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## (NON)MEMORY ARCHITECTURE

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### ARCHITEKTURA (NIE)PAMIĘCI

#### Abstract

There is a view that architecture is a way of remembering events, people, customs, which makes it a storehouse of the past for the future, an element of tradition and culture. It is a trace of thoughts, ideas, and ambitions that have been built.

The analysis of selected aspects of the memory motif in contemporary architecture, with regard to tradition, proves the multitude of solutions as well as the problem of giving form to the architecture of memory. The paper concerns objects of collective memory – these are not only monuments but also objects that store collections of memory, and sometimes they themselves constitute a commemoration. Sculptures and monuments are a special form of commemorating the phenomenon.

The non-memory architecture is in opposition – it is a testimony of events that we do not want to remember, and which cannot be forgotten.

Despite some concerns, the monuments of the present and past are still present in contemporary architecture. Their persistence often involves balancing between tradition and modernity, memory and non-memory.

*Keywords: memory, monument, memorial, modernity*

#### Streszczenie

Istnieje pogląd, że architektura jest sposobem zapamiętywania wydarzeń, ludzi, obyczajów, przez co staje się magazynem przeszłości dla przyszłości, elementem tradycji i kultury. To ślad myśli, idei, ambicji które zostały zbudowane.

Przeprowadzona analiza wybranych aspektów motywu pamięci w architekturze współczesnej z uwzględnieniem tradycji dowodzi wielości rozwiązań oraz problemu z nadaniem formy architekturze pamięci. Niniejszy artykuł dotyczy obiektów pamięci zbiorowej – to nie tylko pomniki ale i obiekty gromadzące zbiory pamięci a czasami same stanowiące upamiętnienie. Rzeźby i monumenty stanowią formę szczególną komemoracji zjawiska.

W opozycji jest architektura niepamięci – stanowiąca świadectwo wydarzeń o których nie chcemy pamiętać, a o których nie sposób zapomnieć.

Pomimo obaw monumenty teraźniejszości i przeszłości są wciąż obecne w architekturze współczesnej. Ich trwanie to często balansowanie pomiędzy tradycją a nowoczesnością, pamięcią i niepamięcią.

*Słowa kluczowe: pamięć, pomnik, monument, nowoczesność*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The architectural tradition has developed a number of forms appropriate for a specific function and location. There are buildings of memory and in memory among them – great monuments of the world that are admired by numerous recipients. This collection contains monuments that do not represent a particular form or architectural style – they are commemorative sculptures; the passage of time is a measure of their meaning and sense of existence.

Monuments were erected to commemorate a person, an event, or to give the seats of state authorities a proper rank. They were characterised by high discipline, axially, and orthogonality of arrangements, as well as predominance of geometrically simple forms. The monumental art, rich in symbols, sought the expression of the forces of nature and man, manifested in grand buildings. A memorial is a special form of monumental architecture.

The basis of monuments is memory. The reflections on how to preserve it and how to convey it by means of architectural form are still relevant to creators. After all, architecture has always been connected with memory – by containing various functions it conveys, for example, the memory of its users. It can *also refer to the house where the biography of its inhabitants is recorded. Then it becomes a carrier of memory. Its material structure and the things it contains evoke the history and experiences of people who have passed through the house.*<sup>2</sup> The situation referred to here concerns a kind of indirect memory – resulting from the use and habitation. However, it plays a special role in the architecture erected in memory, whose pretext is precisely memory, commemoration, etc. And that one is the very basis of this analysis. For the sake of ordering the deliberations, it is also possible to differentiate architecture according to collective and individual memory. Tombs, the architecture of crematoria and burial objects are connected with individuals, they depict nostalgia, emptiness, and mourning. Collective memory, in turn, requires monumental buildings that glorify, commemorate or express the sadness or reflection of a particular group of people. This category includes a memorial and a monument.

