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СВОЈСТВА АРХИТЕКТУРЕ
НАРОДНОГ ПОЗОРИШТА У
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COMMUNICATION TRAITS OF ARCHITECTURE OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN ZENICA

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the communication traits of architecture. This paper mainly aims to analyze and interpret an architectural work upon the theoretical model that is in the function of a methodological procedure, and to point out its communication traits as architectural values. The first part sets the theoretical framework related to the forms and characteristics of architectural communication, while the second part of the paper is conceived as a qualitative study of the communication traits of architecture of the National Theatre in Zenica by Jehiel Finci and Zlatko Ugljen, according to the theoretical setting. The result of the research shall be seen as potential for the application of theoretical, practical and methodological scientific contribution hence theory - based communication in architecture shall be expanded. The same shall be applicable for the critical analyses and understanding of the values of an architectural work, as well as methodological approach in the architectural design.

Key words: architecture and communication, architectural theory, National Theatre, Zenica

КОМУНИКАЦИЈСКА СВОЈСТВА АРХИТЕКТУРЕ НАРОДНОГ ПОЗОРИШТА У ЗЕНИЦИ

АПСТРАКТ

Овај рад се бави архитектонском комуникацијом. Основни циљ рада јесте да се на основу теоријског модела који је у функцији методолошког поступка анализира и тумачи архитектонско дјело, те да се укаже на његова комуникацијска својстава као вриједности архитектуре. У првом дијелу се поставља теоријски оквир везан за облике и карактеристике архитектонске комуникације, док је други дио рада конципиран као квалитативно истраживање комуникацијских својстава архитектуре Народног позоришта у Зеници аутора Јехиела Финција и Златка Угљена, према теоријској поставци. Резултат рада огледа се кроз теоријски, практични и методолошки научни допринос, тј. као могућност примјене теоријске основе засноване на комуникацијским својствима архитектуре за критичку анализу и тумачење вриједности архитектонског дјела, као и основа за методолошки поступак у процесу пројектовања.

Кључне ријечи: архитектура и комуникација, архитектонска теорија, Народно позориште, Зеница

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary architectural discourse, the issue of architecture as an active actor in the communication of space, culture and people, is essential for its understanding. In this sense, the focus of the perception of architecture as a completed physical form has shifted to the processes of interaction of concepts, space and participants (users).

Art, and thus architecture, although not created out of a desire to communicate or convey something (thought, state of mind, emotion), is based on communication processes. [1:5] Every cultural and civilizational product can be considered communication, and works of art and its aesthetic communication are seen as a special challenge. The creation of art, and thus architecture, in its nature, is based on aesthetic intention, of which the process of communication is an integral part. In this sense, the focus of this paper is to study the interactions, forms, specificities and communication processes of architectural creation.

The French communication theorist Abraham Moles was among the first to analyze the relationship between information theory and aesthetic perception. He stresses the informational character of the work of art, because the artist wants to evoke an echo in the spirit and sensibility of individuals, as participants in the process of perceiving the work. According to Moles, the work of art is not only a conveyor of a message (content, semantic values), conveying aesthetic information through its medium, it shows the forms and ways of creation, while always remaining open to further action of the viewer, listener or reader. [2:147–173].

The relationship between communication and architecture is problematized in the work *Culture, Information, Communication* by the Italian semiotician Umberto Eco, in which he considers architecture as a form of semantic information through which artistic meanings are conveyed, while discussing the overall cultural framework through the aspects of communication. [3: 207–270] Eco considers art and architecture as a cultural phenomenon at the level of language, which presupposes an analogy with linguistics, as one of the methodological approaches in *reading* an architectural work. This also means the introduction of the text-context relationship, where the specificity of the context in the architectural discipline is read in its dual form: as a material (spatial) and immaterial (social) contexts.

Considering the perspectives of the contemporary approach to architecture, there is a possibility that architectural communication is not ultimately determined and defined by the author, but that in its creative work it itself, through aesthetic information, opens the possibility for multiple readings through action. The meaning and experiences of space in this sense are not a fixed structure, but rather a form of development, which through contextual interpretation and interpretation in the process of communication in a given time, is concretized through authorial creativity and personalization of users. In other words, shifting the perspective of studying architecture from the completed physical form to the very act of communication, to what it means, symbolizes, represents and how it is directly experienced, we talk about the forms and character of architectural communication - which is further laid out in the following chapter.

