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“THE SERPENTINE PAVILION” AND ITS PLACE IN THE WORKS OF THE INVITED ARCHITECTS

PAWILON SERPENTINE I JEGO MIEJSCE W TWÓRCZOŚCI ZAPROSZONYCH ARCHITEKTÓW

Abstract

The subject of this paper entails the role played by a small pavilion, with a somewhat unspecified function, in the works of well-known architects. By pursuing this theme, the invited artists could present designs reflecting their aesthetic attitude and preferences. Sometimes solutions which first saw the light of day as experiments in the pavilion, became a part of later works. On the other hand, in some cases it was just an episode of no importance in the architect's professional path. The method employed in the research was based on analyses of original texts, websites of design studios as well as photographs and documents depicting works.

Keywords: Serpentine Pavilion, design experience synthesis, form, prestigious realization, development

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem badań była rola, jaką w twórczości znanych architektów odegrał projekt niewielkiego pawilonu o niesprecyzowanej bliżej funkcji. Realizacja tego tematu dawała zaproszonym okazję do prezentacji form wynikających z ich preferencji estetycznych. Pawilon jednak czasem był eksperymentem dającym początek nowym rozwiązaniom, widocznym w późniejszych dziełach. Bywał również epizodem bez większego znaczenia dla twórczej drogi architekta. Metoda, jaką zastosowano w badaniu to analiza autorskich tekstów, stron internetowych biur projektowych, materiału fotograficznego i dokumentów opisujących realizację.

Słowa kluczowe: Pawilon Serpentine, synteza doświadczeń projektowych, forma, prestiżowa realizacja, rozwój

1. INTRODUCTION – EVOLUTION OF EXPOSITION CONCEPTS FOR WORKS OF ART AT THE SERPENTINE GALLERIES

An old tea pavilion in Hyde Park's Kensington Gardens has been the home to an art gallery since 1970. The single storey building standing near the lake on an almost square footprint was built out of grey and red bricks with stone porticos and details. The somewhat classicist pavilion encompasses a raised, two floor central area crowned by a hip roof.

Starting from 1992, installations, sculptures and compositions began to appear on the lawn in front of the Gallery, creating a go-between space. The building was temporarily excluded from use during renovation works carried out between 1996 and 1997. For two years a construction site became the backdrop for the gallery's activities, and subsequent installations and art experiments were staged on the lawn in front of the pavilion, sometimes interpreting what was happening on the construction site...

The opening ceremony of the renovated Gallery required more space than was available. This was found thanks to a temporary roofing by Seth Stein.¹ The need for more space arose once again in 1999. Ron Arad designed an installation in the form of a ping-pong ball canopy in front of the entrance. At this point, Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist, the Gallery directors, "invented" a unique formula for a temporary expansion, which proved to be fateful.² The annual change of the "entrance" concept, which in itself has become an exhibit per se, entailed a chain of important annual events in the world of European culture, art and architecture, and has led to the Gallery becoming famous and quite well thought of among architects.

In its thirtieth year, the Serpentine Gallery financed a temporary, one-year pavilion designed by Zaha Hadid, an already famous architect and graduate of the London AA. The success of this venture led to the decision to turn it into a cyclical event. World-wide recognised architects are invited every year. The pavilion's function is not imposed beyond the "meeting place" formula.³ The only condition for inviting an architect or a team, apart from being well recognized in the professional circles, is the absence, at the time of accepting the assignment, of any previous works in the United Kingdom. The pavilion had to be designed and built on an area adjacent to the historic site within six months, operate for three summer months and then give way to another pavilion.

Cecil Balmond co-initiated the project, participated in the implementation of the pavilions and oversees the event to this day.⁴

Following the subsequent ten years of activity, the management of the Gallery entered a tender for the purchase of the former gunpowder store buildings dating back to 1805, located on the other side of Lake Serpentine. Built of light brick and finished with white stone and wooden details, the complex has a representative neo-classical entrance colonnade. Both Serpentine Galleries are connected by an existing road and a bridge crossing the Lake.