## 2. TRADITION, MEMORY, TIME

It could be assumed that the elements listed in the title of the chapter constitute components of monumental architecture; not necessarily in the given order, with varying degrees of importance of individual elements. Juliusz Żórawski wrote that architecture is a follow-up to the already initiated process that consists in the continuation and development based on the past and tradition. In other words, modernity is to a large extent a result of tradition. *Thus, architecture is based solely on the constant and steady continuation of existing systems. When an architect builds a new form, he does not start the work from the beginning, but always starts working on the existing form. Architectural design is not the beginning, but a continuation of writing a poem that has already begun.*<sup>3</sup>

The development and creation of architecture is a clash of tradition and modernity, which are embedded in evolution and emotions. The reception of these factors can be

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<sup>2</sup> Michałowski L., *Architektura domu i pamięć*, Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica, 2018, no. 4, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Żórawski J., *Wybór pism estetycznych*, Universitas, Kraków 2008, p. 149.

different. We are keen to welcome what is technologically new, resulting from technological advancement, but we accept cultural novelties with greater difficulty, if not with resistance.

Modernity in architecture is often associated with modernism, the era of steam engines and the development of the industry. Its past is an important element of culture and architecture built on tradition. Memory plays an important role here. Recorded in buildings, it serves as a kind of remembrance of tradition for the future. Besides, there is no modernity without tradition or memory. To substantiate this obvious statement, one can recall the words by Philip Jodidio from the introduction to one of the editions of *Architecture Now: The presence of the past suffuses even the most contemporary architecture*.<sup>4</sup>

The tradition of memory architecture is clear. It is recorded in the history of monuments. Triumphant arches were erected to commemorate military victories, tombs and mausoleums were built by civilizations distant in time to commemorate great rulers, memorials and columns were built.

Classical monumental forms include a monument, tomb, memorial, mausoleum. Not all of them have survived unchanged until today. *The most famous was to become Lewis Mumford's claim in The Culture of Cities from 1938 that the memorial lost its aesthetic and social legitimacy as the exact opposite of modern architecture and progressive city*.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, it was believed that the traditional form of the memorial no longer met the modern moral and formal requirements and its current form had already worn out. However, history shows the constant and present need to erect memorials and monuments. Lasting memory must take on a permanent form – a specific architecture. Yet, the architecture of memorial sites has not developed a homogeneous language of form and architectural model so far. Its components are variable so the interdependence of the form on the place, type of memory, culture, location is important, they are factors influencing this architecture. *Nevertheless, it would be misleading to believe that it is possible to obtain a reliable prescription or model according to which the memorial site should be shaped and which would guarantee that such a work of art will survive the test of time (which is a key quality in the case of a memorial site). There is no denominator; none – except, perhaps, the artist's humbleness towards events and time*.<sup>6</sup>

It is obvious that memory needs to be preserved. Therefore, it requires verbal, musical, artistic recording or oral tradition.

Lasting monuments were erected for the present and the future. Passing on the memory to the next generations required matter. If not recorded in the form of a memorial, monument or other marking and spatial separation, it is condemned to the present memory of living people. *Memorials are designed to last forever; so it is good if they look as if they have been standing in a given place forever*.<sup>7</sup>

Joanna Karbońska notes that memory also consists in filling up empty spaces. Monumental architecture fills such gaps. *Memory – recalling it – can be manifested in as many ways as*

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<sup>4</sup> Jodidio P., *Architecture now!* Vol. 6, Taschen, Cologne 2009, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Kabrońska J., *Architektura jako forma pamięci: rola architektury w tworzeniu współczesnego horyzontu wartości*, Wydawnictwo PG, Gdańsk 2008, p. 108.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> Rybczyński W., *Jak działa architektura*, Karakter, Kraków 2014, p. 281.

*there are languages of expressing it, for example, through legends, it is embodied in a manner that is clear to human senses.*<sup>8</sup>

It seems that since memory takes on different forms and ranges (positive, negative, universal, time-bound, local, regional, environmental, etc.), memory architecture also possesses various architectural forms.

