



**How does modern photography of Iwan Baan relate to earlier works of Julius Shulman?
Dialogue of past and present in architectural photography.**

AR2A011 Architectural History Thesis
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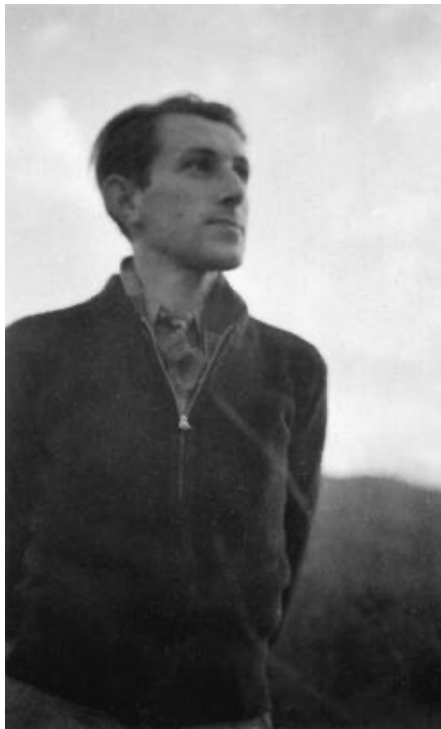
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General Introduction

Predominantly visual culture of 21st century – magazines, websites, and especially social media makes an image more powerful than ever in history. Therefore, visual artists such as photographers have an extraordinary ability to decide what will be shown to the public and remain in the memory of thousands of people. To be a great professional requires not only an unprecedented skill and technical mastery but also a rare talent to filter and synthesize complexities of the modern world. No one would be more accurate to meet these expectations than legendary photographers whose works will be analyzed in this research paper. Julius Shulman and Iwan Baan chose architecture to be major subject of their creative work. This publication is aimed to investigate the relation between them and examine differences and similarities in their attitude to the profession. It also strives, based on these findings to understand the direction in which architectural photography is currently developing.

Introducing the Artists and Relation between Them

Both photographers are very successful artists presenting different approach to the profession. Julius Shulman can be described as a pioneer of architectural photography, who promoted works of many architects through his pictures in the press in the 1950s California. Moreover, his unique style of depicting built environment influenced numbers of artists and greatly contributed to the development of that branch of photography. Iwan Baan born in 1975 represents younger generation of architectural photographers. He is famous from being in constant move, travelling around the world and producing stunning, but also controversial images. His approach to photography, spontaneous and oriented towards people who occupy the spaces, rather than spaces itself might be at first read as contradictory to Shulman's. Although it may be discussed that through his work, he established a new way of thinking about architectural photography and challenged the way of looking at space, just like Shulman did it in the 1950s. For this reason, he was awarded The Excellence in Photography Award by the Julius Shulman Institute in 2010.



Julius Shulman



Iwan Baan

Structure of the Research Paper

Research paper is structured in five chapters, each one corresponding to different key topic illustrated by two images by Baan and Shulman, showing how artists responded to it. First chapter "*Success and Recognition*" shall justify, that photographers can be considered equally famous and influential and therefore credibly comparable. Subsequently, next parts are arranged to show different motives which are "*Creating Storylines*", "*Working with Context*", "*Architecture and People*", and "*Idea of Domesticity*". Variety of topics reflects complexity of matter of architectural photography, which is inextricably connected to architecture itself. Presented issues are not only significant for photographers but are also important from the point of view of an architect. As we shall see the relation between these two professions was always interdependent.

Since media continue to play a major role in incorporating visual images it is nothing more important to promote works of architects than talented photographer able to create memorable pictures. This relation was described deeper in the first chapter of the paper "*Success and Recognition*" with a particular emphasis on images appearing in the press. This chapter will also show that successful architectural photographer needs successful architects to prosper. Second chapter, "*Creating Storylines*" focuses more on individual style of each artist and describes some key aspects of their philosophy and workflow. Title "*Storylines*" refers to photographer as a storyteller, who within a limited frame encapsulates certain, well-thought narrative about space he observes. Indeed, it reflects famous Shulman's quote that "*all his photographs tell a story*".