The new pavilion was named Serpentine Sackler Gallery, after the name of the main founder of the reconstruction and extension of the gunpowder warehouse. The already famous Zaha Hadid Architects studio was involved in the adaptation. The Serpentine Sackler Gallery consists of an exhibition part in a historic complex, as well as a restaurant and public space in the extended part, located in a recognisable white "blob" with massive glazing.⁵

¹ P. Jodidio, *Serpentine Gallery Pavilions*, Taschen, Köln 2011, p. 9.

² *Ibidem*, p. 9.

³ It was designed by James Grey West in 1934.

⁴ An engineer with an interest in art and mathematics (founder of the Advanced Geometry Unit in London), for some time one of the directors of Ove Arup & Partners, supporting the discussed events, as well as a designer and writer. Lecturer at many European and American universities. Co-author of many advanced constructional and technological modern buildings (CCTV in Beijing, with OMA). Thanks to his position in the executive branch, he co-designed and supported the construction of subsequent pavilions.

⁵ The landscape architect, Arabella Lennox-Boyd, was entrusted with landscaping the area around the complex.

Today in place of a small gallery in Kensington Gardens, there is a system of cultural, artistic and recreational spaces, including two historic, restored pavilions, a “blob” icon from the beginning of the 21st century, and every year a new author’s pavilion – a manifestation of current trends, ideas and techniques. These are complemented by designed landscape forms which, in conjunction with the nearby Princess Diana’s Memorial Fountain, create a multidimensional space for events and experiences.



Ill. 1. The first Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, former tea house. The spot where the Pavilions are built since 2000. Phot. A. Bonenberg



Ill. 2. The second Serpentine Gallery Pavilion “The Magazine”, former gunpowder storage place from 1805, with Zaha Hadid extension from 2013. Phot. A. Bonenberg



Ill. 3. Princess Diana Memorial Fountain in Kensington Gardens, London, the Serpentine Gallery in distance. Phot. A. Bonenberg



Ill. 4. Princess Diana Memorial Fountain in Kensington Gardens, London. Phot. A. Bonenberg

In the context of this year’s Conference theme, it seems justified to ask what role this project plays in the works of famous architects who were invited to build the pavilion. It is undoubtedly a short episode, an etude in their professional activities. This very arbitrary, from the point of view of the programme’s limitations, experimental structure could have been an attempt to synthesise the assumptions of their own works, or a foray into the future and the creation of something new that would only appear in later works. It could also have been a single event, an episode of little importance to the further

creative path. The Serpentine Pavilion, providing an opportunity to create an original form, evaluated and discussed by the professionals, has become a prestigious project. The best proof of this is that it always appears on websites presenting the achievements of architects and teams, and yearly events are discussed by the architectural press and professional web portals.

The method employed in the research was based on analyses of original texts, websites of design studios as well as photographs and documents depicting works from The Serpentine Gallery archives.

2. THE SERPENTINE PAVILION CONCEPT AS A PROMOTION OF ARCHITECTURE, ART AND CULTURE

An event that draws the attention of architectural critics every year and one which is an attraction for tourists and Londoners is the annual new pavilion construction which takes place in the Kensington Gardens. The following architects were responsible for the design in subsequent years:

Table 1. Authors of *The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion* between 2000 and 2020

YEAR	ARCHITECTS	YEAR	ARCHITECTS
2000	Zaha Hadid	2010	Jean Nouvel
2001	Daniel Libeskind (& Cecil Balmond)	2011	Peter Zumthor i Piet Oudolf
2002	Toyo Ito (& Cecil Balmond)	2012	Ai Weiwei & Herzog & de Meuron
2003	Oscar Niemeyer	2013	Sou Fujimoto
2004	MVRDV – not realized	2014	Smiljan Radic
2005	Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura (& Cecil Balmond)	2015	Selgas Cano
		2016	Bjarke Ingels
2006	Rem Koolhaas (& Cecil Balmond – Arup)	2017	Diébédo Francis Kéré
2007	Pawilon 'Lilas': Zaha Hadid i Patrik Schumacher / Olafur Eliasson, Kjetil Thorsen, Cecil Balmond	2018	Frida Escobedo
		2019	Junya Ishigami
		2020	Counterspace: Sumayya Vally, Sarah de Villiers & Amina Kaskar
2008	Frank Gehry		
2009	SANAA: Kazuyo Sejima, Ryūe Nishizawa		

