houses constructed in the architectural concrete technology, in which the idea of the archetypal form of the house is a source of creative inspiration. This is the ethics and morality of an architect, often perceived more as an engineer-craftsman than an artist who, serving society in a creative way, tries to respond to the needs of man in accordance with his culturally and historically well-established ideas concerning the transformed environment and space, and does not treat the task entrusted to him as a result of creative egoism and mere realization of his own artistic ambitions, contrary to the expectations of the general public. Nevertheless, one should not erroneously or ambiguously perceive and interpret the willingness to realize individual aspirations of architects as an unethical or immoral activity towards the society, but look at this phenomenon in terms of creative proposals or individual approach to solving design tasks in order to satisfy the existing needs in a way that enables to bring new quality to the living space of a person and to his or her cultural development. Treating the profession of an architect as a kind of service to society, which results in searching for design solutions consistent with the expectations of that society, may also explain the motives behind the creator’s behaviour, consisting in reaching for the archetype of the house as a source of certain inspirations, based on a commonly recognized cultural pattern. The growing pluralism of creative doctrines in today’s architecture and the growing aesthetic diversity of completely different shapes defining the residential purpose of a single-family house have led to the need to strengthen the importance of the informative function of the form of the building itself. The reinterpretation of proven and rooted in social awareness patterns – icons, referring to silhouettes known in culture, evoking associations between the shape of a building and its purpose, has become one of the ways to seek inspiration or pretext for solving a design task that is a contemporary home. The symbolic dimension of the archetypal form of the house is a timeless value, dependent on the culture of a given society, which in the end translates into its architectural and aesthetic expression. Léon Krier draws attention to the role of this symbolism in the search for the nostalgic ideal of home, formulating the following conclusions: (...) *The declared intention of breaking with convention, the tabula rasa approach, reveals a lack of autonomy, an incapacity to sound out the perennial meanings of myth and archetypes. And yet “home” survives in all of us as the innermost refuge. The notion of home still has a fundamental meaning for each of us because we all come from somewhere, and we all feel the need to belong. If that desire is not fulfilled it turns to pain. That is the literal meaning of nostalgia – the longing to return, the pain of*

⁶ A. Sarnitz, *Adolf Loos 1870–1933. Architekt, krytyk, dandys*, Taschen/TMC Art, Köln 2006, p. 10.

⁷ R. Banham, *Rewolucja w architekturze*, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, Warszawa 1979, p. 100.

*being severed. Our ideal of a beautiful city, of a beautiful house, of beautiful architecture is not utopian; nor is it a fantasy or an impossibility. We have all experienced the reality of it and it works strongly inside us. We have found there an unimaginable feeling of freedom, a possibility of happiness, a dream of well-being*⁸.

