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Myths and Realities of Adaptable city. Contemporary City as Adaptable Hybrid

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Abstract. Global space – both natural and cultural – is the greatest good belonging to the human community. The said community has, therefore, the right and responsibility to protect it, wisely and in solidarity, from wasteful exploitation. The postulate of public utility of this good must also presume such mutual conditioning of the rights and obligations of private owners that would minimise the chance of their infringement of collective interests. The culture of space management became an important measure of cultural level of societies at the turn of the 20th century, perhaps one of those moments which decide upon the future of our civilisation. The conclusion that large agglomerations in particular are “incorrigible zones of spatial and social pathology, from which we need to escape into pristine areas and there create a more perfect living environment” is unacceptable, also from the ethical point of view, both as regards the people living in those agglomerations and nature. As far as what has been created by man is concerned, we need to assume that we are able to control and improve this material creation of our civilisation. Such is the fundamental requirement of sustainable development – a difficult, but probably the only way of managing “the global village” in the millennium that has just commenced. The spatial structure of the contemporary city as a whole is a broken form: it has formally expressive and perfectly composed elements, it has mutilated compositions, chaotic arrangements and “lost spaces”, finally, it has spaces that as yet have not been properly used compositionally and are still waiting for their role in the whole. A broken form – in compliance with the principle of irreversibility – may not return to its original composition. Thinking about the future of the city and taking into account the irrefutable fact that a considerable part of the built environment of tomorrow already exists today, we should ask ourselves the question: can it adopt, as a whole, a composition of a different kind? If the urbanised environment, being the basic one, is also to become a full-value environment for human existence, it will require continuous and universal improvement of its quality, as well as new strategies, methods and scenarios for rational organisation of urbanised space that will be able to meet new challenges. It seems that “dramaturgically consistent logic of composition” may become an original formula of urban public space. Scenarios built on the basis of the city “genotype”, in which urban “layers of memory” are the basis for adaptive transformations.

1. Introduction

The 21st-century city can be regarded as a dynamic hybrid, adjusting to incredibly dynamically fluctuating needs and activities, and at the same time as a place of correlation of individualised expressiveness. The group, social, national identification largely (sometimes decisively) results from the distinctness and cultural identity of a specific, unique shape of the space we live in, connected with the location and tradition, and the world of values we create. Contemporary cities, the ones with history,
have a “good tradition” of multicultural expressiveness. But what are the new dimensions of social expressiveness? Where do threats dwell – and where are chances to be sought – for the city of the 21st century, a potentially postindustrial city of culture and knowledge, “the culture which is an attempt to force history to serve values” (H. Elzenberg).

Spatial surroundings do not have the causative power. They have a supportive role: they can be fostering or hindering. Hence the responsibility to offer it in a favourable way, so that it could optimally stimulate individual interpretation of information they contain, but not overwhelm and disinform with its excess, contradiction, illegibility. Hence also the point of complementarity of individual sequences of space, their synergic mutually appreciative composition. Owing to conditions of the effect of surroundings on the human mind, we intuitively “undiscursively comprehend the language of space” [1]. But thanks to them we can also use this language, consciously and purposefully, and to “read” it in a deeper way, and not merely intuitively. Semiological analysis of space tells us to pay attention to signs and all their possible meanings – it is a cautious search, inclining us not to be satisfied with the first discernible meaning; it encourages us to “read” space, so as to discover as many possibilities and interpretations embedded in it as we can find. Architectural and urban space is a sign situation, due to the interaction along the line man – spatial surroundings – man, the degree of its intentionality. A property of a well formed space is intentional composition of signs, which simultaneously complete it to create a meaningful message: a stimulating individual interpretation, understanding, and reaction of each recipient.

Effectively improving effect on the structure of the city consists in playing with what is given and winning in favour of solving the qualities of what is given (objective qualities and the hidden ones, positive as well as negative).

Therefore, what is necessary in urban design oriented towards this goal is an intention of composition (as opposed to the quite common intention of the lack thereof) of parts and of the whole. This results in a vision of the face of the space of the city, and further on in regulating principles of substantial organisational, and legal nature, supporting its realisation. The relation between the formal coordination, the coordination of activities, and the coordination of dramaturgy of relations, grasped as a directorial construction of improving measures, seems to be superior for the realisation of this intention.