Museum buildings, whose architecture of forms is rich, have a fairly clearly defined form. These buildings archive, present, pass on but also create and shape memory. As memorial sites, museums can be regarded as objects in which particular collective memories (i.e. the developed common understanding of the past) are “presented, overcome and popularised.”<sup>9</sup>

There are also unusual forms of memory – sometimes not requiring the erection of monuments. Sometimes non-physical gestures also commemorate – for example, marking the space by avoiding it and not using any part of it.<sup>10</sup>

Alongside the memory architecture, there is the non-memory architecture. It can be assumed that this applies to places and objects that we do not want to remember, which otherwise would be erased from it. The non-memory places are areas on different scales, which Roma Sendyka calls *non-places of memory*. As she explains, these are the areas whose existence cannot be denied but that are not willingly accepted and recognized by the local community as part of their history and culture. In addition, *because there is an effort to neutralize their meanings, they are not completely forgotten.*<sup>11</sup> In other words, there is a paradoxical attempt to exclude this architecture from the local history, memory, and panorama of the landscape, while, at the same time, the memory about it is awakened. It is an architecture of events that one would prefer not to see so that one could forget about them so that one does not have to talk about them and remember them.

An example of this phenomenon can also be the objects that constitute a difficult historical heritage. The Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw seems to be an undeniable monument and at the same time a troublesome landscape element. Continuous attempts to weaken the significance of the Palace of Culture and Science in the city space do not bring any effect. It is difficult to dominate an object characterised by such a distinct architecture. The newest buildings compete only in height. However, the scale of the Palace of Culture and Science and, above all, its extensive form and foreground – a large square, undeveloped area – all this intensifies the monumentality that is beyond dispute. Oskar Hansen attempted to explain the phenomenon of this monumentality in his 2005 exhibition.<sup>12</sup> He claimed that an attempt at dominating the Palace of Culture and Science is impossible – only a dialogue with its strong form can be established. That is why he proposed a high, slender tower extending upwards – in contrast to the pyramidal shape of the Palace of Culture and Science. All this proves that it is difficult to control and weaken

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<sup>8</sup> Zuziak I., *Reinkarnacja architektury* [in:] D. Kozłowski, M. Misiągiewicz (eds.), *Definiowanie przestrzeni architektonicznej. Trwanie i przemijanie architektury*, Vol. 1, Wydawnictwo PK, Kraków 2011, p. 399.

<sup>9</sup> Kabrońska J., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>10</sup> Sendyka R., *Nie-miejsca pamięci i ich nie-ludzkie pomniki*, Teksty drugie, 2017, no. 2, p. 105.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> *Sen Warszawy* is Oskar Hansen's last exhibition organized by the Foksal Gallery Foundation in 2005.

the power of the architecture of the Palace of Culture and Science, while the memory of the uneasy historical background of the object gradually decreases in significance with the passage of time.

Non-memory particularly concerns the places of extermination, associated with cruelty and shameful history of humanity. These are often areas that are too large to delineate their boundaries, to clearly define their extent and location. Left untouched, they are absorbed by nature. The same is true in areas that are excluded, e.g. the zone around the Chernobyl power plant. These are places where nature perfectly copes with the absence of man, restoring the appearance of the landscape of a place that does not remember the destructive interference of people. Therefore, these places cease to be so dramatic, and the memory of tragedy seems to blur in consciousness.

These places are marked by the lack of symbolic monuments and architecture that would express the significance of past events. Sometimes inaction or vice versa – taking action in order to erase and obliterate memorial sites that are difficult to accept – evoke and preserve this memory.

Adam Jakimowicz describes the concept of anti-memory, which is created in architecture *to commemorate the place and deny the effectiveness of this memory at the same time*.<sup>13</sup>

Of all the components of memory architecture mentioned in the title and hypothesis, it is most difficult to define time. It seems that it is a certain measure and a reference. It is time that verifies the rightness of form and its timelessness, and thus universality, which the mass audience seeks. This applies to the (non)memory architecture analysed here.