5. CONCRETE REINTERPRETATIONS OF THE ARCHETYPAL FORM OF THE HOUSE – ANALYSIS OF SELECTED PROJECTS

5.1. RUDIN HOUSE, HERZOG & DE MEURON (JAQUES HERZOG, PIERRE DE MEURON, LUKAS BÖGLI), LEYMEN, FRANCE, 1996–1997

Rudin House (Ill. 1), designed by Herzog & de Meuron, should be considered a pioneering building, whose widely popularised image initiated further attempts to reinterpret the archetypal form of the house using the aesthetics of exposed concrete by other creators in the following years. The synthesis of the traditionally shaped body of the building allowed this project to achieve the status of an icon⁹ of a contemporary house with a distinct and recognizable character. Discussing the issue of *forms imitating and inspired by historical and traditional architecture* in his publication *Concrete and reinforced concrete and architectural forms of the 20th century*, Wojciech Niebrzydowski describes the building as follows: *The Rudin House, built in Leymen, France in 1997, is a European example of how concrete-reinforced concrete can be combined with a traditional form. Herzog & de Meuron created an architectural icon that is a synthesis of the form of a traditional house, using non-traditional material in a striking way. The simplified reinforced concrete block is covered with a gable roof without eaves. Monolithic walls are punctured with large rectangular and square holes. The form of the archetypal village house is complemented by a distinctive chimney. The building is set on a reinforced concrete platform raised above the ground, which in a way alleviates its visual load and makes the whole composition more abstract. A surprising solution is the abandonment of gutters – rainwater from the roof is directed to one of the end walls and flows on its surface directly to a small pond placed on the platform*¹⁰. This concise description to a significant extent defines and reflects a synthetic picture of the spirit of aesthetics that the creators try to achieve in the design of contemporary concrete houses, drawing on traditional patterns. A lot of these elements, such as the lack of eaves, exaggerated windows or the distinctive shape of a chimney, can be noticed in other projects of this type. The creation of *Rudin House* at the end of the 20th century led to numerous discussions and introduced a fresh look at the issue of the return to archetypal forms and the attempt to synthesise the essence of the image of such buildings, but shaped and composed on the basis of principles derived from modernism and, among other things, by using the monolithic aesthetics of concrete. That gave a sense of balance between tradition and modernity, not without the conviction that the creators introduce

⁸ L. Krier, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁹ J. Ruszkowski, *Ikona i archetyp*, Architektura & Biznes, 2002, no. 3, pp. 56–67.

¹⁰ W. Niebrzydowski, *Beton i żelbet a formy architektoniczne XX wieku*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Białostockiej, Białystok 2008, p. 96.

an element of grotesque and architectural joke, with a simultaneous impression of purism and monolithic form in an open landscape.

5.2. *HOUSE MEULI*, BEARTH & DEPLAZES
(VALENTIN BEARTH, ANDREA DEPLAZES, DANIEL LADNER),
FLÄSCH, SWITZERLAND, 1997–2001

House Meuli is an example of a house whose form, despite its irregular shape based on a pentagonal plan, was shaped in such a way as to blend in the rural context of the Swiss town of Fläsch. This is particularly visible against the background of the panorama of this village (Ill. 2), where, a modest though intriguing shape of the house presents itself surrounded by vineyards. The concrete building, with three above-ground storeys, is covered with a characteristically shaped roof, corresponding to the neighbouring buildings. This effect, along with irregularly composed window openings, gave a contemporary expression to the body of the building, which respectfully refers to the context of traditionally erected buildings, gaining the status of a local landmark. The brutalist concrete façade, made in monolithic technology with a vertical formwork imprint, reinforces the sense of visual integration with the rural character of nearby building development – especially farm buildings – and fits into the silhouette of the village itself, while maintaining the distinctiveness and independence of the contemporary form. *House Meuli* is an unusual example of creative inspiration from an archetypal building pattern, which, drawing on the local character of construction, created a new element of the identity of Fläsch. It was done in a completely different and modern way than if it was attempted by styling or imitating the neighbouring buildings. Although the house was built using non-traditional technologies, with the aesthetics of raw, monolithic concrete imposed by the creators, the proper effect was still achieved, which does not discredit the aesthetic expression of this house against the background of the neighbouring building development. *House Meuli* is an unconventional example of reinterpretation of the archetypal form of the house by means of concrete aesthetics. This unconventional character is a result of the irregular shape of the plot on which it was built, but the compositional means and aesthetic treatments used here allowed to create an original form, drawing on the heritage of tradition through skilful transformation of local patterns on new formal principles.