Motives presented in the following chapters were inherited by photography from architecture and are common in both fields. Subjects of "*Context*", "*People*" or "*Domesticity*" are deeply rooted in the profession of architect and were approached from many angles thorough the history. Therefore, it is crucial for photographers to position themselves towards them according to their individual approach and philosophy. For instance, in the chapter "*Working with Context*" we shall see different responses of Shulman and Baan towards the space surrounding the building and try to understand the intention behind them. Relation of "*Architecture and People*" is a topic of the next part of the paper which explains, how human activity can affect the overall perception of depicted space. Finally, the last chapter on "*Idea of Domesticity*" touches a fundamental term of "*Domestication*" of space and seeks to understand how it has changed through the years. All these topics will be analyzed for differences and similarities to establish a relation of past and present. At the end, conclusion will summarize the findings and elaborate on the way how architectural photography has changed since Shulman, and what kind of challenges it might face in the future.

¹ *Visual Acoustics: Modernism of Julius Shulman*, Documentary by Eric Bricker, 2008

Success and Recognition

First, to be able to make a convincing comparison, it must be proven that both artists achieved commercial success and can be considered equally influential and recognizable. We shall first examine the past and identify the events that paved their career paths. It is notable, that Julius Shulman as well as Iwan Baan made their first steps into the field of architectural photography through the acquaintance with renown architects. The former's first client was Richard Neutra, whom he met in the late 1940s and photographed his house. The success of this first commission opened a door to other modernist architects such as, Pierre Koenig, Frank Lloyd Wright, Raphael Soriano and many more, some of whom became his close friends.² Moreover, many of them owed their fame and recognition to Shulman's photography. Modernist architecture movement they represented was far from mainstream in United States at that time and needed outstanding images to gain attention. Shulman maintained good relations and worked with editors of consumer magazines and newspapers, providing them with images of recently constructed houses.³ One of the most remarkable examples of such collaboration was a participation of Julius Shulman in the "Case Study House" program founded by "Arts & Architecture" magazine⁴. It was an initiative aimed to promote new models of residential housing in the United States, where several major architects at the time were commissioned to create inexpensive and efficient model homes. Shulman's key role in the process was to document completed designs which he was successfully doing for several years until the end of the program in 1966.

Professional career of Iwan Baan started after graduation from Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague when he left Europe to work in publishing and documentary photography in New York. He became shifting his focus towards architectural photography when he accidentally met Rem Koolhaas who involved him in documenting the construction of CCTV building in China. As he admits, since then he "got completely fascinated with this architecture field, (...) and from there a lot of things happened quickly."⁵ Indeed, when staying in China Baan contacted another major architecture studio – Herzog and De Meuron, which was at the time working on the National Olympic Stadium and he successfully got a commission to photograph the construction process. Furthermore, they collaborated later with other projects, for instance a series of aerial images documenting all the architects' realizations in Basel, Switzerland. Now, his portfolio consists of images taken for the most renown architectural practices of the world, which value his unique style. Japanese architect, Toyo Ito admitted that "Iwan's photography always surprises me. It allows me to see my building with different eyes."⁶

Remarkable achievements of both Baan and Shulman can be proved through the first pair of photographs (Fig.1 , Fig 2) which presents cover pages of popular magazines. First one, "The Sunset" from March 1954 made by American photographer strikes with its bright, warm colors and dynamic composition. It was shot inside the house, showing the viewer a deep look through the single-space volume of the building. Regular rhythm of columns and beams on the ceiling creates an impression of harmony, peace, and tranquility. Interior is filled with fashionable furniture and objects of everyday use, which are likely meant to highlight the social status and taste of the owner of the house. Through the completely glazed and transparent wall, one can observe the background of the picture, where interior of the house is extended with fully furnished terrace overlooking landscape of the seaside. Composition is balanced with figures of man, woman and dog playing together on the terrace distantly from the observer. Photograph, placed on the cover page of the magazine advertising "western living" undoubtedly promotes a dream-vision of life in the mid-century America.