1.1. FORMS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ARCHITECTURAL COMMUNICATION

The American philosopher Susanne Langer highlights two forms of experiencing a work of art, discursive and intuitive; **discursive** can be understood in the semantic system of meaning, and it is related to the experience of the external objective world, while the **intuitive** form is related

to the subjective experience. [4:23] To define this difference, Langer introduces the notion of *designation* as a notion that differs from meaning, referring to what is expressed and experienced in a sensual form. We can interpret two forms of experience as objectivism and subjectivism, alike.

Architect Bernard Tschumi has a similar line of opinion. According to his studies, architecture is a medium for the communication of concepts, but also for producing experiences of space. Architecture always produces something else, in addition to representing itself. Immediate personal experience of space is seen as a powerful means of achieving spiritual content. Tschumi adopts this dual nature of architecture that balances between two focuses through the notions of the labyrinth and the pyramid, where labyrinth concentrates on the sensual experience of space, while the pyramid is focused on the reason, establishing a dynamic and dialectical relationship with one another. [5:76]

In the context of previous studies, and analogously to the mentioned divisions and their multiple meanings, two directions of examining the communication traits for the interpretation of the meaning and experience of an architectural work are defined:

1) **discursive form of architectural communication** – communication traits of architecture as representations, the meaning of which in architecture is connected in a broader contextual sense and cultural-social system

2) **phenomenological form of architectural communication** - communication traits of architecture as direct communication of expressiveness, non-representational character: which refers both to the mechanisms of architectural language and to the characterization of the psychophysical and emotional relationship between subject and space.

The next two subchapters consider "in depth" two forms of architectural communication stratified into their characteristics, which can be used as tools to interpret a specific architectural work, in this case, the National Theatre in Zenica of the architects Finci and Ugljen. [6: 56-99]

1.2. DISCURSIVE FORM OF ARCHITECTURAL COMMUNICATION

The discursive form of architectural communication is understood as the semantic system of meanings as part of a broader view of society and cultural references related to the creation and understanding of the architectural work.

More specifically, the way we understand architecture in a symbolic sense through the use of metaphors that we use in the mimetic mechanism, focusing on the cognitive values of the narrative, is being studied. It is a fact that architecture derives its meaning from the circumstances under which it is created. Therefore, everything that is outside of architecture is important, and that can be included in the sum of its functions. [7:254]

We can view the theory of metaphor as an instrument for the production of meaning and expressiveness that arises from the contemporary interpretation of the mimetic mechanism as a natural human aspiration to absorb one's environment and its symbolic articulation, and thus identification. Originally, metaphor is a comparison, but in an implicit way, which points to the cognitive processes of analogy in the origin of metaphor. [8:367]

Metaphor initially appears in the process of creation as a conceptual system, while in the phase of reception, i.e., conceptual interpretation of meaning and significance, it occurs through its expressive characteristics. The phenomenon of metaphor, in the field of architectural communication, is naturally present in the creative and contemplative process of the creator,

as well as in the structure of perception, and, finally, the observer's/participant's reception and understanding of an architectural work. In addition to the dominant function of metaphor - as an instrument for conveying the message, it is also a significant figure in building the expressiveness of architecture. In this sense, metaphor can be a key design strategy throughout the design process - from the setting of spatial disposition, formal and functional characteristics of architecture, to the use of materials.

We observe the metaphor in a broader system of the mimetic process. The impulse of mimesis, as explained by the German philosopher Theodor Adorno, refers to the natural tendency of the creator to absorb the environment through layered perception, and thereafter, he processes its content through the creative process, which he finally, in a symbolic way, articulates and incorporates into his own (artistic) work. According to him, mimetic processes are present in the creative process at an early intuitive stage and before the creator engages in conscious imitation and rational action. This thesis supports the understanding of the project process, which is not exclusively based on rational thinking, but is imbued with intuition and imagination in understanding and creating things (the world) that surround us. On the other hand, the mimetic process is also present in the reading of the work, where the recipient, in a semiotic apparatus, decodes the meaning by revealing the similarity that is re-articulated in the creative expression. [9:15]

According to this approach, the architect absorbs material and immaterial characteristics/values of the context in the design thinking through a mimetic mechanism, and then incorporates them through symbolic articulation and metaphorically transposes them into a new value. As for the observer/participant, in this mechanism, it is through metaphorical expression that they recognize and adopt the recognized values with which they identify himself. Hence, metaphorical expression in a mimetic system can be viewed as a way of expressing the - emotional, ideological, conceptual, symbolic - character of the context shaped through authentic creative expression and re-recognized and accepted by the observer.