5.3. *HALL HOUSE 2*,
ALPHAVILLE ARCHITECTS,
SHIGA, JAPAN, 2006

The Japanese two-storey *Hall House 2* (Ill. 3) was designed in a place from which one can see Lake Biwa (Shiga prefecture). Made of smooth-walled grey concrete, the walls and gable roof slopes create the body of the building that refers to the neighbouring buildings, but it is devoid of unnecessary details such as gutters or window frames, creating a kind of synthesis of the form of the local archetype. The monolithic and aesthetically coherent body of the building with a free composition of window openings and loggias on the façades creates a contemporary reinterpretation of the archetypal form of the house in contemporary architecture. The iconic image of a cuboidal shape, covered with a gable and concrete roof and emerging triangular end walls, draws its influence from local patterns, yet transformed for the needs of the present day. Through references to archetypal shapes, this monolithically strange body



- III. 1. *Rudin House*, Herzog & de Meuron, Leymen, France, 1996–1997, source: *Architektura & Biznes*, 2002, no. 3, p. 57, photo by: Margherita Spillutini
- III. 2. *House Meuli*, Bearth & Deplazes, Fläsch, Switzerland, 1997–2001, source: <https://bearth-deplazes.ch/en/projects/tower-house-flaesch/> (access: 9.06.2019), photo by: Ralph Feiner
- III. 3. *Hall House 2*, Alphaville Architects, Shiga, Japan, 2006, source: <http://a-ville.net/project/a090.html> (access: 9.06.2019), photo by: Alphaville Architects



- III. 4. *Concrete Slit House*, AZL Architects, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China, 2005–2007, source: <https://www.archdaily.com/132139/concrete-slit-house-azl-architects> (access: 9.06.2019), photo by: Iwan Baan
- III. 5. *House in Nasu*, Kazunori Fujimoto Architect & Associates, Tochigi, Japan, 2009–2010, source: <https://www.archdaily.com/115008/house-in-nasu-kazunori-fujimoto-architect-associates> (access: 10.06.2019), photo by: Kazunori Fujimoto Architect & Associate
- III. 6. *27 dwelling in Sete Cidades*, Eduardo Souto de Moura, Adriano Pimenta, Lagoa das Sete Cidades, Azores, Portugal, 2011, source: <https://www.archdaily.com/619204/27-dwellings-in-sete-cidades-eduardo-souto-de-moura-adriano-pimenta> (access: 10.06.2019), photo by: Luís Ferreira Alves

of the building becomes acceptable in the local context of the place, creating a new quality, consistent with Japanese aesthetics and the spirit of minimalism.

5.4. *CONCRETE SLIT HOUSE*, AZL ARCHITECTS
(ZHANG LEI, MENG FANHAO, CAI MENGLEI, LU YUAN, TANG XIAOXIN),
NANJING, JIANGSU PROVINCE, CHINA, 2005–2007

The house was built in a residential area dating back to the 1920s. The scale and aesthetic and material solutions applied in the building reflect the character of the context of the place in an original way. The monolithic body of the building refers to the traditional form of houses covered with a gable roof. The concise shape, bringing out the essence of the archetype through aesthetic simplifications and synthesis of the body of the building, has been enriched with the titular “slit”, giving the effect of cutting the form into two parts (Ill. 4). The entire structure, including the gable roof, was cast in dark coloured concrete. The hand-crafted form of the formwork, which was made from five-centimetre horizontal wood strips, created an effect resembling that of the brick textures known from the neighbouring buildings in the concrete face. The exceptional quality of the meticulously executed formwork and casting ennobles this type of architecture against the background of the historic, already adjacent buildings, thus creating a certain field of dialogue between tradition and modernity.

5.5. *HOUSE IN NASU*,
KAZUNORI FUJIMOTO ARCHITECT & ASSOCIATES,
TOCHIGI, JAPAN, 2009–2010

House in Nasu (Ill. 5), designed as a weekend house, is an example of an architectural play with the archetypal image of the house executed in the aesthetics of concrete building material. What distinguishes this building is the introverted and mysterious character of the form, which hides the inner court – the courtyard. Giving a sense of privacy, the space divides the building into two separate parts of different sizes, which are covered with concrete gable roofs to form a monolithic and aesthetically coherent whole. The design forming the form of the house is located in the surroundings of tall trees, intensifying the effect of separating the man-made world and the world of nature. The connection between these worlds is made by the windows in the gables and the courtyard opened up to the sky. The iconic image of the house, drawn from a concise shape, was created with a minimal use of artistic means of expression, reduction of detail, limited colouring in grey hues of concrete and smooth texture. This promotes a peaceful atmosphere of relaxation prevailing in the interiors and clearly divides and organizes man’s living space.