Specificity of the approach presented herein and the Author’s introduction of the term “directing of space” [2] consist in the understanding what directing stands for, stemming from the personal experience of the theatre (constantly continued in different cultural conditions), from the perspective of an artist, a stage designer, who simultaneously is an architect and an urban planner, cooperating with the director. The understanding directing as a creative process stemming from the experience of the theatre as a “reduced model” [3], the goal of which is the “quality of the work in its reception”, that is complementing it in the interactive relation between the directed space and man-recipient, relying on its effect, but at the same time “modifying” it through his presence, reaction, understanding, degree of acceptance.

The directing construction (the framework of directing measures) towards the city can be also regarded as a coordinated system of accessibility (public space of the city accessible to diversified activities and expressions) and a system of communication (the language of signs of the urban and architectural space, including its shape, intellectually and emotionally communicating the possibilities resulting from the contact with it). In other words, it is a construction which crystallises the image of the city in its reception.

The physical space of a work of architecture is its shape and existence in the three-dimensional space. It manifests itself to the recipient as a visual space, but simultaneously as a palpable, aural, mobile one. This external space thanks to the qualities of its form allows the recipient to understand his individual place in this space – the way of making use of the space appropriate for him only, not only in functional, but also intellectual and emotional terms.
The semantic space of a work of architecture stands for its reception and understanding – an entity in the internal intellectual and emotional space of the recipient, in his “field of the internal state” [4]. In this space, in the changing field of the internal state, all encountered individuals and places leave their trace, all times reside: the past, the present, and the future. At the same time, it is a space of notions (creative processing of the experienced, the known, oriented towards the future), the space of memory of most broadly grasped experiences, and of illumination: the clarity of meanings manifesting themselves in images. This field eventually decides on “how” we perceive the world, but at the same time its state (quality, richness) depends on “what” we see in the theatre of our life.

The framework of the directing activities is a closed structure of sequences, that is reaching the form of the whole by means of operating with its finished parts so as to obtain legibility of the composition at each stage of the realisation of this whole. The dramaturgy of relations constitutes an intrinsic quality of the directing approach. Due to the directing construction the form and logic of individual scenes – sequences are justified by the subsequent ones, assuming the gradual increase of the legibility of each of them: first in a specific moment when it is received, and then in the context of the whole, that is its role in this whole. In a good theatrical performance each scene is a whole in itself, at the same time belonging to the unity of the performance, co-creating it, with a necessary reference: the consequence of the preceding scene, and an opening to the next one.

The public space of the city is potentially such a theatrical performance. In the current state of space, it is a good or wonderful show, with certain exceptions which confirm this thesis, and these deliberations wish to serve the purpose for the public space of the city to become a good show more and more frequently. The spatial structure of the contemporary city as a whole is a fragmented form: it has elements which are formally distinct, perfectly composed, it has mutilated compositions, it has chaotic layouts and “lost spaces” [5]. Finally, it has spatial motifs still not used in compositional terms, awaiting their role in the whole.

In compliance with the principle of irreversibility, a fragmented form cannot reach the initial state of composition. In light of the unquestionable fact that a significant part of the built environment of the future already exists today, when pondering on the future of the city one should pose a question whether it can reach a state of different type of composition as a whole.

Let us once again refer to the theatre, in order to investigate the mental path of building a new, creative, an open form out of the fragmented form. Tadeusz Różewicz, in whose plays the theatrical space plays a great role, created a new quality, in terms of the dramatical construction, as well as theatrical forms; he used a “fragmented form” of the reality and theatrical tradition. Różewicz’s “theatre of inconsequence”, “theatre of an impure form”, is an extremely consistent, dramatically perfectly constructed and composed collage. A collage in which a diversified dramaturgical material (as such of different values) constitutes itself, crystallises into a new sense, a new drama. This is not about denying the reality and throwing traditional conventions away. It stands for the constant revision of the reality and the legacy of culture, allowing to create one’s own vision. “Form becomes content, and content becomes form” (T. Różewicz). The form is filled with content and content generates form. Traditional conventions, principles of reaching understanding with the viewer, are used anew: they return in a new shape, as a new value, quality. The chaos of the diversified “dramatic material” (often shockingly discrepant) juxtaposed with composition in the dramaturgically consistent logic, creates order. The essence of a visual collage, ingeniously translated into the language of the theatre, created a new original formula of drama and a new entirely consistent theatrical form. Such “dramaturgically consistent logic of composition” when translated into the language of the urban and architectural space and with the application with the aforementioned directing construction, seems to be able to become an original form of building spatial scenarios of the city, and new, consistent, overall form of the space of the city in its reception.

