

Hungarian University of Fine Arts Doctoral Program

ARCHITECTURAL ART'S SITE-SPECIFIC ANSWERS IN EXCESS OF
THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Theses of
JÁNOS MIHÁLY HÜBLER's DLA dissertation

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Supervisor: Dr. habil, DLA György Jovánovics

The goal of my dissertation is the analysis of my artistic experience that defines my creative attitude. During the enquiry of architectural and artistic works I mark off parallels and contact points. In each of the examples I examine the conscious usage of the structural characteristics of concrete as cast material. I base my thesis on analysis of my own art works, on variants that can be further developed and improved.

My questions aim to the void, to the absent, the space of the absent, the meaningless. I used my own experience and concern, the analysis of art works and the rich material of publications on this topic.

1. Thesis

I examine the naturalization and the alienation in the memorial works of two sculptors, Rachel Whiteread and Micha Ullmann.

I come to the conclusion that art can be public and personal if the viewer is actively participating in the memorial work, and he is not just a passive receptor. In the process of naturalization one has to adopt the historical and social reality. Moreover, its position must have commute: as the "consumer" of idea and as producer of his own memories. Thus, one can become vehicle of memory.

Architecture is a marginal territory that has extended possibilities to treat the site specifically according to the historical event. At the same time with the missing books it constructs the void, the visible absence, the no longer existent.

2. Thesis

I define the site in Peter Zumthor's and Daniel Libeskind's architectural reactions to the space giving room to a work as answers given to a certain function. I determine the message of both buildings in securing a space for the persistent void arranged for a long term. Analyzing the two projects I can state that even the works without architectural precursor can be symbolic if set in a certain context of content and space. At the same time both buildings are based and also are depending on the historical knowledge.

Both buildings answer to the challenge of the spirit of the time. Zumthor's project departs from its own reality and makes no reference to anything else. It fits not only to its own age, but disposes of further layers of meaning for the coming ages as well. While Libeskind's void is site-specific, it does not secede from the reality, as it is the space of the void, it is also not utopian.

3. Thesis

In two chapters of my thesis I analyze the spaces occupied in the concrete and the taking up of space in the concrete. I define the concrete as media of the timeless space occupation.

I come to the conclusion that if one emphasizes the role of the concrete in his work, he does that out of conviction, because it recognizes and appreciates the composition results of the material.

As the disgust, the works come off our head. The abhorrent is not the visible, but the statement we have to believe in. The closed body of the possibly most massive material full of challenge so to say summons and provokes the viewer to think about and imagine something of which the object directly deprives him. It demands our own imagination, feelings about the eternal present. The scream drowned in the concrete - the grim motif of being buried alive in concrete - stays as an eternal threat and presses for our attention. As the scream, the presence of the radioactive material as well, it vindicates our attention.

The understanding of bonding into concrete as monumental is a continuity that is generated by the closed space and the oblivion of its existence. It reifies the ancient desire of the architecture: it is long lasting, persistent, useful and practical.

In the case of both walling up the presence as not visible, it is an extra sensorial experience. They have a persistent effect, even if we neglect them.

4. Thesis

I state in my doctoral thesis about the books that the invention of book printing changed everything, the printed matter destroys the architecture. I state here also that the book, as vehicle of the writing is an evacuated memory and a secured knowledge. Approaching the use of books, the library, and the collection I come to the conclusion that any usage per se damages the book. The rollout of non-usable books and spare copies and the everyday destruction of the library stocks are the most typical forms of taking out of circulation. This is an unobserved routine practiced by the professional personnel responsible for that.

5. Thesis

In the "*Set up of Memorial through Destruction*" chapter, in connection with the building of the "*Concrete*" I start with the genius loci that ensured the invention of the work.

I define the key role of the architectural characteristics of the site as a physical circumstance with determining factors.

The inner structure of the space of the building defined the final form of the work, the book-field walled up in concrete. In my approach the books appear mainly as raw material, as a "typical construction material" characteristic to the site, and I deduce the role of the concrete as adequate "binder".

Adopting the experience of my creative method I define a spatial solution that can be positioned at the border of the domains of architecture and sculpture.

This is where I introduce the guise-concrete, the site-specific quality of the concrete.

6. Thesis

In the chapter "Scaling", analyzing my doctoral work "*Growing structures, the Metamorphoses of the Material*" I define that very existing synthesis that comes into existence between the construction and the books, between architecture and art, and architects and artists.

My statement is that the created work is a statue, and the circumstances of its creation were determined by the casting of the books into concrete as a one-off historical event.

I come to the conclusion that apparently the presence of architecture is contradicting itself, as the work is not immovable. It is site specific in the sense that it evokes the architectural references of its site-specific creation.

7. Thesis

In the chapter "*Remembering through abandonment*" I expose the possibility of subtraction of the books related to my work "*Bibliography*". I state here that the fate of the books was in the beginning their perdition, later their definite preservation. The preservation is symbolic, as they did not "survive" the act of destruction because of the idea or the information represented by them. I refer in the statues to the quondam location of the books.

The locations of the books - as the evoked past - and the incompleteness of our information, the deformity of our sentiments is universal. The absence of the books implicates all the possibilities, and as it is timeless, it is infinite as well.