5.6. *27 DWELLING IN SETE CIDADES*,
EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA, ADRIANO PIMENTA,
LAGOA DAS SETE CIDADES, AZORES, PORTUGAL, 2011

Eduardo Souto de Moura and Adriano Pimenta designed a residential complex of 27 concrete residential buildings (Ill. 6) in Sete Cidades (Azores) whose architecture is inspired by the archetypal forms of stone houses. Apart from the characteristic iconic silhouette with triangular end walls and a monolithic gabled and eavesless roof, each house, has a tall con-

crete chimney that discharges exhaust fumes from a specially designed kitchen stove, fired with wood. It is an element of household equipment derived from traditional solutions. An additional element of the composition are undercuts of two opposite corners of the body of the building, where the entrances and interior lighting were located. The whole was made as a monolith of brutalist aesthetics with a horizontal formwork imprint. The project was executed in strictly defined and predetermined cost-consumption condition. The example of this urban development indicates that concrete reinterpretations of the archetypal form of the house can be multiplied in a manner devoid of monotony, even when the basic aesthetic considerations were dictated by the economics of the adopted solutions. The implementation of contemporary functional, material and aesthetic solutions was carried out with respect for the traditional, iconic silhouette of the house, preserved in the cultural awareness of the local community.

5.7. *KONIECZNY'S ARK*,
ROBERT KONIECZNY – KWK PROMES,
BRENNNA, POLAND, 2011

Robert Konieczny's *Ark* (Ill. 7) is a Polish example of a synthetic reinterpretation of a traditional form characteristic for the iconic symbolism of the shape of a house, which was transformed in a modern way for the needs of the present day. The concrete eavesless body with archetypal end walls, characteristic of archetypal forms, seems to float above the sloping terrain. The dynamism of the form is intensified by the undercuts and slanting walls of the lower part of the building, which resemble an inverted hipped roof. For the architect, the most important element was the view of the surrounding area, so the body of the building has a large horizontal glazing on the front elevation. The whole structure, except for the part of the gable roof, was made in the monolithic concrete technology with a smooth-walled surface. Noteworthy, too, is the way the building was founded, which does not create a barrier to groundwater flowing from the slope, resulting in an additional effect, as if the body was "floating" above the ground. The widely published and awarded project contributes to popularization of this type of architecture based on reinterpretation of traditional forms with the use of technology and aesthetics of fair-faced concrete. It is also an inspiration for other creators who reach for the archetypal image of the house, paving the way for further interpretations and explorations based on proven patterns.

5.8. *TWO IN ONE HOUSE*,
CLAVIENROSSIER ARCHITECTES,
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 2012

Two in One House (Ill. 8) was designed on the plan of an elongated irregular hexagon. The monolithic smooth-walled concrete form refers to the archetypal forms of the houses with its gabled roof also made in fair-faced concrete technology. Thanks to this, a visually coherent structure of the body of the building was obtained, with planes subtly changing direction, which is signalled only by an edge on the border of concrete surfaces. The building was erected on the outskirts of Geneva, which determined the suburban character of the house with simultaneous references to the nostalgia for archetypal references to traditional forms, but here in a modern, polygonal rather than rectangular, form. The modern and contemporary character