Let us consider the city as an organism, as a complex forming a whole, a structure, the living space of people, created by man. Development, transformations, exchanges (of functions, forms, users)
constitute the essence of this organism, and so do conditions, principles, understood as a genotype of the process of its transformations. The statement “life has the last word” can be interpreted as an argument against coordinated and planned actions, suggesting that people always win with those who plan, and the legacy of the past will always bend – and will be bent – to the needs of life in the future. Nevertheless, it could be assumed that for this very reason the effects of prediction, flexibility, respect for the existing conditions contained in planned actions, everything that is particularly important in directing as such and space directing in particular, are so important. The problem is not for people to win with planners or for planners to win with people, but for programming actions, or directing actions for that matter, to effectively verify and predict the needs of communities, aimed to improve the quality of the anthropogenic environment.

Nature has the capacity of self-regulation and reaching optimal solutions this way. In the case of human activity it is necessary to be aware of the need of regulation and development of ways to implement is as well as possible. It is important to listen closely to the guidelines already embedded in the system and to develop them creatively, with high competence, with the efficiency of action and sensitivity allowing to extract and hand over this “good gene” of the urban composition and properties of architecture, and to select new “formal genes” favouring the appropriate development of identity of this particular organism. Therefore, it is not about being limited to reiterating patterns (even the proven ones), but about logical modification, resulting from the introduction and promotion of patterns increasing quality and attractiveness in compliance with the “identity guideline” and about avoiding (thanks to relevant preventive regulations) harmful, unifying patterns, inconsistent with this guideline. Good continuation stands for innovation that appreciates tradition and is open to a dialogue with what is communicated by the existing system.

The essence of directing is the ability to generate certain impressions in a recipient, by means of affecting (bef orehand) the matter available to the director. The principle of “look more carefully – see more” refers to the creator affecting the matter (architect – director), as well as the recipient – user, entering an interaction with the effect of the director’s actions affecting the matter. It refers to sensitivity and the ability to read the reality of the “theatre of the everyday life” [6] taking place in the urban and architectural space.

The task of space directing towards the city is to create spatial situations that foster interaction, stimulate desired behaviour and hinder the undesired one – to build scenes fostering integration and social expression, by means of creating a directing framework, making use of elements of the director’s matter, and basing on the unique genotype, as well as on the memory layers (of the development, transformations, even destruction) of the city.

The starting point is the matter available to the director: its understanding and the opportunities it potentially offers. Due to the dynamic nature of this matter and in order to emphasise the eternal nature of the relation between man and his surroundings, it seems legitimate to describe it as elements. The term “elements” is used also because of the fact that although they are a creative “material”, they always maintain their independence of “an element which can also destroy”, always menacing for man. Hence what becomes an element of directing is appreciating, considering, and protecting against their power, bearing in mind that it is always worth listening intently to them, as in nature these elements, despite their destructive force, provide more help than harm. Simultaneously, the term “element” highlights their associative, metaphoric, and dramaturgical meaning, so important for the director’s approach, as well as their pro-eco significance. [7], [8].

Therefore, matter consists of five elements given to man by nature, and of five anthropogenic components. The first ones could be dubbed “the primary material”: the elements of earth, water, fire, air, and the fifth element – life – spirit and the gift of existence. The second group: form (thought-controlled shaping of things), function (desired and possible action, making use of things), motion (dynamics of the thing itself and of its reception), time (duration of things and their dynamic images), technology (technical capacity of materialising a thought into a thing) have been generated by human intellect, in order to make use of the priceless resources offered by nature.
The element of earth is comprehended here as tectonics, material, and context at the same time. We can talk about a two-fold material. The first one is an inanimate material, whose process of coming into being in nature is reflected in its properties. These properties decide not only on the technical capacity of the material. In the hands of the handler they are carriers of emotional and cultural meanings. Simultaneously, from the perspective of taking context into account, the meaning of specific materials is important for the local tradition and identity and for maintaining the global diversification, in compliance with the idea of supporting the regional, cultural, and historical uniqueness of the place and fostering sustainable development. The second material is the animated, the greenery. Greenery is an indispensable element supporting life and a certain animated “texture of the earth”. Changing its colours, transparency, textures, smells, sounds in cycles, it possesses special abilities to modify the shape of space itself, as well as its reception. It also influences the change of formal relations, having the ability to weaken and strengthen fields of formal activity and the force of linking elements in architectural and urban systems in which she acts as a component of their composition. These qualities of greenery make it a part of matter available to the director, which offers broad possibilities of enriching the dramaturgy of the space of the city.