It was not possible to keep to the timetable three times over the last twenty-three years. In 2004, the project submitted by the MVRDV studio was considered impossible to implement due to safety of the historic gallery, scale of difficulties and price.⁶ The project envisaged the construction of an artificial, hollow hill covered with grass above the historical pavilion which would be a viewing point in the Park and its extension. The space between the shell and the pavilion was to act as a setting for the historic “jewel.” The interior lighting was to be artificially modified, with the only central opening in the summit area.⁷

In 2007, Olafur Eliasson, Kjetil Thorsen and Cecil Balmond could not bring forward the construction of the pavilion, which was needed by May in connection with the planned celebrations. Zaha Hadid Architects (Hadid and Schumacher) created the “Lilas” pavilion-sculpture in the form of glowing umbrella flowers. The actual proper one was only built in August 2007.⁸

And this year (2020) has seen the third case. Due to the pandemic, construction of the pavilion by the Counterspace team comprising Sumayya Vally, Sarah de Villiers and Amina Kaskar was postponed to the next year.

3. SERPENTINE PAVILIONS AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE INVITED ARCHITECTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

How the Pavilion concept lies against the background of the given architects' works can be seen by juxtaposing the realisations that took place in the years preceding and following the construction of the pavilion – i.e. in the period narrowed down to about ten years before and after the event. The aim is to determine whether the characteristics of the work of the architects appeared in The Serpentine Pavilion or whether it became an opportunity for an experiment which was expounded upon in later works. Or was the Pavilion perhaps a dream of a new and not repeated architectural form come true?

Due to limitations, a comparison of only ten selected Pavilion projects is presented herein. They were created by architects of different generations who established their own studios from the 1940s to the first decade of the 21st century. According to the chronology of entry into profession, these are: Oscar Niemeyer (1942),⁹ Toyo Ito (1971), Jean Nouvel (1972), Peter Zumthor (1979), Piet Oudolf (1980), Zaha Hadid (1980), Olafur Eliasson (1995), Kjetil Thorsen (1987), Cecil Balmond, Daniel Libeskind (1990), Cecil Balmond, SANAA (1995), Smiljan Radic (1995) and Bjarke Ingels (2003). Projects of the last four years (2017–2020) were not taken into account by the research, due to the difficulty of a broader look at the architects' achievements after the construction of the pavilion.

The following ten tables present the Pavilions in chronological order juxtaposed with several structures characteristic for the work of the architects. Both buildings preceding the Serpentine pavilion and those built later, in less than ten years, will be shown.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. V06.

⁷ MVRDV – Serpentine Pavilion, <https://www.mvrdv.nl/projects/118/serpentine-pavilion> (access 12.07.2020).

⁸ P. Jodidio, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁹ The dates indicate when the architect or team began their own architectural practice (data according to the websites of individual studios and Wikipedia in English).

Table 2. Comparison of the chosen works by Zaha Hadid with her Serpentine Pavilion¹⁰

2000 Zaha Hadid The Serpentine Pavilion			
		1.	2.
Before The Serpentine Pavilion		After The Serpentine Pavilion	
1999 Ski Jump Bergisel, Innsbruck, Austria		2003–2006 BMW Car Factory near Leipzig, Germany	
	3.		6.
1994–1996 Cardiff Bay Opera House, Wales (project)		2009 Burnham Pavilion, Chicago, USA	
	4.		7.
1993–1994 Fire Station, Weil am Rhein Germany		2009–2014 Galaxy Soho Centre, Beijing, China	
	5.		8.