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- III. 7. *Konieczny's Ark*, Robert Konieczny – KWK Promes, Brenna, Poland, 2011, photo by: Przemysław Bigaj
- III. 8. *Two in One House*, Clavienrossier Architectes, Geneva, Switzerland, 2012, source: <https://www.archdaily.com/373375/two-in-one-house-clavienrossier-architectes> (access: 10.06.2019), photo by: Roger Frei
- III. 9. *Refugi Lieptgas*, Selina Walder, Georg Nickisch, Flims, Graubünden, Switzerland, 2012, source: <https://homeworlddesign.com/refugi-lieptgas-concrete-cabin-in-the-swiss-alps/> (access: 10.06.2019), photo by: Gaudenz Danuser

of the architecture is not only related to the concrete material, but also to the unconstrained way of composing window openings and loggia recesses, which are additionally emphasized by the larch wood finish. The extremely smooth and bright concrete façade did not hinder the creation of a building meeting very high energy standards. The name *Two in One* suggests that a functional programme for two flats of different sizes was designed in one form. The characteristic polygonal geometry and rhombic roof slopes make it difficult to decipher the actual scale and proportions of the house, making it more habitable. The monolithic nature of concrete introduces a sense of aesthetic cohesion, and the whole, despite completely contemporary rules of creating residential spaces, intuitively forces one to read the form obtained in this way as being rooted in tradition and recognizable typology of the shape of the house. These connotations with the archetype are the result of a thoughtful play with architectural reinterpretations of the image of the house, preserved in the social perception of the new aesthetic principles, based on the aesthetics of concrete building material – a synonym of durability and safety.

5.9. *REFUGI LIEPTGAS*,
SELINA WALDER, GEORG NICKISCH,
FLIMS, GRAUBÜNDEN, SWITZERLAND, 2012

This small holiday building was erected on the site of an old wooden cottage structure serving as a temporary shelter. The former character of the buildings had to be preserved during the construction process. To achieve this goal in the new material – concrete – the local architects Selina Walder and Georg Nickisch used timber logs from the old cottage to create an unusual formwork (Ill. 9). The resulting façades, which are the negatives of the traditional tree trunk wall arrangement, create a modern record of the past of this place in concrete casting. Both the walls and roof slopes are made of a thick solid layer of lightweight and insulating concrete. The seemingly low house hides an additional, hidden underground storey, where one of the sides opens up on the recessed rock wall through glazing, thus introducing not only light, but also additional aesthetic value to the interior. This project is an example of a successful archetypal reinterpretation of a cottage in concrete material, where the monolithic expression of the façade respects the character of the former buildings, while simultaneously creating the architecture that provides the comfort of modern living.

5.10. *CASA TINY*,
ARANZA DE ARIÑO, PUERTO ESCONDIDO,
NEAR PUERTO ESCONDIDO, OAXACA, MEXICO, 2014

Casa Tiny (Ill. 10) is a small holiday house built in the midst of wild nature, located near the waterfront. The basic material here is smooth-walled concrete cast *in situ*. This material was used not only for walls and roof slopes of the building, but also for floor slabs, stairs and furniture. The aesthetics of monolithic concrete is revealed not only on the outside, but also in the interior, which constitutes a high space with a mezzanine. The concrete structure was complemented by details of blinds, shutters, doors and furniture elements made of native parota wood. The concrete structure itself is simplified, with a very concise and minimalist expression that boils down to a monolithic narrow cuboid whose longer walls smoothly converge into a gable roof without eaves. The building is accompanied by concrete terraces. One

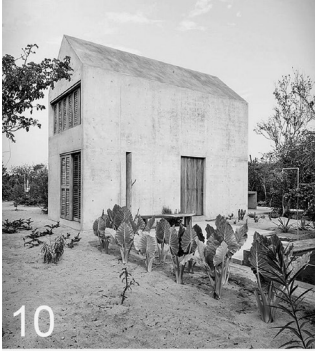
being the extension of the kitchen part, the other ended with a swimming pool. *Casa Tiny* is an example of a house providing a comfortable refuge, which is necessary to relax in the wild and reminiscent of an idyllic oasis in the wilderness, which can only be reached on foot. The building is a kind of synthesis of archetypal forms of houses, where clear references to the need for self-sufficiency of a holiday habitat have been fully adapted to the contemporary needs of temporary residence. Despite its clear connotations and references to the traditional perception of the character of the house, the entire building has retained its modernist, modest and aesthetically austere character, mainly due to its concrete aesthetics and monolithic technology of shaping details. The whole presents a nostalgic, though contemporary, expression, which is a reinterpretation of the image of house patterns, preserved in the public perception, as an autonomous habitat surrounded by wild nature, conducive to contemplation.