Regarding the element of earth as a material and a respected natural (tectonics) and cultural context at the same time acts as a stimulator for generating expressive (meaningful) solutions, differentiated in terms of their scale, fostering local individualisations (social and cultural ones). Such an approach is to serve the goal of effective transformation – improvement (re-use, re-cycling, re-duce, re-place) and intelligent development of the existing structure as a common alternative for investments entering new territories. Consequently, new projects are perceived and treated as an extension – continuation, and at the same time as qualitative correction (improvement) of the existing structure, and not as an independent investment, caring only for its own needs. It is worth emphasising that the intentions of the Hannover Principles (1992) and those of Saarinen (1943) are convergent [9]. At the same time, the “bad practice”, regrettably still very common, is against these postulates. The growing promotion of “good practice” and “good theory” instils optimism, as they were already the objective of the International Federation for Housing and Planning Congress “Urban Renewal. Recycling versus Land Consumption”, Barcelona, September 2011. Thinking in categories of the qualitative correction also entails flexibility of the introduced solutions, which (sometimes) calls for higher funds, but on the other hand is beneficial as the resultant system develops: it stands and adjusts to the more and more dynamically changing requirements of the future.

The element of air is regarded as a carrier of smells and sounds and a certain filling of space. It is the very element of the matter available to the director whose quality decides about the biological comfort, and in doing so influences the mental comfort, too. The quality of this specific filling, understood as a microclimate, depends on the abilities to make use of the qualities of the climate, the possibilities inherent in the process of shaping the space and the appropriate selection of necessary technical solutions. It is about applying the contemporary interpretation of traditional methods of taking the properties of the local climate into account, besides the use of contemporary technical possibilities. The air is simultaneously a carrier of sounds and smells, influencing our mental state, our sense of well-being, our emotional connection with the place, orientation. Regarding the element of air as a carrier refers to relating to sounds and smells as to components of the comfort of the space and the semiotic composition of this space. Avoidance of the noise pollution and odour nuisance requires consciously applied protections or neutralisation at the stage of conceptual assumptions, and not ex-post interventionism. Similarly, filling the space with the desired sound, smell, taste, co-creating its specific climate and character, requires a sensitive “directing design”, and it results straight from the way in which the space is shaped, from the elements applied and the effects they entail, but also from permissible functions and effective protection against the undesirable ones.

The element of fire is understood as light and energy. Light offers an opportunity to see: to register images and interpret remembered meanings, in the predictable, objective part, as well as in the subjective, personal part – the brain interprets what the eye sees thanks to our cultural foundations and
our individual experience (associations, impressions). Watching the performance of the “everyday life theatre”, just like in a real theatre, thanks to these foundations and sensitivity we are offered to understand individual images (the cultural sensitivity to the symbolism of the colours of nature allows the Navajo people to see clusters of colours where we simply see mountains) and scenes of the reality. Artificial light, which thanks to new technologies gives us more and more possibilities of enriching and transforming the appearance of the space, unlike the natural and fire light can be recognised as a certain type of pollution of the natural environment. Light pollution seems to be an unavoidable effect of the contemporary urbanisation. There is no doubt it is a type of pollution, but at the same time quite a picturesque one. Nevertheless, while appreciating picturesqueness, one needs to remember about appropriateness. Hence the need of effective control – in creative and economic terms alike - and the use of artificial light with the awareness of the consequences. Operating the element of fire as light puts the emphasis on building the dynamics and dramaturgy of space, with the awareness of its multifaceted effect: “I expose glossy and opaque materials, surfaces, and edges to sunlight, I allow the occurrence of mysteriously deep masses and semitones of shadows and darkness, for the charm of light to appear on things” [10].