With her works, Zaha Hadid co-created two trends of contemporary architecture: deconstructivism and “blob” architecture. Construction of the Pavilion came at a breakthrough time: the Bergisel Ski Jump in Innsbruck, dating back to 1999, with its sophisticated sculptural form is part of both trends. The Serpentine Pavilion is classified as deconstructivist, but the architect’s successive projects assume soft, amoebic forms, largely conditioned by new, specialized software. The 2006 “Lilas” pavilion mentioned above confirms the change, as well as later works, including the extension of the “Gunpowder Room” in 2013, which is the second part of The Serpentine Galleries.

¹⁰ The numbers next to the photographs in Table 2 indicate the order in which the photographs’ sources are listed in the bibliography. This numbering and order will be repeated for all tables.

Table 3. Comparison of the chosen works by Daniel Libeskind with his Serpentine Pavilion

2001 Daniel Libeskind, Cecil Balmond (Arup&Partners)	 1.	 2.
	Before The Serpentine Pavilion	After The Serpentine Pavilion
2000 Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado, USA	 3.	2007 Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, USA  6.
2001 Jewish Museum in Berlin, Germany	 4.	2007–2017 Złota 44 residential skyscraper, Warsaw, Poland  7.
1998 Felix Nussbaum Haus, Museum in Osnabrück, Germany	 5.	2013 Generali Tower, Milano, Italy  8.

Daniel Libeskind is one of the few contemporary architects who consistently fit into one convention, known in architecture as deconstructivism. The Serpentine Pavilion, thanks to the scale and intensity of the form and detail, is a good example of an expressionist trend in this movement. The domination of technology, the exposed texture of the material and its form cause the work to balance on the borderline of design and sculpture. The projects that followed the London pavilion continue along this path, even in the case of questionable interventions in the historical fabric of modernised buildings i.e. museums.

Subsequent big scale developments by the architect acquired softer shapes and smooth facades, still showing expressive and deconstructed forms.

Table 4. Comparison of the chosen works by Toyo Ito & Cecil Balmond (Arup & Partners) with their Serpentine Pavilion

2002 Toyo Ito & Cecil Balmond (Arup&Partners)			
	1.		2.
	Before The Serpentine Pavilion		After The Serpentine Pavilion
1999 T House in Yutenji, Tokyo, Japan		2004 TOD'S Omotesando Building, Tokyo, Japan	
	3.		6.
1996 Nagaoka Lyric Hall, Nagaoka, Niigata, Japan		2007 Sumika Pavilion / Sumika Project, Tokyo, Japan	
	4.		7.
1989 Restaurant PASTINA, Tokyo, Japan		2015 Museo International del Barroco, Puebla, Mexico	
	5.		8.

The motif of a defined, cubic volume and openwork partitions with irregularly distributed supports was present in the works of Toyo Ito in the 1990s. It has also become the leitmotif of the London pavilion. Several buildings from the same period received similarly free facades, with perforations entailed by different factors. They resulted not only from the structural grid, but also from the functional arrangement of window openings (Mikimoto Ginza2, Tokyo) or from the function related to technology, as in the National Theatre in Taichung (Taiwan) in 2014. New, soft, wavy lines were used by the architect more and more often, starting with the renovation of the facade of the Aparthotel in Barcelona (2009), to become the focal element of the facade and shape in the aforementioned National Theatre in Taichung.

Table 5. Comparison of the chosen works by Oscar Niemeyer with his Serpentine Pavilion

2003 Oscar Niemeyer	 1.	 2.
Before The Serpentine Pavilion	Before The Serpentine Pavilion	After The Serpentine Pavilion
2002 Novo Museu, Curitiba, Brazil	 3.	2006 Natal City Park Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, Brazil  6.
1996 The Niterói Contemporary Art Museum, Brazil	 4.	2010 Oscar Niemeyer International Cultural Centre, Aviles, Spain  7.
1982 Niemeyer and Ferrara, 'The Volcano' Cultural Centre, Le Havre, France	 5.	2011 (ready 2020) Cafe for the factory workers 'Niemeyer Sphere', Leipzig, Germany  8.