5.11. *HOUSE T*,
ATELIER ULRIKE TINNACHER,
GAMLITZ, AUSTRIA, 2015

House T (Ill. 11) is an example of the restitution of the contemporarily reinterpreted form of the archetype of the house in a place where a small wine building was once located. The basic body of the building, referring to the traditional cuboidal body covered with a gabled roof, was erected over the old part of the former house, containing a vaulted stone cellar. An elongated form with a flat roof with a day zone and a garage was incorporated into this form. The main part, which is a sign of respect for the former form of the house, was made with the use of the monolithic fair-faced concrete technology. The aesthetics of formwork with a vertical plank arrangement of very unified character was applied here. The whole is complemented by a roof covered with strips of grey flat sheet metal with a clear articulation of standing seam joint system. The form of this house stands out from the undulating slope of the surrounding vineyard. Thanks to the use of concrete technologies, the building was given a contemporary expression, which was to constitute a continuity of memory about the former building existing in the same location, its scale, proportions and its traditional silhouette. This memory was maintained by modern means of expression and composition preserved in monolithic concrete matter.

5.12. *TRIN CABIN*,
SCHNELLER CAMINADA ARCHITECTS,
TRIN, SWITZERLAND, 2016

The concrete house built on a mountainside introduces a new quality to the Swiss village of Trin (Ill. 12). This quality has strong connotations with archetypal forms owing to the iconic image of the body of the house. The three-storey building retains its classical silhouette despite the monolithic character of the proposed aesthetics. The façades, as well as the eavesless gable roof, were made in the smooth-walled concrete technology and introduces an element of modernity while maintaining the traditional shape for this type of building. The contemporary architectural expression is complemented by square windows of various sizes, which give the impression of being freely and unaxially integrated into the body of the building. The concrete chimney, distinctive from the main body, narrowing towards the top is also a characteristic element influencing the aesthetic reception of this building. The interiors also reveal the structure of bare and smooth concrete, combining it with wooden elements of



- III. 10. *Casa Tiny*, Aranza de Ariño, Puerto Escondido, near Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca, Mexico, 2014, source: <http://ideasgn.com/architecture/retreat-ideas-casa-tiny-aranza-de-arino/> (access: 10.06.2019), photo by: Camila Cossio
- III. 11. *House T*, Atelier Ulrike Tinnacher, Gamlitz, Austria, 2015, source: <https://www.archdaily.com/795931/house-t-atelier-ulrike-tinnacher> (access: 10.06.2019), photo by: Simon Oberhofer
- III. 12. *Trin Cabin*, Schneller Caminada Architects, Trin, Switzerland, 2016, source: <https://www.ignant.com/2017/10/18/the-trin-cabin-by-schneller-caminada-architects/> (access: 10.06.2019), photo by: Gaudenz Danuser

room furnishing. The conciseness of the means of expression used here creates an essential and elegant simplicity combined with rustic wood. It is a modern concrete building that retains the stereotypical archetypal image of the house, but with elements that can evoke a sense of grotesqueness or architectural joke among the audience, which results from the skilful composition of window openings and the proper formation of the chimney. The modern residential spaces fully realize the functional programme of the contemporary house whose architecture constitutes a reinterpretation of traditional shapes that do not compromise on modern ways of interior design based on today's standards and quality of living.

