

MARCIN CHARCIAREK*

IDEALIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT IN DRAWN ARCHITECTURE

IDEALIZACJA I UPORZĄDKOWANIE W ARCHITEKTURZE RYSOWANEJ

Abstract

The creator of a drawing in the process of unifying idea and architectural material is giving that relation a suitable aesthetic dimension, trying to see in it a clear unity of form and matter. Recording, sketching, drawing – in the face of such delimitation, establish an appropriate range of imagination and organize thinking about architecture – from the idea of illustrating the shape of the intention to making it materialize. Drawing requires an effort of mind and thoughts, matter- that of ordering and selection.

Keywords: idea-matter, image of matter, notation of idea

Streszczenie

Twórca w rysunkowym procesie jednoczenia idei i tworzywa architektonicznego nadaje tej relacji wymiaru estetycznego, starając się dostrzec w niej klarowną jedność formy i materii. Zapis, szkic, rysunek – wobec tak wytyczonego zagadnienia relacji idei i materii ustanawia zakres wyobrażenia i uporządkowania myślenia o architekturze – od idei obrazującej intencję aż do kształtu zrealizowania w konkretnej materii. Rysunek wymagał wysiłku umysłu i myśli, materia – uporządkowania i wyboru.

Słowa kluczowe: idea-materia, zapis idei, obraz materii

* Ph.D. Arch. Marcin Charciarek, Chair of Housing Architecture and Architectural Composition, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology.

Idealization of “paper reality”. In architecture, the image of reality has always seemed to be inadequate. This encourages the belief that a work of art is not only a form relating directly to the moment of creation, but has an independent broader context of the eternal search for the perfect architectural space.

Viewing the issue of architectural drawing as a search for the *ideal*, as a metaphoric formula – an element expressing the unity with the epoch, has another, discursive aspect in addition to the functional one. Jan Białostocki writes about this issue, stressing the fact that many aspects of art can be understood much better when expressed as a crystallization of desires, rather than a picture of reality. The critic writes that art always contains an element of “leveling” of a dearth of reality – even today it retains *compensatory* function: “(...) Very often art was not a mirror image, reflection, expression of life, but compensation, it was giving a shape to what was missing in life, supplementing the existence of the elements which man needed”¹.

Like other disciplines, drawn architecture (as a dream of ideality, improving reality) is not only a reflection, but a juxtaposition of the imaginary world and the real world. It creates substitutes and myths rather than images of what it is. The compensatory functions of drawn, painted or sketched architectural works lead sometimes to the impression of aesthetic experience and create a basis for metaphorization and symbolization. Built on this thesis, is a popular belief that one of the basic tasks of art is the creation of artificial worlds – imaginary ones, in which creative imagination has the task of creating alternative, often contradictory, “ideal” basis of understanding the essence of aesthetics and its perception. In this case, the metaphor as a poetic tool for disregarding the realism of temporality, becomes the primary function of creating an idealized fiction.

Compensatory nature of the image, however, is something other than a metaphorical role of the building. The image is able to reproduce a model of architecture that can lose its identity in a three-dimensional and physical artwork, contained within the walls, the ceiling and the floor of a real structure. On the other hand, the material can give a new meaning, impressions, which cannot be found in the sphere of drawn architecture.

The image of the idea. In the drawing process of unification of idea and material, the architect will give an aesthetic dimension to this relationship by trying to give it an architectural unity. Recording, sketching, drawing – in the face of the relationship delineated in this manner, establish the way and orderliness of thinking about architecture – are a record of the idea illustrating the *intention* to materialize.

From the time of the Renaissance the “studies of perspective” allowed the architect to link architecture with theoretical thought and imaging, thus giving it the status of ideological and intellectual work. Drawing required effort of mind and thought, matter that of ordering and selection by which architects proved that a work of architecture was nothing more than matter, but matter shaped in a unique way expressing the artist’s specific idea known as a *style*. According to Leon Battista Alberti, the record seemed to be an attempt to “substantialize” idea through the designation of boundaries by means of perspective, axonometry, plans, sections, interdependencies between the elements of the composition².