The Serpentine Pavilion by Niemeyer, like almost all his work, is contained in the tradition of modernism translated into the language of bold, expressive forms and dynamic shapes. The oldest of the architects invited to design the Pavilion remained faithful to his own unique way of building. His structures always combined sculptural form with difficult, often innovative structural solutions implementing complicated reinforced concrete shapes and, delicate, curved and double-curved shells. The colours, which have always been important in his works, refer to the paintings of the European De Stijl Movement, but also to the indigenous and contemporary art of Brazil (murals by Diego Ribera). The architect consistently used reinforced concrete frames, slabs and shells bringing out all the advantages of the technology and material. One of the few exceptions is his last work, a cafe-ball hanging from the corner of a factory building in Leipzig. Its framework is Buckminster Fuller's steel dome (a geodesic dome) partly covered by glass.

Table 6. Comparison of the chosen works by Olafur Eliasson “Snohetta” with his Serpentine Pavilion

2007 Olafur Eliasson, “Snohetta” (Kjetil Thorsen, Cecil Balmond)		
	1.	2.
	Before The Serpentine Pavilion	After The Serpentine Pavilion
2002 Alexandrina Library, Alexandria, Egypt		2009 Vulkan Beehive, rooftop of the Mathallen Market, Oslo, Norway 
	3.	6.
2000 (finished 2008) Opera, Oslo, Norway		2013 Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre, Aberdeen, Scotland 
	4.	7.
1994 Museum of Art & Cinema, Lillehammer, Norway		2014 September 11. National Memorial Museum, New York, USA 
	5.	8.

The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Olafur Eliasson, Kjetil Thorsen and Cecil Balmond (Arup & Partners) has several features that characterise architectural forms by Eliasson. These are the legibility of clear, geometric shapes, the use of soft lines contrasted with angular forms, the use of natural materials and the subordination of the structure to local spatial and cultural contexts. In the case of Serpentine Pavilion, it was the view of the park and the historical building of the first Gallery. They were observed through the veil of vertical lines while climbing up and around the ramp, to the top terrace.

Table 7. Comparison of the chosen works by SANAA: Kazuyo Sejima i Ryūe Nishizawa with their Serpentine Pavilion

2009 SANAA: Kazuyo Sejima i Ryūe Nishizawa  1.	 2.
Before The Serpentine Pavilion	After The Serpentine Pavilion
2007 The New Contemporary Art Museum, New York, USA  3.	2012 Factory building in Vitra campus, Weil am Rhein, Germany  6.
2004 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan  4.	2015 Grace Farms, New Canaan, USA  7.
1998 Koga Park Café, Ibaraki, Japan  5.	2018 Social housing, Paris, France  8.

In buildings created by the SANAA team, soft, circular and cubic forms have been intertwined right from the beginning. The harmonious coexistence of these forms in a single building was achieved by the interpenetration of glazed interiors and reflections permeating the structure. The soft, amoebic footprint of the Serpentine pavilion was enhanced by the shape of the mirror roof. It seems to open a new period, where the fluidity of lines becomes the main principle of buildings containing different functions. These include the Rolex Training Centre (2010), the design of which coincided with the invitation to London and most of the subsequent projects. The most recent work (2020) – Boccioni University Campus in Milan also follows this trend.

Table 8. Comparison of the chosen works by Jean Nouvel with his Serpentine Pavilion

2010 Jean Nouvel	 1.		 2.
	Before The Serpentine Pavilion		After The Serpentine Pavilion
2004 Agbar Tower, Barcelona, Spain	 3.	2013 Renaissance Barcelona Fira Hotel, Barcelona, Spain	 6.
1995 (finished 2001) Gasometer A Adaptation, Vienna, Austria	 4.	2017 Louvre, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	 7.
1987 Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France	 5.	2019 National Museum of Qatar, Doha, Qatar	 8.

Against the background of Jean Nouvel's oeuvre, the Serpentine pavilion stands out both in terms of bold colours, which does not appear in his other works and its very expressive "constructivist" form. In this sense, it resembles USSR's Konstantin Mielnikov's pavilion at the 1925 International Exhibition in Paris. Both before, as well as after the construction of the pavilion, Nouvel reached for the eye-catching, sculptural forms, referring at the same time to locally occurring shapes, but far from the spirit of constructivism. For him, the cultural context of a work addressed to a specific audience was always important. In this sense, the Serpentine pavilion is a departure from the way the architect designs. The recently completed apartment complex in Lyon (2019) contains new accents, evoking the spirit of the London project. The colourful facades of the tall building are clad in a raster of white "structure" and the body is topped with a white openwork structure in the form of a deconstructed gable roof. This "roof" serves as a technical background for a residential building, houses photovoltaic panels and technological equipment.