1.3. PHENOMENOLOGICAL FORM OF ARCHITECTURAL COMMUNICATION

The phenomenological form of communication in architecture refers to the analysis of an architectural work as a phenomenological structure in which the interweaving and integration of a multisensory physical phenomenon and its subjective experience take place. This communication trait of architecture refers to the immediacy of interaction in the encounter, and implies a state of direct connection, where the issue of meaning is realized through the psychophysical contact of the body and the intensity of space. This form of communication derives from phenomenological research methods that focus on examining sensory phenomena and subjectivity of experience, introducing layers of intuitive and unconscious, through the ephemerality of phenomena that architecture produces within the spatio-temporal perceptions of space.

In a broader sense, phenomenology is part of philosophy that deals with phenomena as a form of expanding and deepening reality. The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty takes this direction of philosophical thought by examining the correlation of the body and sensory-motor functions, and its settings are often the starting point in phenomenological research in architecture. [10:77] Merleau-Ponty's philosophy nullifies the Cartesian division of mind and body by examining the way in which bodily stimuli and situations link us to the world and affect our mind. In the postmodern period, thanks to theorists and architects who use this approach, the emphasis is placed on the subjective bodily and unconscious connection with architecture. Both phenomenological thinking and phenomenological analysis in architecture focus on the

way things are created and how the elements of space, light, colour, sensuality of materials and specific details interact. [11:345–387] Phenomenological analysis in architecture refers primarily to sensory properties, and is read through different scales of direct interaction, all the way to the overall impression of space, i.e. the atmosphere of space and its expressive value.

The two architects that are mostly dealing with the atmospheric phenomenon in architecture are the Swiss architect Peter Zumthor and the theorist and lecturer Juhani Pallasmaa, who approach this issue from different research positions, but both use the term "atmosphere" to emphasize a general emotional impression about an entire building or its fragment.

Zumthor connects the issue of the atmosphere with the quality of architecture and in that sense, it is an aesthetic category for him. As he explains in his book *Atmospheres*, it is the initial and immediate experience of space, a phenomenon that acts emotionally on a person, where he interprets emotional sensibility as a form of perception that acts quickly and directly. His further study of the atmosphere refers to the relation of corporeality and the total materialization of space, where bodily experience is considered through the synaesthetic experience of space. In addition to the relationship between man and space, author's notion of the atmosphere is seen in the relationship of a building with its environment in which it is placed, i.e., the way it is located and becomes a constructive part of the environment. Therefore, the phenomenon of the atmosphere for him is essential for building a concept, and consequently an emotional form of perception, as defined by Zumthor. [12:13]

In his essay *Space, Place and Atmosphere: Peripheral Perception in Existential Experience* Pallasmaa defines the phenomenon of the atmosphere similarly to Zumthor in the sense that the atmosphere is a spatial quality that ensures and highlights sensory experience. Pallasmaa stresses that man is able to instantly feel the atmosphere of space, before analyzing details and intellectually mastering elements, such as being able to form a clear image, feeling, as well as to retain a clear memory of a particular atmosphere: „Assessing the character of the environment is a complex interweaving of countless factors that are currently and synthetically perceived as the overall atmosphere, ambience, feeling or atmosphere“. [13:18–42] Therefore, the issue of atmosphere according to him is an issue of existential experience of space as a qualitative value of architecture that fully engages human sensuality. [14:64]

The discursive and phenomenological form of architectural communication through the characteristics set forth in the second part of the paper are used as tools for the interpretation of a specific architectural work. The issues of meaning and experience of space realized through ways of communication in the discursive and phenomenological form will be problematized and analyzed on the example of the National Theatre in Zenica of the authors Jahiel Finci and Zlatko Ugljen.