Memory is the most enduring document, it will last together with man, follow the past and awaken the future of architecture. And the future will bring new qualities that would not exist without this memory – knowledge!<sup>14</sup>

### 3. MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

Monuments serve the purpose of collective identity and passing on tradition and heritage. They are erected out of a sense of responsibility for memory and the need to preserve it.

It seems that a memorial is the basic form of a memory-related monument. In the multi-lingual translation of the term, it is the memorial that most often appears as its synonym. The reasons for erecting the memorial are also unambiguous – it is a commemorative thing. *The type of architecture that directly refers to the past is the memorial since its only function is the commemoration of a past event or historical figure*.<sup>15</sup>

The role of memorials in social culture and shaping the signs of civilization is undeniable and their symbolism is of utmost importance. That is why they are sometimes the object of attacks and destruction by social groups who manifest their dissatisfaction.

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<sup>13</sup> Jakimowicz A., *Wybrane aspekty pojmowania czasu w architekturze współczesnej – czas i przestrzeń jako matryca* [in:] D. Kozłowski, M. Misiągiewicz (eds.), *Definiowanie przestrzeni architektonicznej. Trwanie i przemijanie architektury*, Vol. 2, Wydawnictwo PK, Kraków 2011 (Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura, 2011, no. 4-A/2), p. 151.

<sup>14</sup> Zuziak I., *op. cit.*, p. 399.

<sup>15</sup> Rybczyński W., *Jak działa architektura*, Karakter, Kraków 2014, p. 278.

Monuments serve positive memory – they glorify, celebrate, arouse admiration and sublimity. Memorials, in turn, serve to commemorate and maintain the memory of events that are frequently difficult to accept. To confirm such a context, one can find the meaning translated as derivatives of the word to warn and admonish in the origin of the word *moneo*.<sup>16</sup>

If a monument is to spread mass knowledge and memory, its form must free itself from a specific, determined code, known only to a limited number of recipients. It should also limit intentionality in favour of clear communication. Therefore, it must possess a universal meaning code of the form that clearly conveys the content. The key to understanding must be universal, which results in problems in creating and reading their meaning. Hence, symbolism is of fundamental importance. Monuments preserved and passed on memory, they were a record of social values. However, there also exists an opinion that contemporary monuments do not symbolise anything. They persist in their originality of form, proving the uniqueness of the times in which they have been erected. Arguably, contemporary monuments are no longer memorials – the rational and economic requirement to give them function and usefulness loses the original, archetypical meaning of monumental architecture. It seems, however, that this does not apply to monuments.

There are obvious images of memorials in memory: their shape, symbolism, position in the culture and history of nations are widely recognized. The Vittorio Emanuele II Monument in Rome at the Piazza Venezia, erected in honour of the king, is an outstanding white marble monument. The building is also the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Built between 1885 and 1911 according to the plans of Giuseppe Sacconi, it commemorates the unification of Italy. The building rises upwards, from the monumental staircase through the massive base to the arched column portico. The historical form of the building is striking in its scale, panache, and splendour.

The same goes for the Leipzig Monument to the Battle of the Nations. It is a monument surrounded by the natural landscape, an impressive concrete work that climbs to a height of 91 meters and is the tallest monument in Europe. It stands by a pool surrounded by greenery. Inside there is a tall hall and a museum. The symbolic building commemorates the biggest Napoleonic battle in 1813. The strong axial composition of the structure, closely connected with the surroundings, has an architectural impact on this part of the city. These are examples of traditional memorials, their forms are well known and easily readable.

Contemporary memorials are still trying to face the problem of commemoration. It happens that the classical shape one is accustomed to is supplanted by the geometry of the structure, event or performance that has a symbolic dimension but does not have a monumental form. It is an escape from the literal form of a memorial – monument. That is why its message may be impermanent, difficult to recognize, like memory which is ephemeral.

The architecture of contemporary memorials is a quest for the originality of form while maintaining meaningful symbolism. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, designed by Peter Eisenman, seems to fulfill this difficult task.