¹ J. Białostocki, *Sztuka i kompensacja*, [w:] *Refleksje i syntezy ze świata sztuki*, Warszawa 1978, s. 204.

² L. B. Alberti, *Książ dziesięć o sztuce budowania*, Warszawa 1960, p. 16.

A specific correlation in this record of the idea seems to be a presentation of the tension between “the resistance of matter” and the requirements of intent, trying to bring out matter’s capabilities for a perfect, absolute self-determination and organization. The “embodiment” of an image is therefore a step to transfer thoughts and words into the visible world, the reality of bodies, things, objects and knowable senses – not only ideologically. Rudolf Wittkower’s idea, which reveals another role of architectural record as the one allowing a deeper vision of spatial things, and their appropriate record of idea/material, also makes it possible to recognize the nature of the things, while keeping a certain distance from the image³. Subordination of the whole to the part and the part to the whole is an automatic recognition of the form’s order. The record outlining the *idea* is the beginning of *harmony* derived from the architect’s thought, in the context of which *matter* seems to be a complementary factor (present in many other buildings), but a significant one, hiding in itself an *ordering* of the idea in matter.

The link between the real (material) world of architecture and the drawn one (mapping ideas) constitutes an ongoing experience in the history of building, continuously generating new interpretations of the perception and recording of architecture. This changeable account of the transition from the plasticity of an image through rational choices of figure shapes to mathematical and physical categorization of the structure allows the world of architecture to be seen as something dynamic between something conceived and sketched and later plotted and erected. That is why in the *Sophist* the philosopher wonders if we do not make some structures by the ability to build and others by the ability to create the image which is a kind of a *dreamy vision*⁴. This confirms the thesis that a drawn record does not only reflect the aesthetic value but its visual expression adds or generates a metaphor necessary to create an architecture which the artist considers ideal. In this way, we can perceive the drawing as a model, but with a different, immaterial quality worthy of poetic things. It results from an impact, through the drawing, of the “fictitious reality” of the record of imaginary architectural space which is a representation of architecture on a piece of paper initially devoid of any “resistance” of matter and imperfections. It happens that subsequent categories of the artwork’s materialization cause a transformation and disintegration of the ideological sense of the architectural record – what is ideal and what is real, what is formal and what material.

The intentional image is thus able to reproduce a model of architecture. The classification of these images, though rich and multidirectional can in fact be interpreted in two ways – firstly, it is to present (through free interpretation) the chosen architectural idea, and secondly – it is a physical carrier of the architect’s material intentions and a record of the first matter transformed into the physicality of the work of architecture. Any image of *drawn architecture* seems to be a reference point for material ordering of illusion which, by way of approximation from a conception (outline) to the construction project (built structure) – reaches an appropriate degree of information content approaching the essence of perception of architecture or attempting to do so.

³ R. Wittkower, *Interpretacja symboli wizualnych*, [w:] *Symboli i symbolika*, Warszawa 1991, p. 343.

⁴ Platon, *Sofista, Polityk*, Kęty 2002, p. 72.

Arrangement of matter. It is believed that the whole theory of architecture can be explained in terms of material factors. It is the available matter that determines the idea showing a certain order, a force resulting from the relationship of individual parts to one another and their relationship to the whole. Changing the hierarchy of importance does not seem to affect the eternal form-matter “opposition”, but only suggests an alternative way of understanding the form as a result of the *transition* of the world of ideas and the *changeability* (*novelty*) of matter. Massimo Scolari (situating drawn architecture outside of the field of art) claims that it is through technical dimension (matter) that architecture releases all the qualities which make it an expression of collective beauty as it reduces the range of possibilities to one most appropriate solution immediately and ‘voicelessly’⁵. A formal analysis alone cannot reveal the properties of non-homogenous elements which create the imperceptible cohesion of architecture, and that is why, when we look at a drawing, what we can see is a resultant “residue” of what has been designed as an entity in matter.