Each of these approaches has its advantages and limitations, but placed in relation, they complement one another and allow a more comprehensive analysis of the specificities of the communication traits of architecture.

2. ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION TRAITS OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN ZENICA

In 1978, the National Theatre in Zenica was declared the best architectural achievement in the former state of Yugoslavia. The authors of this building, architects Jahiel Finci and Zlatko Ugljen, received then the highest recognition in the field of architecture within the former Yugoslavia,

the "Borbina" award. The city of Zenica was a centre for steel production in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the former Yugoslavia, which is certainly the first association with this city. However, Zenica is also a city with a vibrant tradition of theatre. The National Theatre is located in the centre of the city, on the central square, with city streets on all four sides of it. According to the project, the new building of the National Theatre, with its diverse content, aimed to become the centre of cultural life of this industrial city. [15:56]

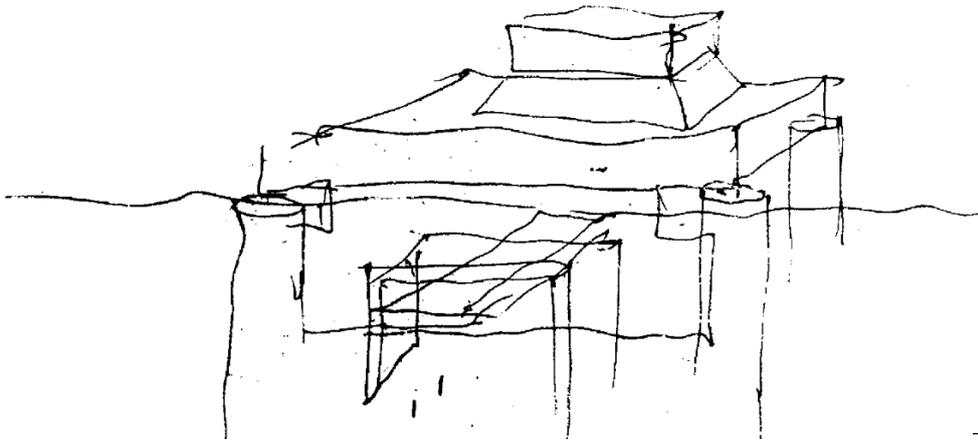


Figure 1. Freehand sketch, author arch. Zlatko Ugljen. National Theatre, Zenica, BH, designed in 1974. [15]

To present the communication aspect of the architecture of the National Theatre, the methods of architectural, graphic and diagram analysis were used, as well as the method of analyzing the direct experience of buildings of special importance for considering the interior form of communication, as well as the method of observation and photography in the field.

The architectural analysis begins with the presentation of the author's original freehand sketch. The sketch shows the clarity of the main idea (concept) – the essence of which is materially embodied in reality. The sketches of the author Ugljen point to a summary of thought and sensitivity which, through further engineering precision, turns into exactly what the architects set at a primordial creative level at the very beginning of the project.



Figure 2. National Theatre in Zenica, entrance façade by the author arch. Jahiel Finci and arch. Zlatko Ugljen, [15]

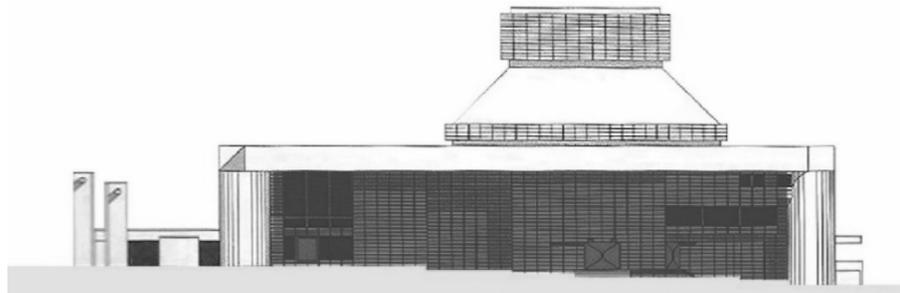
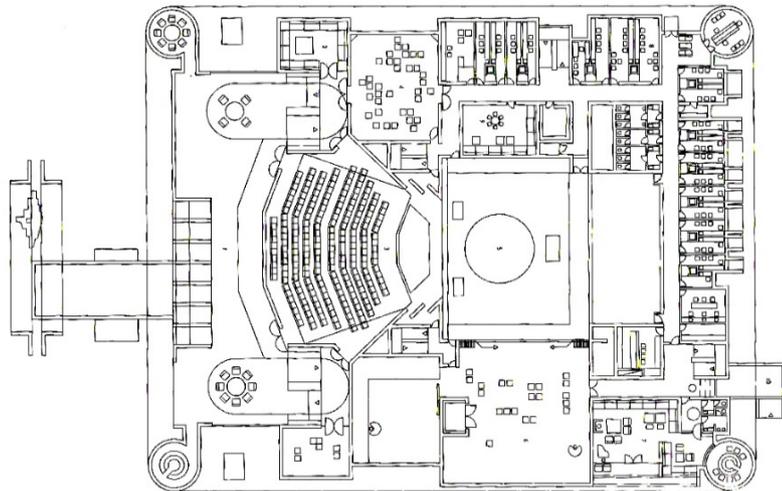