In determining the competition objectives, the requirements for the idea of memory were given instead of the ones for a specific form. The monument was to provide a solution for the way of remembering through modern architectural solutions, freed from the

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<sup>16</sup> Sendyka R., *op. cit.*, p. 101.



- III. 1. Berlin Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, Peter Eisenman; source: author
- III. 2. Memorial to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Budapest, I-Ypsilon; source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Budape%C5%A1\\_V%C3%A1rosliget,\\_pam%C3%A1tn%C3%ADk\\_revolve\\_1956\\_II.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Budape%C5%A1_V%C3%A1rosliget,_pam%C3%A1tn%C3%ADk_revolve_1956_II.JPG); License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

traditional monumental form. The structure was to stimulate and awaken the memory of the victims.

The memorial takes the form of an unfinished work that has no beginning or end. *It seems that Eisenman's actions, due to their lack of literalness, are more – though not fully – in line with the idea of living memory, encouraging visitors to make an effort to understand the work, and thus to understand the events it commemorates.*<sup>17</sup> The author expressed hope that the audience would not understand the work in part as it is impossible to understand the Holocaust itself.

The monument is made up of nearly three thousand cuboidal concrete blocks referring to the stelae of tombstones.<sup>18</sup> Due to their different height they delineate an undulating grid, and the irregularity of the upper planes and their large number, varied topography of the site create a deliberate sense of confusion among the elements. This feeling is to serve contemplation and the creation of memory. The size of the square and the number of elements intensify this feeling, after all, it is impossible to grasp the whole monument with a single glance, the complicated structure does not immediately reveal its logic. Small shifts of solids in relation to the orthogonal grid further complicate it. The size of solids is not accidental, just like the distance between them – it only allows for the comfortable passage of one person. The composition makes it look different from every perspective.

By attempting to relate the form to memory, a multi-layered labyrinth, dependent on the observer's point of view, is created – just as memory and individual feelings can be complicated.

In addition, it should be noted that a significant and large plot of land in the very centre of the city is fully dedicated to a memorial site, paying tribute to the victims and being a warning in the modern times. It is a difficult memorial to a difficult chapter in the history of the nation – that is why it is both a memorial and a non-memorial site at the same time.

Years later, the author of the project concluded that the monument would not have been built in this form today. As he explains: *The social climate has changed; much that has previously been considered acceptable is now questioned.*<sup>19</sup>

The Berlin monument is also related to the subject of respect for memory and monuments. The architecture of the monument and the site do not clearly define the acceptable behaviour of visitors within the area of the monument. Unfortunately, it happens that the culture of memory loses out to the “culture” of social media, as the artist Shahak Shapira showed quite significantly. He used photos of people with the memorial in the background found on the Internet for photomontage by pasting contemporary figures into historical photos from death camps. This shocking artistic activity draws attention to the value of memory and the way it is transmitted and preserved. The need for education and constant reminding and creating memory still exists; although it can be quite dramatic at times, it is also instructive.

Eisenman has been criticised for the form of the Memorial – he has been accused of lack of architecture that would inspire sublimity, seriousness, and restraint in contact with the monument. The lack of unambiguous information about the subject matter of the monument

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 121.

<sup>18</sup> <https://eisenmanarchitects.com/Berlin-Memorial-to-the-Murdered-Jews-of-Europe-2005> (access: 04.2019).

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.dezeen.com/2016/12/07/berlin-holocaust-memorial-wouldnt-be-built-today-says-pe-ter-eisenman/> (access: 06.2019).

along with its full accessibility have been considered a drawback. The discussion on how to build the form of memory architecture continues, especially as architecture is sometimes powerless when faced with the intention of commemoration.

The Memorial to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence (Ill. 2), erected in 2006 in Budapest according to the design of the I-Ypsilon studio, took a slightly more sculptural shape.