² *Visual Aesthetics: Modernism of Julius Shulman*, Documentary by Eric Bricker, 2008

³ Rosa, J., Shulman, J., & McCoy, E. (1994). *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman (First Edition)*. Rizzoli, p. 88

⁴ Smith, E. A. T., Gössel, P., & Shulman, J. (2021). *Case Study Houses. The Complete CSH Program 1945–1966*. 40th Ed. (Multilingual ed.). TASCHEN.

⁵ *Iwan Baan, The Interview*, ERCO, the Light Factory, 2014

⁶ *Photographer Iwan Baan*, Documentary by DW News, 2014

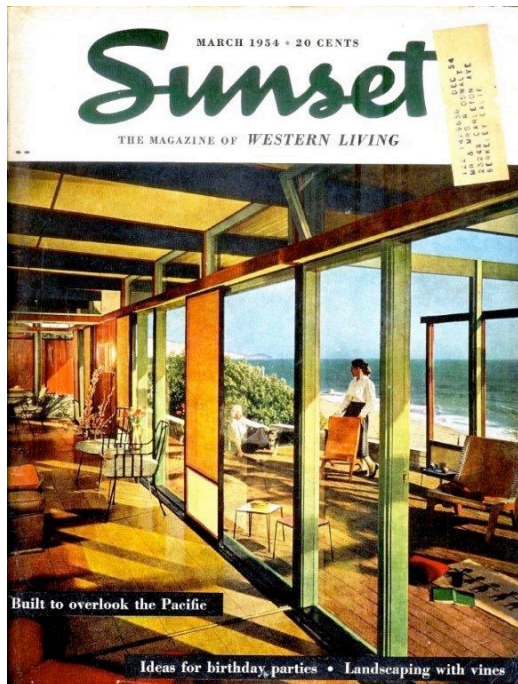


Fig. 1 “Sunset” – cover by Julius Shulman

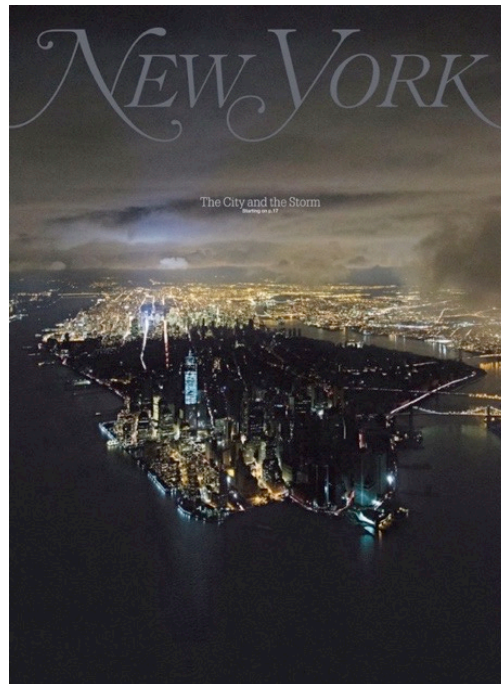


Fig. 2 “New York Magazine” – cover by Iwan Baan

“New York Magazine” from November 2012 features amazing, aerial photograph made by Iwan Baan just after hurricane Sandy hit the eastern coast of the United States. Composition of vertical image is centered on the part of the city drowned in complete darkness, with only several light spots of skyscrapers visible. In the background, miles away from the observer the city lightens up again, magnifying the contrast of light and dark. This shocking moment showed on the cover page of popular magazine might convey a powerful message about vulnerability of human civilization, hopeless when encounters unpredictable natural forces. That feeling is enhanced by use of aerial perspective, which is one of the trademarks of Baan’s work and helps to unknowledge the vast size of the blackout area.