The element of fire is at the same time a dramatic symbol of the human ability to use the natural energy. The energy which is necessary to achieve comfort, and therefore – let me reiterate – the appropriateness of the adjustment of space in specific conditions to the required standards. The project of the “energy of space”, defining the use of light (natural and artificial) and the way energy is applied in order to build the biological, functional, and mental comfort, should be regarded as creative controlling – directing – of the element of fire: controlling the dynamics of space in the changing light, controlling the comfort of temperature and its stimulating character, controlling the mobility (requiring the use of energy) of specific components of the directed space.

Two aspects are crucial for the element of water: safety, and dynamics, as inherent properties of this material. Water, which is the fundamental factor conditioning life on Earth, in all cultures is recognised and celebrated as the source of life bringing the sense of security in the physiological and emotional sense. Everything that extracts and emphasises the deep value of this meaning, both in the material and spiritual sense, is worth the most serious consideration in the designing process. On one hand, water is a functional prerequisite necessary for every human habitat, on the other it is a creative and expressive material offering an enormous potential. For this potential to be fully used, it is necessary to discern social, cultural historical, spiritual, and poetic (symbolic) meanings in the context of a specific place, so as not to make the mistake of nonuniformity.

A property of water as a material is its natural ability to modify the image of the space, which provides the opportunity to correct, manipulate the spatial feeling and the statics / dynamics of the system in which it is introduced. Horizontal elements of water, by differentiating the possibility of “reading” the same space, often constitute a compositional point of reference (like e.g. the surface of the ocean for Manhattan, Lake Michigan for Chicago, the Vltava river for Prague) for the entire spatial system. Due to local climatic conditions, water periodically fills the space. Natural changeable states of water enrich the reception of the space in an equally natural way, but if this fact is used consciously, the effect of enrichment can be intensified and intentionally highlight subsequent faces of the space filled with this medium in its different forms. The introduction of water in spatial compositions improves their semiotic value by way of associations resulting from the awareness of its presence. It co-creates different desired moods: calm, contemplation, reviving joy, etc. A special, creative role of water in architectural and urban systems finds its reflection in a term coined by Wylyon, “aquatecture” [11].

The element of life – the gift and continuity of existence – manifests itself in the spirit of the place: in its sense and emotional message, in the relation with the space of human memory. It is a durable relation with the social space of memory about those who co-created the place with their lives and the space of memory of those who lived the space, and when leaving it, took this experience in their consciousness and subconscious enriched with it.
The spirit, an element which is the most difficult to define, is the most human at the same time. What seems to be the most important here is regarding each designing task as a part of a broad context in time and space and taking care of the significance of the sense of the place as the foundation for human actions or experiences understood as “sustainable”. The respect for the presence and awareness of the spiritual element, the spirit of the place, in its cultural aspects of tradition, history, ecology, and human emotions secures the perception of the design and implementation process (influencing the matter) merely as parts of the solution, and never as its entirety. Further parts are predicting potential, certain, and probable interactions between space and man, and predicting the unpredictable, that is opening the system up to its spiritual creativity: mystical, mysterious, warmly close. The directing approach to this element also takes into account the scope of possibilities and consequences of making use of them, as well as the scope of limitations: rules and conditions adherence to which is non-negotiable. It can create conditions fostering the durability of the relation with the place and the sense of community, but it cannot legitimise, order, impose it. Solutions in the spirit of the place should be regarded as a certain aesthetic message, symptomatic of putting the human community in the position of looking for a communication channel, leading to deeper understanding of nature, and not in the position of confrontation – scorn or consumerist attitude towards nature. The pursuit of living in a sustainable anthropogenic environment – in architecture in its broadest sense – is a challenge. It is a need to accept our (us people who influence the shape of space, and in particular us, architects) position and role in the contemporary world as an interpreter working for the good of both parties. A mediator between human goals, plans, and intentions, and the rights of nature (including the human nature) and the right to protection and respect, established by man, to which it is entitled.

Let us move on to anthropogenic elements of the directing material resulting from what is the element of man: action and transformation. The first of these elements is the form – an intentional and meaningful division of space, a result of the process of shaping things by means of thought. We speak of shaping, defining forms, so that their mutual reactions – relations of the fields of formal actions – could lead to the creation of a synergic system. This issue was touched upon by Juliusz Żórawski during lectures for architecture students in Cracow already in 1946/47, and Pierre von Meiss (1990) talks about the field of interaction, the radiation space specific for every object, whose geometry and organisation defines the direction and intensity of radiation, which in turn is responsible for the fact that in the system of several objects their individual radiations create a conflict or coordinated field, depending on the relations between the objects [12]. It seems that in the contemporary practice of composition of urban systems this incredibly helpful directing tool is not sufficiently extensively applied.