This is not a new attitude. Gottfried Semper was the first to see an artwork not as a reflection of ideas, but as a phenomenon of material space united in a holistic structure. Among the followers of the material version of the history of architecture which illustrates various changes in the structure by means of projection, cross-section or axonometry, we can find other distinguished critics of architecture – Emil Kaufmann, Kenneth Frampton and Colin Rowe. For each of them, the basis for the study of architecture was the relationship between the drawn plan (as a tool for illustrating the material possibilities) and the ideal shape of the architecture. However, for the critics, the most significant moments in the history of architecture are the ones that indicate breaking or maintaining the continuity of formal and structural systems through adjusting them to the “new” perception of matter and its technology.

For Kaufmann the cause of change in the autonomy of the eighteenth century neoclassical architecture was the discrepancy between ideas and the used materials which lacked the “potency” to construct – as demonstrated by the drawn utopias of Claude Nicolas Ledoux’s and Etienne Louis Boullée’s.

Kenneth Frampton considers important the changes in terms of perfect tectonics – purely spatial transformations of architecture based on a solid, irreducible plan. Similarly, Coline Rowe thinks that material interpretation of architecture is a constant search for the purity of the drawn plan dependent on used building material, beginning from villas Rotonda and Malcontenta by Andrea Palladio and ending with the concrete villas Stein and Savoye by Le Corbusier. Comparing architectural masterpieces, critics focus on indicating the internal opposition of the idea-matter and use of different structural systems – in Palladio’s villas shown in vertical elevations and cross sections; in the works of Le Corbusier – an innovative layout – *open plan* hidden behind a simple, horizontal plane of the facade supported by a row of posts.

The theory of drawn architecture determined in this way claims that changes in the creation of idealistic architectural space are dependent on defining architectural matter, through which the content of the building in the form of a drawn architectural plan and cross-section is described in terms of its potentiality. Layout, section or architectural detail,

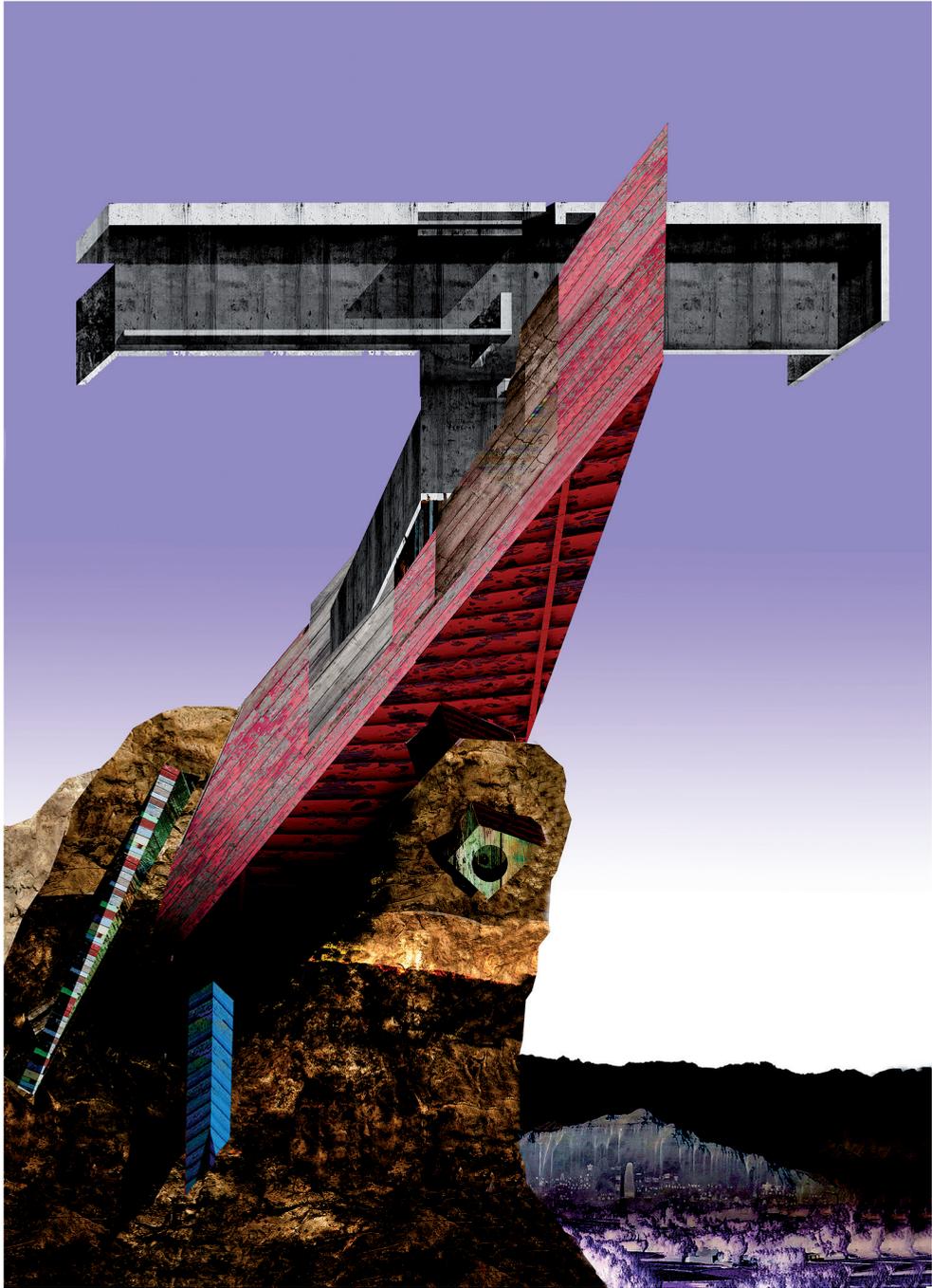
⁵ M. Scolari, *Aporie de l’architecture*, l’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, nr 190/1977.