The triangular composition of the monument disintegrates from a full high corner and falls towards the other two vertices. The highest part is the solid steel block, which then dilutes and the elements are dispersed with a simultaneous change of the material of the columns. By increasing the distance between them, they increase the disintegration of the solid. The change of material from polished steel sheet to rusting Corten sheet with a variable degree of corrosion highlights the disintegration of the sculpture.

The play of form and material gives dynamics and emphasizes the content, which is a literal symbol of events – the union of protesting people gave them collective strength to make changes and overcome difficulties. This is how the shape can be interpreted – single corroded poles thicken and increase in height until they join in the form of the highest shining wedge at the top of the composition. The apex is pierced into the plane of the cobbled undulating floor.

The character of the monument is definitely sculptural and slightly less architectural. It clearly communicates the content expressed through the attractive contemporary form.

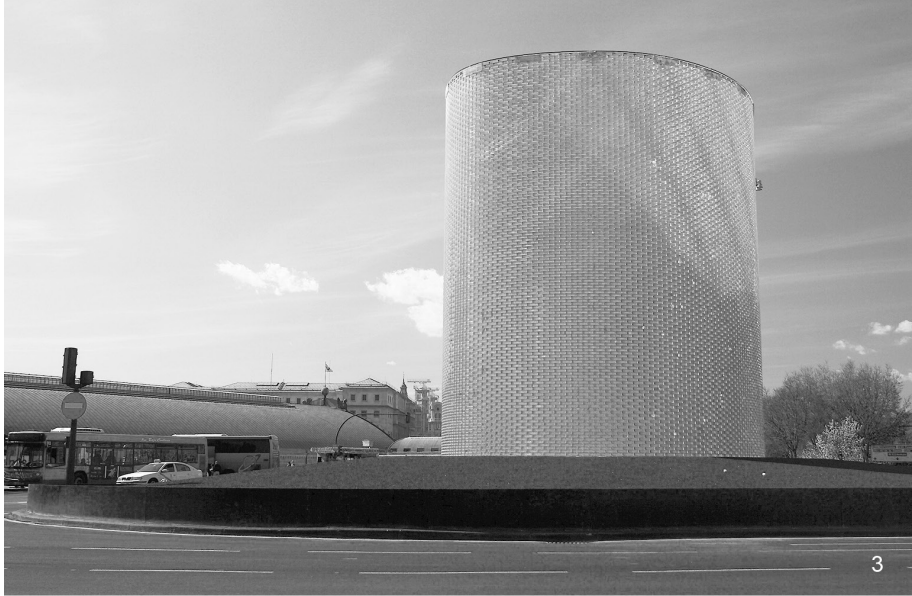
The FAM Architects used distinctly different but equally modern means of expression when designing the Atocha Station Memorial commemorating the victims of the terrorist attack in Madrid on March 11, 2004. It was created in 2007 at the Atocha subway station. The small, subdued geometric form creates a highly symbolic monument, captivating with its emptiness and the play of light and darkness.

The memorial consists of a cylindrical structure situated on a black square surrounded by the intersection of city arteries near Atocha station.

Cast glass hollow bricks form an overground part – a cylinder which is penetrated by light which falls through a transparent membrane with the printed text of letters of the inhabitants and illuminates the empty interior of the cobalt memory room.

The resulting architecture is full of seriousness, silence, and nostalgia. The monument is far from being literal, it builds the atmosphere of a memorial site without clear and obvious formal symbols.

It is frequently a difficult and long process to find a suitable form for a monument. The memorial to the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York City was not erected until 2011 after long debates on how to commemorate this catastrophe. Daniel Libeskind designed the general project of the whole memorial site. Particular attention was paid to the Ground Zero area – precision, appropriateness, and seriousness in deciding how to develop several memory zones. Together with the architects Michael Arad and Peter Walker, Libeskind proposed to leave a symbolic void in the site of the collapsed towers of the World Trade Center office buildings. Two hollow square holes formed as pools with a waterfall are a possible metaphor for a feeling of emptiness that cannot be filled by anything. An empty space in the area of the non-existent buildings provides a permanent trace of the tragic events. It reflects nostalgia and memory, giving a clear message to future generations. The memorial is an



