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The reciprocity between art and architecture

Hakan Saglam*, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Ondokuz Mayıs University, 55020, Samsun Turkey

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Abstract

The concept of 'Art' in the modern meaning, evaluates within the Enlightenment's seminal World of philosophy. Before the Enlightenment architecture and craft were instinctively united fields of creating, almost impossible to detach one from the other. From the beginning of twentieth century the avant-garde of modern architecture were aware of the growing schism between art and architecture and vice versa. The pioneers were writing manifestos, stating that art and architecture should form a new unity, a holistic entity, which would include all types of creativity and put an end to the severance between "arts and crafts", "art and architecture". Approaching the end, of the first decade of the twenty first century, as communicative interests in all fields are becoming very important, we should once more discuss the relation/ interaction / cross over of art and architecture; where the boundaries of the two fields become blurred since both sides, art and architecture, are intervening the gap between. The aim of this paper is to discuss the examples of both contemporary art and architecture, which challenge this "in between gap."

Key words: Architecture, art, interaction, in between.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture. E-mail address: hakansaglam06@gmail.com / Tel.: +0-362-312-1919/4810

1. Introduction

Throughout history, art and architecture have always been together, they have grown and evolved by borrowing from one another. Especially architecture, which has borrowed many concepts like rhythm, balance, contrast and hierarchy- from other branches of the arts and has used them in the formation of a different aesthetic language. The Bauhaus in particular, and its first year design studio namely 'basic design', which has been used as an inevitable tool of architectural education since the beginning of modern architecture, constitutes the foundation of architectural education by referencing paintings, music and other areas of the arts. As everyone knows music has been the inspiration of many works of architecture, or has acted directly as the spring of architectural design.

Eric Mendelsohn, one of the prominent architects of the Twentieth century, expressed that he had transformed what he felt from music into architecture and that he was mostly interested in two aspects of music, harmony and counterpoint. After him, similarly, Daniel Libeskind believes that music should be sustained through different media. In his design of the Jewish Museum " he has made studies on the conversion of music into forms". Beyond carrying the fundamentals of music such as rhythm, unity etc. into architecture, Libeskind considered the end point of music and targeted to complete it." (Franck 2004)

On the other hand, Abercrombie by saying "architecture is frozen music" stated that architecture takes too much advantage of music and is affected by it. However, it remains a fact that there are some musical works of art that have been affected by architecture even without the direct use of architectural elements . The Coop Himmelb(l)au duo clearly stated that music as well as dance have been reflected within the space . It is also known that Coop Himmelb(l)au used rock and roll music and the movements of the human body as the starting point of their designs and have gone as far as centering their designs on these aspects (Jencks, Kropf. 1999) Similarly, Peter Zumthor likens interior space to a big instrument; that "collects, increases, expands, and transmits sound." (Zumthor,2005) Differing from the conventional definition, he defines architecture not as a spatial art but as the art of time. Much earlier, in 1914, the futurist manifesto described "architecture as the art of sounds." (Conrads,1970)

2. Arrangement and Order of Space

Usually, the elements that form space find their similes in different arts. For example, both painting and architecture are related to the arrangement and order of space. Probably, it is not possible to practice architecture with the techniques that belong to painting but it is certain that there are similarities in terms of understanding and comprehending space by looking at paintings as well as by studying architecture. (Berkus,2000) Other than works of painting related solely to space, there are a lot of works of art that have inspired architecture. Santiago Calatrava has mentioned the relationship that he forged between the human body and the liege train station. (Jodidio, 1998) We can find clues of this relationship, which has an important place in the development of architectural theory, in the works of the ancient theorist Vitruvius. In his 'Ten Books on Architecture', he states that in the construction period, the masons constructs the walls, columns and beams and the artists decide on the placing and dimensions of these elements to prevent the buildings form being ugly, which can be considered the cooperation between art and architecture. Still today Leon Battista Alberti's definition retains its importance. He clarifies the question of what beauty and ornament are wholly composed of and how they differ, by stating that it can be understood by comprehension and intuition. (Portoghesi, 1992) Alberti in his book of architecture, which is also composed of ten volumes, mentions the

unchanging components of architecture; rigidity, functionality and beauty. He defines architecture as a discipline of the fine arts. (Taschen, 2006) This togetherness is clear in almost all periods of history but especially in the Renaissance period. It is visible that besides the artists who have realized artistic synthesis within architectural structures, there are also artists who have more than one identity within the arts, i.e. Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. Although they are designated painter, sculptor or architect they wanted to make the boundaries between painting, sculpture and architecture more insurmountable than they were previously. "They are painter, sculptor and architect, but painting is painting, sculpture is sculpture and architecture is architecture." (Tanyeli, 2006) In other words each field has continued to keep its own identity. However, later in the architectural examples of the Baroque period, it is known that different areas of art have been fused together in an inseparable manner. With the enlightenment period and modernism that followed it, there has been a new point of view with regards to the relation between art and architecture, with the digression of the arts from each other. Painting, which was dependent on the wall during the pre-modern period, "when there was no possibility to think of a separate relief from the wall, underwent a shift after the second half of the 19th century when formations like the Arts & Crafts, and Art Nouveau movements put forward designs where the boundaries between painting, sculpture, architecture and design were totally ignored." (Tanyeli 2006) A particular example from the art-nouveau period gains importance. Can we discuss the tree column in Victor Horta's Tassel House or the Karyadit's of the Erechteion temple in the Athens Acropolis within the same conceptual framework? Does not the boundary between art and architecture get completely blurred through these examples? Indeed there are many more examples such as these. In which area are we going to classify Van Doesburg's abstract paintings? Or, how are we going to claim whether the Proun Series that El Lissitzky produced from the beginning of 1919 is more architecture or painting or sculpture? When we carry this discussion to the present, another problematic question appears, for how can we evaluate and discuss Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim Museum or Cook and Fornier's Graz Art Gallery? The state of being between that of architecture and art appears in a very clear way in these examples. When we look at this togetherness within the field of architecture it is also possible to see that different and radical attitudes may exist together.