Figure 3. National Theatre in Zenica, by the author arch. Jahiel Finci and arch. Zlatko Ugljen, a-base floor, b-side view [15]

2.1. CONSTRUCTS OF DISCOURSE COMMUNICATION

The concept of complex ambiguity and elements of metaphor as an instrument of meaning and communication can be noticed on the example of the theatre building. The spatial geometry with which the structure of this house is built is a minimal set of shapes and materials, but of special signifying functions and great expressiveness. The structure of the building is primarily built by two corpora - the basic dominant corpus containing all the contents of the theatre and the entrance part sequentially placed on the facade.

The external shell – the membrane of the theatre building is a complex place of connection between the interior of the house, its function and the metaphorically interpreted exterior of the context in which it is located. A dialogue of internal content and relationship to the context of the city is established through its form and materialization. This mechanism can be seen on the membrane of the main building, where the connection between architecture and theatre is established. Compact parallelepiped is framed by a portal built by four roundels and a strong wreath connecting them. At the level of the façade, this complex establishes an associative connection with the form of the theatre scene as four portals - four stages. The level drawn inside the white frame is coated in corten steel and its dark colour contributes to the effect of depth - like the depth of a theatre stage. Passers-by, projected into these architectural illusions, are actors of an articulated theatre scene. In this way, an intersemiotic connection is established between architecture and the theatre. At the same time, at the level of material use, the corten steel, which dominates on the surface, is symbolically linked with the "city of steel".

The morphological syntax of the basic corpus is the dominant parallelepiped, cylinder and pyramid, which are used to build an intersemiotic metaphor. The spatial geometry of the basic corpus with its entire appearance - four pillars at the corners with the theme of grooves that emphasize their monumentality and verticality, a rim that unites the pillars horizontally, and a withdrawn inner corpus - on an abstract level is a reference to the temple archetype as the Talia¹ temple – as a spiritual stronghold.

The basic corpus is dominated by the over-stage space, thus expressing the typological affiliation of the building. However, its final form on an associative level evokes a square hip or "pyramid roof".

The metaphorical mechanism that connects other cultural systems can also be analyzed in the entrance corpus, motivically and sequentially placed in relation to the main corpus, in order to bring the building closer to human proportions by applying different proportions. The elongated entrance cube is framed by a geometrically expressive monumental double white frame. The amorphous steel sculpture of the famous Yugoslav sculptor Dušan Džamonja completes the meaningful articulation. The whole composition builds a theatricalization of the entrance scene. The re-observation of heterogeneous elements establishes an intersemiotic metaphor between the theatre and architecture. The entire composition is read as a theatre stage through reference codes, and passers-by on the open plateau are now the audience.

¹ Talia - mythologically, one of the three graces, one of the nine muses, the muse patroness of poetry, comedy, hence Talia's temple as a theatre.

The mechanism of metaphor, as seen in the given example, is an effective instrument for conveying meaning. Among other things, it is the bearer of the poetic qualities of the architectural form, similar to its use in language. A strong metaphor as a means of expression communicates the essence of an object and its appearance, while its associative capacity acts in a way that the object becomes recognizable and noticeable. It is about the appearance of a virtual experience of symbolic and conceptual connection in the observer, which occurs in the process of connotation to the "object" and the transfer of meaning to which the architectural expression refers.