Table 9. Comparison of the chosen works by Peter Zumthor with his Serpentine Pavilion

2011 Peter Zumthor & Piet Oudolf	 1.	 2.
	Before The Serpentine Pavilion	After The Serpentine Pavilion
2007 Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, Mechernich, Wachendorf, Germany	 3.	2012 Werkraum House, Andelsbuch, Austria  6.
1999 Twin house, Rath in Haldenstein, Switzerland	 4.	2016 Mining History Museum, Allmannajuvet, Norway  7.
1996 Baths in Vals, Grisons, Switzerland	 5.	2019 Los Angeles County Museum of Art (project), Los Angeles, USA  8.

Architecture created by Peter Zumthor is recognisable by its simple, usually cubic shapes – and that’s what the Serpentine Pavilion is like. The second distinguishing feature is the use of local materials that are visible on the outside and penetrate to the interior of the building. It can be stone, brick, glass, wood, giving a uniform colour to the space created. When it comes to the London Pavilion it is dark coloured wood. Another characteristic feature of Zumthor’s architecture is that buildings are carefully inscribed in the landscape or urban context. The architect’s London Pavilion is a continuation of this creative path. It represents the most important features of the buildings which Zumthor built earlier and which were built later. Working with architect Piet Oudolf, a landscape architect and author of greenery design for New York’s linear The High Line park, designed the space of the inner courtyard as a meadow-garden to which the shady terrace of the café opens.

Table 10. Comparison of the chosen works by Smiljan Radić with his Serpentine Pavilion

2014 Smiljan Radić			
	1.		2.
Before The Serpentine Pavilion		After The Serpentine Pavilion	
2010–12 House for the Poem of the Right Angle, Vilches, Chile		2014 Bus stop, Radić / Bader, Krumbach, Austria	
	3.		6.
2005 Copper House, Talca, Chile		2017 Radić, Castillo, Lazcano, Fire station, foot passage, play-ground, San Pedro de La Paz, Chile	
	4.		7.
2005 Casa Pite, Papudo, Chile		2018 Radić, Castillo, Medrano, Teatro Regional del Biobío, Concepción, Chile	
	5.		8.

The architecture created by Smiljan Radić is very diverse and the architect often uses sculptural forms, unconventional materials and original colours. His structures range from public commissions as well as personal domestic constructions such as the ‘House for the Poem of the Right Angle, in Vilches’ His pieces, therefore, are remarkably heterogeneous, each in dialogue with their surroundings, which is a noteworthy feat when one considers the challenges of the terrain in Chile.

The translucent, partially deconstructed, spherical form of the Serpentine pavilion fits into the “blob” movement, which is not the way the architect expressed himself artistically either earlier nor later. Radić’s work to date is characterised by a great variety of forms for which it is difficult to find a common denominator. The relatively short time (less than six years) that has passed since the construction of his Serpentine pavilion makes it difficult to say.

Table 11. Comparison of the chosen works by Bjarke Ingels with his Serpentine Pavilion

2016 Bjarke Ingels (BIG)	 1.	 2.
	Before The Serpentine Pavilion	After The Serpentine Pavilion
2013 Danish Maritime Museum, Helsingør, Denmark	 3.	2016 Via 57 West, New York, USA  6.
2008 JDS & BIG, Mountain Dwellings, Copenhagen, Denmark	 4.	2017 Leg-Lego House Billund, Denmark  7.
2005 JDS Architects & BIG, VM Houses, Copenhagen, Denmark	 5.	2019 Copen Hill Incinerator power plant and ski slope, Amager, Denmark  8.