6. CONCLUSION

When *Rudin House*, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, was erected in the French town of Leymen in 1997, it was difficult to predict that it would be described as a pioneering building, breaking a certain stereotype of the archetypal form of the house and giving it new aesthetic meanings. By reinterpreting it through exaggeration and simplification, which in large part were determined by the monolithic technology of fair-faced concrete, this cultural architectural model was synthesized and thus gained the status of an iconic building. *Rudin House* became a pioneering inspiration for many subsequent buildings with clear connotations, reminiscent of the traditional shape of the house, for the preservation of which the monolithic aesthetics of the exposed concrete were chosen. The reinterpretation of the iconic image of the house form, combined with concrete matter, gave an unexpected artistic effect, around which one cannot remain indifferent. The contrasting use of non-traditional material (exposed concrete) with the archetypal shape of the building often arouses extreme emotions in the observer, resulting from a certain contradiction of the image of the house preserved in the culture and the appropriateness of the use of the monolithic non-traditional matter intended for its realization. Many a time, such a dialogue between tradition and modernity entails an escape into an intended "architectural joke" or grotesque language of applied forms and their exaggerations, allowing to include the recipient-user in this game of architecture. This game derives its power of influence from the introduction of contemporary design trends and doctrines into the archetypal image of the house, which directly derive from the modernist thought of shaping space. This implementation creates a new quality of living, combining nostalgia for the forms of the past with today's conveniences resulting directly from the contemporary standards and ways of creating residential spaces, all with the participation of the avant-garde aesthetics of concrete façades. Writing about *the need for an archetype* in his publication *Architecture and Art*, Tomasz Kozłowski draws attention to the issue of nostalgia in architecture in one of the motifs he raises, which, as he states: *can lead to the thought of the archetype, remembered as the perfect prototype. Sometimes remembered from art lessons, sometimes from childhood. As he further notes: After all, we can see the pretext as a rebirth of form, i.e. incarnated memory. Something so innate in our subconscious that it is impossible to reject it in one hundred per cent*¹¹. Today, the archetype and its reinterpretations and transformations can be as good pretexts for creators to play with architecture as abstract painting or sculpture used to be for the broadly understood modernist movements. Archetypal forms and details from the history of architecture were usually an inspiration for postmodernists. Today, the strength of

¹¹ T. Kozłowski, *Architektura a sztuka*, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 2018, pp. 139–141.

contemporary architecture can be found in the synthesis of certain iconic shapes and visual cultural codes known from the past. An example and good practice here are the phenomena consisting in different ways of reinterpreting the archetypal form of the house in concrete material. Perhaps it is also a question of the universal (as Antonio Monestiroli put it) *continuity of classical experience and defining the identity of each type of building, expressed in fixed repetitive elements*. Monestiroli writes: *Consider the house, the process of its typification over the centuries. There is a certain correspondence between form and culture of living; they are mutually justifiable; one is explained by the other. If the culture of inhabitation is one of the aspects of our social life, then the form of the house – the type in which it is preserved – makes this aspect real and intelligible*¹².

Today's creators are guided by different premises in designing this kind of architecture of contemporary house. It is usually a necessity resulting from the local context, most often sanctioned in the provisions of local law. However, this does not prevent the reinterpretation of traditional patterns into modern architecture of a single-family house by means of concrete technologies and aesthetics. It sometimes results from the willingness to play or to confront the iconic image of the archetypal form of the house and an attempt to find a new image pattern appropriate for the contemporary times. The examples of projects presented in the text, as well as the description of the problem of reinterpretation of the archetypal form of a house, allow one to indicate some visible creative processes occurring within the framework of the so-called "concrete architecture", where a recognizable shape, or rather a cultural icon, becomes a universal pretext, which the creators willingly use in various periods of postmodern "modernity". It is possible that the growing number of projects appearing every year, maintained in this convention of stylistic shaping of the form of the house, will allow one to talk about the crystallisation of a permanent tendency in today's architecture, and not to look at this phenomenon in a merely incidental or ephemeral way.

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