The directing of space defines an objective form, a thing the way it is, but at the same time it predicts its subjective image: how this thing is perceived and how it interacts in the dynamic perception (possible in numerous variants). It is important to take into account the duality of the emotional perception and the intellectual assessment (analysis) in the process of reading of the object itself, i.e. its form, its field of interaction, and the circumstances of such interactions. The dyad of building of an architectural form, the free space and the partition (limitation), has a certain main range of means. The free, open space creates penetration opportunities. The path defined in it attracts, preferably by its better accessibility. The partition defines possibilities. A perforation in the partition defines the place of permeation, links with the path, simultaneously demarcating the activity zone with the path and the zone beyond its influence. Emphasising the free space as well as the partition attracts attention, makes a certain impression, brings new meanings.

The function, the desired and possible activity, the use of things, in the hands of the space director is an element which directly stimulates (provides) specific types of behaviours and interactions in space. Operating it on one hand refers to the assumed flexibility of the urban and architectural space as a structure open towards the range of possible actions (changeable ways of its use, modifications); on the other it concerns predictable consequences of certain activities coming into being. It seems justified to build in a certain defensive mechanism against undesired or threatening functions, which at the same time generates the most appropriate ones and is open towards non-antagonistic but unpredictable
functions, which could be brought about by the utilisation process. Therefore, function in this respect means interactive and probabilistic programming of activities. Specific functions connected with the lifestyle of a specific community, its social identity, influence the shape of the spatial identity – the image of the space of the city. Maintaining and a gentle evolution of such characteristic functions protects and develops the spatial identity of a specific place. On the other hand, a strong spatial identity of the city resulting from a specific function (e.g. industry) may become a foundation allowing to create a new face of the future, completely different in functional terms, having set free from its functional legacy. Such a metamorphosis of an industrial city into a modern postindustrial centre, consciously undertaken by the municipal authorities, with appreciation and adaptation of the industrial spatial identity has been successfully implemented in e.g. Manchester.

In the director’s approach the semiotic connection between the form and the content is essential; content, that is function with extension to all communicative uses of a specific object [13]. In the relation form – content understood this way, the form stimulates decoding the meaning of the content. The relation form – content is a flexible (with the flexibility margin consistent with the logic of the task) readiness to undertake the communication process and to accept the process of a specific functional activity, contained in the structure of the form. The relation form – content looks for a coherent structure, for a structure that secures mutual reinforcement and confirmation, for a meaning. It seems particularly important in the case of the public space due to its democratic accessibility and the resulting full range of potential recipients, the multitude and variability of objectives of entering into an interaction with this space, and the diversity of its knowledge. The relation form – content in the director’s approach can be defined as in separateness of the object and the process in creative thinking. Characteristically enough, in the case of theatre the director’s conceptual outline reflects man in the relation with the form of space. Space acquires form in the context of human interaction – this interaction co-creates composition, together they build a message. In the architectural practice a conceptual outline usually focuses on the form itself, on playing with form; man, if present at all, is introduced rather as a measure of the scale of the space and is rarely depicted as the subject in the process, justifying the form of the space.

Another element, motion, is understood as the dynamics of the object itself and the dynamics of its perception. The director’s approach assumes intentional operation of the multifacetedness of the term “motion”. Motion as moving from one place to another, moving in a different speed and with a different destination, combined with the variability of the insight into and reception of the form of space. In the creational approach it is an analysis of possible perceptions of space and situation in the space, focusing on man’s actions and the perception of the whole picture of these actions. On one hand it allows to define possibilities, which can be taken advantage of, and on the other it points to limitations which require intervention, the search of new solutions.

Motion as the activity of thoughts – feeling, understanding, intellectual and emotional reflection in the contact with space. Operating the element of motion within this meaning entails predicting and opening many reception channels, allowing for its individual and more profound reading.

Motion as infiltration of the arts – diversity of the means of expression and the way they are selected in order to increase the dynamics of space, putting it into apparent motion (the sense of dynamics of solids, clusters of colours) or causing actual motion of elements.