The architecture that Bjarke Ingels creates is recognisable and has clear common features despite the very different design themes. The external partitions – walls, covers, are vivid, “pixel” as is described in many publications discussing the work of BIG group. The scale is not significant here. Balconies, windows, but also ventilation openings or wall structure can be the “texture” elements of the building’s walls. In residential projects, the architect pays special attention to contact with nature or designed greenery. Environmental protection issues generate a lot of interesting housing solutions for him, but the operating waste incinerator on the island of Amager, with built-on artificial ski slope exploiting the plant heat, comes to the fore.

When it comes to the Serpentine pavilion, resistant fibreglass, simple assembly technology and modular wall structure enabled the sponsor of the pavilion¹¹ to transport dismantled structure to the USA after London exhibition, to assemble it temporarily in New York and Toronto and place it permanently in the centre of Vancouver.¹²

4. SUMMARY

For twenty years, the tradition of opening a new “version” of the pavilion in June has become an important event for architects. Subsequent pavilions were widely commented on, photographed and described in many publications.

The aim of the work was to analyse the role played by The Serpentine pavilion in the work of those who were invited for its construction. They were architects with a recognised reputation and considerable experience, and the only criterion for inviting them to London was lack of designs implemented in the UK. That the pavilion has become important for its creators is evidenced by the fact that photographs and often design drawings can be found on the relevant studios and companies’ websites. The documentation and discussions on subsequent projects can also be found on web portals dedicated to architecture.

Traces of ideas, intended and sometimes unintended interactions can be found in later works of the pavilion designers. The synthesis they had to make for this small structure proved to be important, just as the exhibition pavilions once inspired the future works of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Konstantin Mielnikov.

Comparison of The Serpentine pavilions’ forms with other architectural projects, in a period of about ten years before and after the London event, allows us to assess whether the implementation of the pavilion has become an important event, bringing new quality to the architect’s work. Three situations were observed: the aesthetics of the pavilion may be consistent with the rest of the architects’ works, the pavilion could introduce or be a herald of formal changes, noticeable in later implementations. It could also have been a work that left no trace in the architect’s later activities.

In the context of the leading theme of the discussion on the *Truth and Lies in Architecture*, it is difficult to talk about such a phenomenon in case of London pavilions designs – synthetic, small structures. It certainly is a *search*. And all the more interesting as there are almost no restrictions to the design assumptions. The freedom of choice of form and material allowed architects to project their own understanding of architecture at the stage of theoretical considerations about it.

Hence, as can be seen by looking at a broader time period, the pavilion played different roles in their work. In six of the ten cases examined, the construction of the Serpentine Pavilion was a presentation identifying the architect’s workshop, which has not changed in the years that followed. Two of these can be described as signalling a change in the way forms are thought of and subsequent works are a proof of that. Two are one-off experiments, not used by the artist anywhere else thus far.

¹¹ Westbank, a construction company from Vancouver.

¹² P. Lynch, *BIG’s Serpentine Pavilion to be Moved to Permanent Home in Vancouver* [in:] ArchDaily, <https://www.archdaily.com/868438/bigs-serpentine-pavilion-to-be-moved-to-permanent-home-in-vancouver> (access: 12.07.2020).

Table 12. Evaluation of the significance of The Serpentine Pavilion for the work of the invited architects

YEAR	ARCHITECT	pavilion's aesthetics consistent with other works	pavilion with new aesthetics, heralding a time of change	the pavilion is a unique manifestation of a new form
2000	Zaha Hadid		■	
2001	Daniel Libeskind (and Cecil Balmond)	■		
2002	Toyo Ito (and Cecil Balmond)	■		
2003	Oscar Niemeyer	■		
2007	Olafur Eliasson, Kjetil Thorsen (and Cecil Balmond)	■		
2009	SANAA: Kazuyo Sejima and Ryūe Nishizawa		■	
2010	Jean Nouvel			■
2011	Peter Zumthor and Piet Oudolf	■		
2014	Smiljan Radic			■
2016	Bjarke Ingels	■		

The twenty-year tradition of architectural and cultural events in Kensington Gardens has become a part of the architectural events' calendar and has had noticeable positive effects.

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