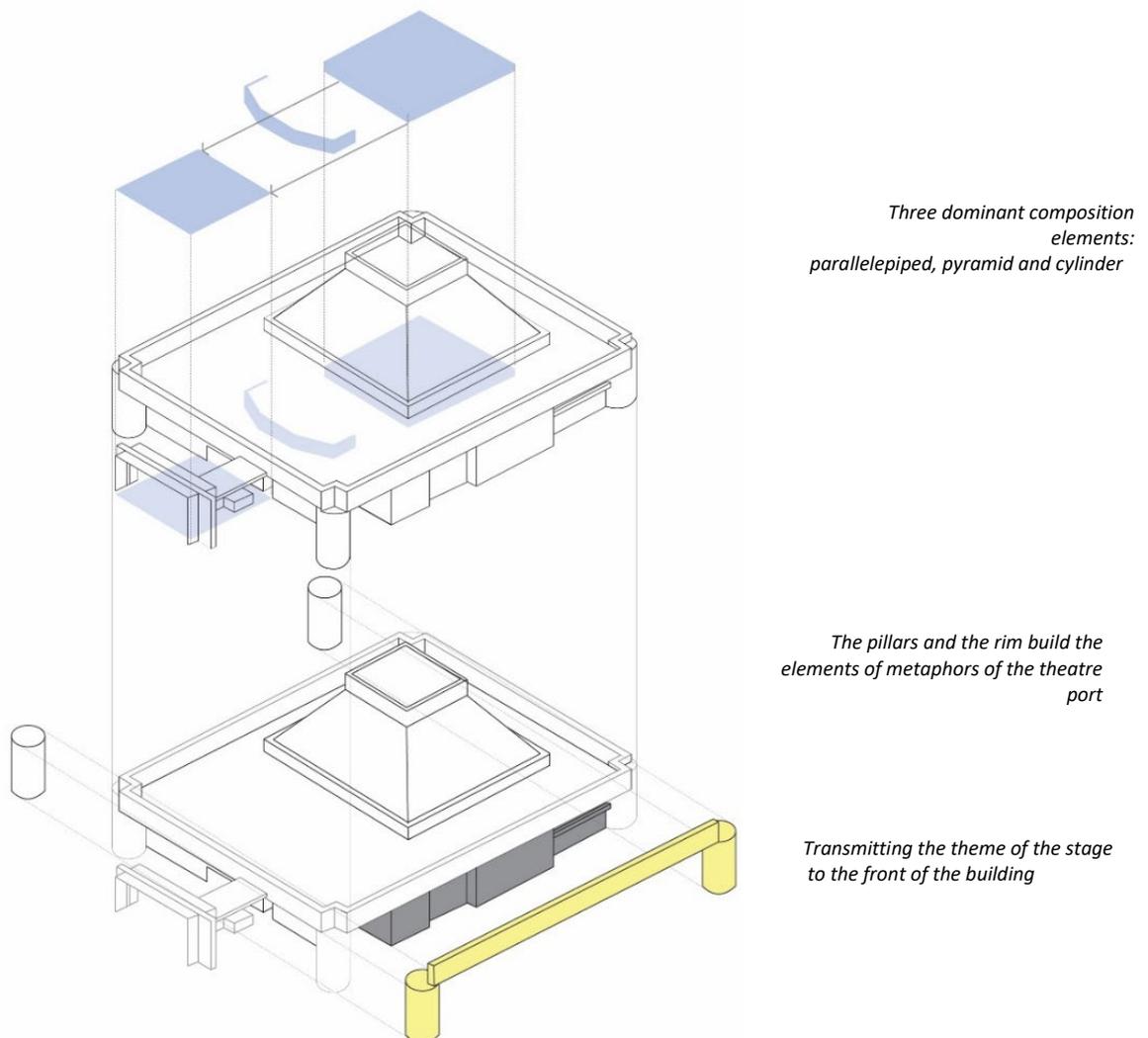


Figure 4. National Theatre in Zenica, Diagram analysis: metaphorical transferring the theme of theater to the form of an object. Authors of the diagram M. M. Aleksić and S. Peulić

In this sense, mimesis, as an instrument of meaning and expressiveness, which is in the category of representation and refers to cognitive processes, serves as a linguistic mechanism that works on the principle of semiotic apparatus, where the use of metaphorical narrative allows symbolic action. We can conclude that the concept of mimesis in the creative process is present in this architectural work.