- III. 3. Monument to the Victims of 11-M, Madrid, Atocha, FAM Architects; source: Tomada por w:es:Usuario:Barcex, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1877695>; License: CC BY-SA 3.0
- III. 4. Canadian National Holocaust Monument, Ottawa, Daniel Libeskind; source: <https://www.arch-daily.com/881316/national-holocaust-monument-studio-libeskind>

invaluable symbol of the community which, to commemorate, has left an undeveloped area in the zone of the most valuable plots of land in Lower Manhattan.

Completely different motivations guided the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa, Canada, also designed by Libeskind Studio, which was completed in 2017. The expressive original sculptural form of the monument is a strong statement on the subject of commemorating the victims of the Holocaust, which still requires the creators to explore it.

Six corner triangular figures made up of concrete walls form a star. The concept is a direct reference to the graphic markings used by the Gestapo to identify their prisoners. Triangles in various colours informed about sexual, political, and religious orientation – they divided people, categorized and marked their fate. The form unambiguously communicates the imposed symbolic geometry. Although the monument commemorates the distant past and the events that took place in Europe, its testimony is strong, it recalls the due memory of millions of victims, making it clear that such an event concerns everyone, regardless of distance, nationality or affiliation. *It also stands as a tribute to the courage and resilience of the survivors who were able to make their way to Canada following one of the darkest chapters in human history. The monument recognizes the immense contributions these survivors have made to Canada and serves as a reminder that we must be vigilant in standing guard against antisemitism, hatred, and intolerance.*<sup>20</sup>

The diagonal walls of the monument create a labyrinth of corridors and passages between tall blocks, and the concrete expresses a harsh and serious mood. The exposed faces have different textures and some of them are imprinted with an image. These are six reproductions of photographs taken especially for the monument by Edward Burtynsky depicting death camps and killing fields. The whole building consists of a rich composition of various elements. This helps to identify the creator of the monument – Libeskind repeatedly emphasized that the architecture created always speaks and does not remain silent.

The location of the monument is justified by the neighbourhood of the Canadian War Museum by Moriyama & Teshima Architects, which took the form of horizontal architecture integrated with the green area. Likewise, concrete with different textures was used here.

Architecture built to commemorate painful and cruel events, which one would like to forget about, is still needed – it is to testify, recall, sometimes warn the present and the future. Its modern forms and abstract shapes are a carrier of information and feelings, arousing a sublime reception and a sense of importance and seriousness of the place and events. It is a monument for the victims and one honouring the survivors.

The architecture of the Holocaust monuments is already significant, but there is still a need to build new monuments to remind and preserve and shape memory.

This is the task performed by the Museum and Memorial Site in Bełżec. The monument was created on the site of the Nazi death camp 1942–1943 as a large rectangular memorial site. It was lined with gravel and ash – a symbolic material produced during fires. The area surrounded by walls is separated by a slanting road leading from the museum building to the concrete wall of the monument, which gradually sinks into the slope of the monument. It seems that the architecture of the museum itself is not so important when confronted with the vast place of execution. This is the interpretation of the authors of the museum building from

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<sup>20</sup> <http://holocaustmonument.ca/> (access: 06.2019).



- III. 5. Museum and Memorial Site, Belzec, Andrzej Sołyga, Zdzisław Pidek, Marcin Roszczyk oraz DDJM; source: <http://be-ddjm.com/projekt.php?id=1>
- III. 6. Bologna Shoah Memorial, Bologna, SET Architects; source: <https://architizer.com/idea/1499338/>

the DDJM studio, which constitutes a symbolic concrete gateway to the memorial area. The whole activity required concentration and seriousness, as well as formal modesty. It seems that the created place possesses these features.