3. Discussions on the Relation and the Connection

Adolf Loos, who was an advocate for the continuance of architecture in its position as an autonomous discipline, declared that the only areas of architecture that can be art are monuments and graves. Loos, who also resisted the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk, qualified this idea by stating that it is the carpenters' due to make furniture. This point of Loos' has been the fundamental source of discussions about the connection between the arts and continued almost to the second half of the 20th century. His fundamental approach can be summarized as the elimination of all the non-functional and non-structural elements from design, and an understanding of architectural design with only the specific elements of architecture. But even in that period, it is known that the togetherness of art and architecture did not break. In 1918, Bruno Taut in his manifesto titled "A Program for Architecture" brought into focus the relationship between architecture and the other arts once again. This call was later repeated by Walter Gropius while explaining the foundation principles of the Bauhaus in 1919. Gropius talked about the need for the coming together of the applied arts, painting and handicrafts in order to create a new architecture. He did not make the distinction of the monumental and decorative arts, and an artist-craftsman identity for the future architects.

The same year, *sinskulparkh* (synthesis+sculpture+architecture) came into being as a commission aiming for the synthesis of architecture and sculpture. However, the commission changed its name

into jivskulptarkh (painting+sculpture+architecture) before the end of 1919, adding painting into their aimed synthesis. After 1920's the group continued its activities although they were not very prominent. In these years, the concept of 'gesamkunstwerk' appeared, which stood unquestioned since the Baroque period, and it has been adopted as the unification of the styles of the areas that existed in the works of architecture. (Tanyeli, 2006) After 1936, under the leadership of the architect, sculptor and painter Andre Bloc, who targeted the synthesis of the arts, various developments occurred. The same year, he founded the unity for art group, with famous names such as Bonnard, Braque, Derain, Dufy, Laurens, Leger, Lip-chitz, Lhote, Le Corbusier, Maillol, Matisse, Picasso, Zadkine as members. In 1949 he founded the unity group for plastic arts with Le Corbusier and in 1951 he founded 'Group Espace' which was composed of engineers, architects and artists (Ögel, 1977) The founding declaration of this group points to the inseparable relation of its aims and wishes, and explains it as such: "color and form in art must be combined inseparably with architecture". Bloc, in his work of sculpture-habitacle, emphasized the closeness of the two fields by interpreting architecture as sculpture. It is known that, the "swimming panels" in the buildings of Mies Van DerRohe, one of the avant-gardes of the Modern period, have been designed as objects of art that cannot be separated from the space through color, form or configuration. His construction system, steel I beams "over the fire resistant columns, are ornaments as complicated as the pilasters applied over the load bearing columns of the Renaissance or Gothic structures." (Venturi, 1993) This understanding has converted the specific elements of architecture, such as columns, beams, doors, walls, chimneys etc., into art objects. As it is known most of the mushroom columns of F.L.Wright's Johnson Wax building are not load bearing, but are used only for decorative purposes. They are for architectural value but also add value to the space in which they stand as sculptures elements.

From the 1960's on, the trials of postmodernism in connecting art and architecture, resulted in the 'sticking on' of worldly icons that we know or don't know as ornaments onto the façades of buildings. After this point being able to sell what you think has become much more important than what you actually think. Concepts such as simplicity and plainness have been forgotten. Word plays, allusions, metaphors, new meanings, brand new uses, uncertainties and collapses are all on the agenda. They are even used as techniques, functions and structure and have redefined the idea of beauty. Eisenmann states that, what he is trying to do is to "change the direction of architecture from the necessity to be a structural, functional and beautiful object." (Eisenmann,1988) In his eleven houses, he questions our condition in time and space with non-functional sculptural elements. Many columns although they don't have any work or function come out of the slab, stand hanging on the ceiling or are marked only by slices on the ceiling or floor. One of the most striking examples of an architectural structure becoming a sculpture can be found in Vienna. Coop Himmelb(l)au's Attic Remodelling. His designs are conceived from the practical movement of body language. The created spaces do not resemble conventional spaces, they form contradictions. Frank Gehry asks why the fish shouldn't become a symbol if the architects cannot prove the reasons for the styles that they choose. And this way he proposes the slogan 'the shock of the fish' rather than 'the shock of the new'. In his works, fish, planes, binoculars have been unified within his buildings as a sculptural understanding. This state is the search for the new potentials of the idea of a kind of frozen movement, or the sculptural qualities of space and the human/nature relation.(Jencks 1986) As Cleant states, sculpture has affected architecture with its many potentials. From now on, the boundaries between sculpture and architecture are integrated into each other in an irrevocable manner (Cleant, 2004).

4. Conclusion

The togetherness of architecture and other fields of art, the leap within the fields, feed the richer, multi layered and cultural environment. It is believed that architecture has an important role for both being nourished by this environment and for providing the proper circumstances for all the arts to continue their existence. Architecture with its feature of being able to unite all the arts in its being increases this importance constantly. Since the beginning of human history, the discussions about the freedom of autonomy of architecture has always been on the agenda and this area of discussion has always been able to use the old-new paradox as a creative accelerator. The connection between architecture and other arts should be based on the conceptual and practical rather than the visual and the image. With the constant blurring of the line between the arts, architecture has been able to preserve its “in between” status, and thus improve the hopes focused on the future. One could state that the connection / relationship between architecture and the arts has been in existence throughout history, in sync with the native characteristics of the period. This relation and connection has changed with the native characteristics of the period but has never ceased.

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