The analysis of this architectural work points to its complex multi-layered nature, which points to different semantic interpretations that overlap and intersect. The presented metaphors of theatre and stage, actor and spectator, city and history, shaped through the authentic architectural vocabulary of the National Theatre in Zenica, are a true example of the appropriate use of discursive forms of communication.

2.2. CONSTRUCTS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION

The experiential properties of the space are directed through careful framing from the very approach to the object. Depending on our movement and position, there is a constant dynamic change of the whole situation, so that this composition multiplies into constantly different complex figures, increasing the duration as time spent. A theatrically dynamic atmosphere and emotional sensation are achieved.

The focus is on the event or the experienced and embodied image, as Pallasmaa explains. A particularly important psychological place of spatial illusions is at the very entrance to the object of theatrical illusions, where for a moment we separate ourselves from everyday life and live somewhat different moments in life. Here, architecture should act on our mood and emotions with architectural illusions through sensory sensations.

The architectural promenade begins with an interspace - a transitional place between the exterior and the interior (between the openness of the square and the actual entrance to the building). Spatial stratification problematizes the relationship between open and closed, and it is a matter of gradual discovery of space in the sequences of the entrance portal.

As previously discussed, the entrance portal in the metaphorical mechanism with its plastically shaped form contains the associative function of the stage. In addition, at the subjective level of access, movement and experience, with its expressive form and monumentality, it has an emotional effect on the observer/visitor. The expressiveness of this enlarged and visually dynamically open façade, among other things, is built by playing the full and the empty game, element structure of which composes the rhythm and character of light and shadow. In this case, the light is dramatically structured through the cleft of the two-part frame, which defines its position and sharpness. The light that fills this cleft changes depending on the day, season or hour, which consequently changes the subjective impression of the structure. Thus, in addition to the expressiveness of form, as one of the forces of action, we notice that immaterial components, such as emptiness, cleft, light and shadow, are also equal building blocks of the overall composition and atmosphere.

Within these sharp material and immaterial elements, the sculpture of Dušan Džamonja completes the entire composition. Its shape amorphousness materialized in steel chains contrasts with its white purist vertical pedestal. At the same time, together with these spatial forms, it acts as a steel cobweb of soft shadows that constantly vibrates in the light. The materiality and expressive texture of the sculpture evoke tactile experiences - the smell of steel and even its temperature.

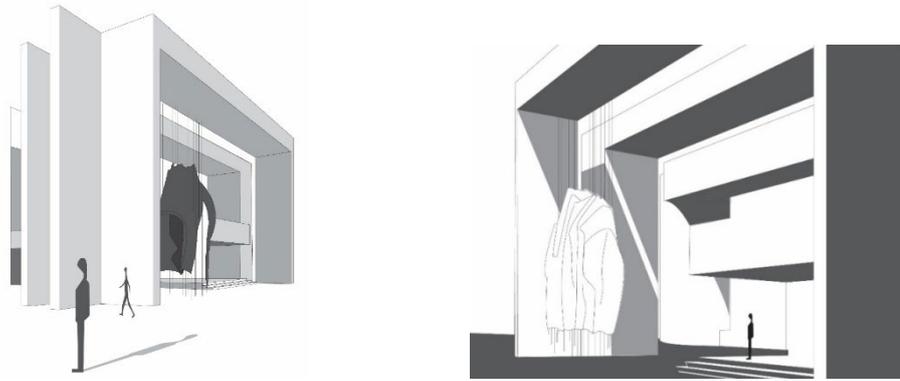


Figure 5. National Theatre in Zenica, Graphic illustration: building the atmosphere with light and shadow - composition of the entrance portal. Authors of the diagram M.M. Aleksić and S. Peulić