The modern form of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, USA is defined in a similar way. Its shape is often referred to as a model of the contemporary monument. The design of the architect Maya Lin, selected in a competition, succeeded in communicating the memory of the victims of the war in Vietnam without literalness and with appropriate modesty. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall attracts special attention as it is an unusual monument and distant from the traditional form. The smooth polished walls with an engraving of almost sixty thousand names and surnames reflect the figures visiting the monument. This is an aesthetic effect that connects the present with the victims. The other thing is that the distribution of the names of the victims is chronological, which hinders finding the name of a loved one. This makes one aware of the terrifying number of victims while the place constitutes a monument of collective rather than individual memory. *The Vietnam Memorial in Washington is all words not images, embarrassed not assertive, using no rhetoric hollow or otherwise, yet speaking exhaustively. It forms the universal utterance these structures usually seek without finding.*<sup>21</sup>

The design of the Bologna Shoah Memorial was selected in an architectural competition presided over by Peter Eisenman. The SET Architects created a modern sculpture of the memorial at the junction of the streets in the vicinity of the railway station. This place is enclosed by the development of the railway station and parking lots. It is not a unique place in an urban layout, but rather a fragment of an undeveloped area. Thus, it is supposed to facilitate contact and accessibility of the monument for everyone.

The square city plaza is divided diagonally by a double-sided wall with stone cladding. In the middle, perpendicularly to the walls, there is a two-part memorial block. The sculpture with the geometry of basic simple solids is a sign and its spatial arrangement guides the viewer to the centre of the memorial. The form does not impose a ready interpretation – two vertical metal blocks with a side and height of 10 m clearly define the direction of the composition. A wider gap between the blocks indicates an entrance, narrowing to the other end. This introduces a gradation of mood, seriousness, or possibly the focus of attention on the place where the extermination is commemorated. It is a symbolic path to the other side of the square.

From the outside, the closed cuboid structure has empty interiors, which are divided by vertical and horizontal stripes of sheet metal to form internal chambers. Their arrangement reflects the arrangement of the beds in the camp barracks.

Contemporary material of rusting sheet metal is susceptible and dependent on external conditions. It changes over time, and so probably does consciousness and memory of the tragic events of several decades ago.

The entire composition of the monument is limited by terraced stairs resulting from the slope of the adjacent area, which constitute a pedestal for sheet metal blocks and, additionally, emphasize, grade and elevate the sculpture.

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<sup>21</sup> Harbison R., *Zbudowane, niezabudowane i nie do zbudowania. W poszukiwaniu znaczenia architektonicznego*, Murator, Warszawa 2001, p. 9.

The scale of the Shoah Memorial and its form seem appropriate to the site. Progressive corrosion of the elements results in the variability of the monument, perhaps a reminder of the elusiveness and transience of memory. It is probably a modern interpretation and an attempt at recounting history, creating a memory of it in an unusual way. The motif of the shape of the inner chambers of metal blocks, referring directly to the size of death camp beds, seems to be too literal. A memorial commemorating cruel events in an abstract form should contain a metaphorical, symbolic message, but without literalness.

The (non)memory architecture requires a meaningful but serious approach, it is supposed to encourage contemplation and reflection.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Memory architecture has a customary social function. Its forms and scale are different, often resulting from tradition. Among them, there are special monuments of a small scale – memorials. These buildings have their own specific and unique architecture. Historical monuments, erected for the idea they symbolized, often had no utilitarian value – they were only memorials to civilization. Today, their archetypes are becoming a romantic past.

Modern buildings of monuments and memorials, containing the symbolism and abstraction of shape, are still a carrier of information and memory. Today, as in the past, buildings with a continuous, unchanging function, not undergoing intensive changes, erected as a testimony to historical events, playing an important religious role, should be durable and long-lasting. Erected to commemorate important moments in history, rulers and warriors, they define social and national identity. Such a building is a way of remembering the past. However, its form is located somewhere between tradition and modernity, the passage of time and the permanence of matter.

Therefore, it seems that architecture related to memory should be universal. For this very reason, the question of the permanence of memory and architecture and the appropriate way to convey and preserve it remains open.

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