therefore, have become a standard way to represent the *material principle* of architecture, which, regulated by the imagined form with its ‘ideal’ meaning, reflects the way of using matter.

Therefore architectural drawing as a tool for representing matter is not a process of animating matter but rather a process of forming and organizing matter in accordance with a certain idea. The formation of the artwork and the formation of matter are not two processes. They constitute one integral process and the “intensity” of the correlation between the formal idea and matter requires interpretation (Il. 1)⁶.



⁶ A reference to the relationship between architectural ideas in terms of selected matter are architectural competitions – including the UNESCO concept competition, Cultural Centre at Bamiyan in Afghanistan (01’2015). The aim of the competition was to create such a form whose identity would fit in with the cultural heritage of the valley of the Hindu Kush – land adjacent to the temples and niches of the Buddhist statues carved in the rock, destroyed in 2001. For the authors (project team including: arch. K. Tarnowski, arch. M. Charciarek, visualizations: arch. W. Cieplucha, Arch. M. Kozieł) the first foundation of the construction of meanings was the term “reminiscence” – code for rebuilding forms of city, located in the past on the route of the Silk Road. This reminiscence is treated as a memory of the myth as a major source of potential shapes and building material typology *caravaserail* (geometry of central plan, wall, dome, garden, courtyard) as well as through the use of natural building materials. The material *Mausoleum*, located above the town and chromatic nostalgia created with solid walls, covered with carpets and lined painted wood, are the author’s version of the space which discovers peaceful memories of the past – color, smells, tastes and textures. Mausoleum memorial project will serve as a reminder of ongoing reconstruction of the world – its destruction and deconstruction, renewal of meanings and reconstruction through the eternal conflict of heaven and earth – confrontation between vertical and horizontal, where MEMORY constitutes a metaphor of architecture.



III. 1. *Mausoleum*, first sketch, Bamiyan Cultrural Center competition, 2015 (author)

References

- [1] Białostocki J., *Reflections and synthesis of the art world*, Warszawa 1978.
- [2] Alberti L.B., *Ten books about the art of building*, Warszawa 1960.
- [3] Wittkower R., *Symbols and symbolism*, Warszawa 1991.
- [4] Platon, *Sofista*, *Polityk*, Kęty 2002.
- [5] Scolari M., *Aporie de l'architecture*, *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, nr 190/1977.