Operating the element of motion entails conceptual control of the reception of the same form depending on the method and speed of movement. Motion makes forms blend into the background, and the background become forms, in the microscale (texture, visual and physical contact), as well as in the macroscale – panoramic perception. It is a factor which forces to analyse the role of a part in the entire picture and its variability depending on the distance and dynamics of perception. It is also connected with analysing and adopting determined motivations for entering the space of the city and the resultant orientation towards perception looking for specific signs in this space, as well as paths and speeds of movement. This also stands for the care for the quality of communication for each of many paths and each of many approaches.
Time as “matter” in the hands of the director of space allows to make use of and to overcome the limits of time – and here again, also in the multifaceted approach. Time as memory – continuity of links with the past, whose implications reside in the present, determining, conditioning, defining. “The past is today, only a bit further away” (C.K. Norwid). Time as continuum: of the past (memory – experience), the present (perception – experience), and the future (hope – creative improvement). Krzysztof Piesiewicz, co-author of screenplays to movies directed Krzysztof Kieślowski, when asked about the most durable foundation of the European identity, pointed to the awareness of the continuum, broadly encoded in the European culture.

Time as the internal rhythm of the performance of the public space. Rhythm resulting from variable activity connected with time – a specific time of the day, season. An activity decisive for the picture of the space characteristic for it, which picture in turn “signals” time.

Time as an element modifying the scale of the space, in other words a relation between the scale of the space and the feeling of the lapse of time. Time and space are functionally interconnected, and the perception of time is also influenced by the scale of the surrounding area. In appropriate conditions subjects increase the interactivity indicators in a specific area so as to remain within the scale of this area (according to the results of research by Professor Aiton De Long, University of Tennessee [14], human brain accelerates proportionally to the scale of the surrounding area, whereas the border proportion seems to be 1/12 of the dimension reduction). That is why in monumental, overscaled space time seems to fly faster. Conceptual control of the factor of time also stands for the awareness of its destructive activity. It means predicting how a specific object will age, how it will last in time and change its relations with subsequent generations of recipients.

The last element is technology, civilisational technical possibilities allowing to materialise a thought into an object – to build an urban and architectural space. Technology is understood as a structural and material means of implementation and measures which serve the materialisation of individual aspects of interaction (light, movement, sound, etc.) and exploitation of the subject of architecture in the process of utilisation. The technical capacities we possess and the way they are used must go hand in hand with respect for nature and for the anthropogenic environment. The bigger the capacities, the greater the respect and the sense of responsibility should be. Thanks to the freedom of the information flow and the (potentially) available technical capacities we can built nearly anything nearly anywhere. “The problem is not technology, but the way it is applied. Technology can be used so as to achieve a positive goal – advancement of social justice – one of the greatest ideals of the contemporary times. When technology is applied to secure fundamentally valid principles of universal human rights: to shelter, food, healthcare, education, and freedom – contemporary times will reach their full potential. This is where the spirit of modernity finds its utmost expression” [15].

In the past a sensible and responsible technological solution was directly connected with natural limitations (climate, locally available material), the possibilities offered by the level of civilisation, and the requirements (canon) dictated by the culture of a specific community. These were the three external determinants. The contemporary global technological range, the incredible speed of exchange of solution models have moved the determinants of the choice from the external to the sphere of consciousness and subconscious of the creator himself, to the sphere of his professionalism, talent, sensitivity to a multifaceted context of the place, and the essence of the very task, executed in this particular location. Contemporary conditions refer to the culture of the creator in operating civilisation-related possibilities at the execution of the task: adding one’s own little stone to the existing identity. Ten elements described herein, making up the “matter available to the director”, offer a potential of opportunities. It seems that this interpretation focuses on the extending of the creative spectrum in urban design, oriented towards a multifaceted improvement of the structure of cities, in compliance with the principles of sustainable development regarding space as the common good. It is confirmed by studies systematically carried out by the Author in her specific research laboratory constituted by urban planning competition works, diploma designs, and international designing workshops.
The intention of the creative approach presented herein – directing of space – is highlighting the fact that integrated, and not selective, handling of the matter, so rich in the possibilities of interaction, directed by a coherent conceptual thought, aware of the consequences, undertakes, adopts and fulfils specific roles in creating the space of the city. It gradually builds up the means of expression so that each could act in a precisely selected moment, in compliance with the logic of the dramaturgy of the whole message – the urban and architectural space – ready to enter into interaction with the process of the “everyday life theatre”, which reaches its full expression, the beauty of urbanity, only through this interaction.

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