Different scales of direct interaction, through multisensory stimulation of sensory experience applied through volume, construction, but also the detail itself produce different phenomenological sensations. The composing itself directs the gaze, and for a moment the inner volumetry of the dominant cubes is felt. Different angles of light, its reflection, refraction of light and shadows dynamically define space and it is constantly changing and represents a psychological and sublime field of architectural phenomena. The discovered elements of the construction are also expressive elements that participate in the construction of the overall composition. The shadow seduces us on an unconscious level, attracts us to explore ephemeral images, to become a part of it. Shadow, as an immaterial architecture, is directly dependent on the position of material elements, and its variability introduces us to abstract communication with the environment. [14:46] Carefully designed details, through the appearance of form and materialization, ultimately articulate the multisensory issues of light and shadow, but also of the tactile elements integrated into a unique sensory experience. Thus things that are invisible become visible. In architecture, it is almost impossible to separate these concepts as it is precisely the combination of form, material and detail in the experiential sense that makes a unique substance.

3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As for the aim of this paper, a theoretical model of communication traits of architecture has been established, which has been applied to the analysis and interpretation of an architectural work as a methodological procedure. In accordance with the theoretical setting, the communication features of the architecture of the National Theatre in Zenica of the authors J. Finci and Z. Ugljen were recognized and explained. They were analyzed through two basic forms of architectural communication: discursive and phenomenological.

The discursive form of architectural communication refers to the meaning and significance of architecture in a more comprehensive form of cultural mediation and context. This form of communication is further decomposed into the mechanisms of mimesis and metaphor as instruments of meaning and expressiveness, characteristics of which are further considered as constructs in the design process in the analysis of the National Theatre in Zenica. In this way, the communication traits of theatre in various forms of appearance, from the very concept through the form and spatial structure, were explored.

Communication-wise, it is through the discursive architectural analysis of the National Theatre that the mimetic absorption of the environment is noticed, as well as material and immaterial characteristics that are collected in the creative mind of architects, and then symbolically articulated in a physical manifestation. The concept of metaphor within this mechanism is recognized as an instrument of symbolic interpretation and objectification in the production of meaning in relation to the social and cultural reality of the context. In the semiotic system of signs we see how the authors Finci and Ugljen turn architecture into a legible sign in which the presence of the signified is reflected and thus establishes a discursive form of semiotic communication. The context of the city of Zenica and the very theme of the theatre are recognized in the signified, while the signifier is formed by a completely modern and autopoietic expression.

The phenomenological form of communication in architecture refers to the aspect of internal communication, i.e., subjective experience in direct encounter with architectural space, where meaning is produced, reproduced and experienced. Phenomenological characteristics refer to both the internal mechanisms of architectural language and its immediate expression and to the nature of psycho-physical contact between the subject and space, which is related to the non-representational character of architecture. This form of communication is decomposed into its characteristics through notions such as: sensory experience, perception - time and atmosphere which are analyzed as constructs in the design process of architects Finci and Ugljen.

What is noticeable in the form of phenomenological communication is the sensitivity of the relationship of these two authors to the overall atmosphere or ambience of space, which arises from the meaning of the relationship between the elements of architecture, light, materials and details. The concept that stands out in the treatment of the building of the National Theatre is shaping with light, which as an element of innovation, makes a difference and contributes to the artistic authenticity of this building. It is about tactile research and sensory properties that space emits in alternating multiscale confrontation and permeation of different volumes, light, shadows, which produce emotional sensations in users. The architectural detail of this building as a special form of narrative is noticed as an exceptional architectural value. The specificity of the sensibilities of the authors Finci and Ugljen is manifested through detail, while a special layer of tactility is introduced into the experiential experience of space, which increases the overall phenomenological experience of architecture. Finally, the artistic and form synthesis from the macroplane to the microplane contribute to the overall atmosphere. Hence, it is read from the way of interpolation of the object into the environment with respect to the context, in terms of harmonious ingrowth and its meaningful articulation, to the internal building elements, construction and shape, all the way to the overall design and the smallest detail.

Through the simultaneous discursive and phenomenological shaping of communication, a complex relationship is observed in the conceptual and semantic constitution of architecture, which cannot be subsumed under an exclusively objective meaning, nor an individual and subjective experience. The interpretation of the architecture of the National Theatre in an ambiguous and complex relation to each individual theme pointed to the communication traits as values of architecture in a symbolic sense and at a phenomenological experiential level, alike.

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