Both pictures, however different from one another were intentionally used as a cover for popular magazines. Shulman’s photograph, like many others made thorough his career was aimed to link architecture to the certain lifestyle, which can be described as “modern” at the time. He was aware of limited range of traditional, architectural newspapers and sought attention in commercial press in which architecture played a role of elegant background for various activities of its residents. This strategy helped to popularize his clients’ work to the broader audience and create a demand for “modern homes”. Conditions of contemporary world in which Iwan Baan operates differs greatly from the ones of his predecessor, especially in terms of widespread accessibility to digital images, and less interest in their printed counterparts. In this framework, picture featured in the major New York’s newspaper might be read more as a prestigious achievement rather than a proof of popularity. Nonetheless, Baan’s popularity is now constituted by social media presence and major architectural websites, such as “Archdaily” or “Dezeen” which are a vast archive of his works.⁸ Worth noticing are also his collaborations with prominent architectural research centers like ETH Zurich or Harvard University resulting in richly illustrated publications. It can be therefore said that Julius Shulman and Iwan Baan share similar scale of worldwide recognition and eighter can be considered one of the most important figures in photography of the past and present centuries.

⁷ Rosa, J., Shulman, J., & McCoy, E. (1994). *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman (First Edition)*. Rizzoli., p. 90

⁸ Iwan Baan, *Photographer*, The Second Studio Design and Architecture Show, Episode 269, 2022

Creating Storylines

First chapter proved that both Iwan Baan and Julius Shulman achieved great commercial success which led to international recognition of their works. But what can be observed as well are differences in their artworks derived from unique character and specific way of work of each artist. Julius Shulman was a very disciplined photographer, who carefully planned every frame he shot. His belief that “*photographer is the director and producer of each frame*”⁹ is truly reflected in every image he made. That also meant that he had to adapt a set of rules which helped him achieve repetitive results, for instance he put a particular emphasis on showing depth of his pictures through emphasizing the leading lines in one-point perspective. Shulman consciously engaged his viewers “*so their eyes follow the thrust of the lines (...) into the scene to where I want him to stop*”¹⁰. This can be observed in the image described as *Fig. 3* taken in Los Angeles, which dates to the beginnings of his career. It is a very static, nearly monumental composition framed by tall, concrete columns of City Hall on right side and braced roof on the top. Row of these columns leads the viewer to the focal point of the composition placed in the down-left quarter of the image, where the excavator stands. In the foreground, people dressed in historical costumes pose among machines and tools left by construction workers, who can be barely seen in the background. Theatrical appearance of these figures on one hand contrasts with rough character of the construction site, but on the other evokes a feeling of solemnity and dignity of the scene. With this composition, Shulman completely redefined the character of construction site, typically viewed as something rudimentary and assigned it almost royal qualities. Surprisingly, this was possible thanks to lucky coincidence which happened during the photo session, when a group of actors rehearsing in unfinished building accidentally meet photographer.¹¹ Paradoxically, what stands behind a very rigorous and dignified image is an accident. This what Shulman’s successor – Iwan Baan took the most advantage of in his works.



Fig 3. Los Angeles City Hall – Julius Shulman

⁹ Rosa, J., Shulman, J., & McCoy, E. (1994). *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman (First Edition)*. Rizzoli., p. 69

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *Visual Aesthetics: Modernism of Julius Shulman*, Documentary by Eric Bricker, 2008



Fig 4. National Olympic Stadium in Beijing – Iwan Baan

Iwan Baan shows way more spontaneity which on one hand leads to less technically mastered images, but on the other creates an impression of reality and truthfulness. He is much more influenced by reportage photographers and focused more on a message of each picture rather than technical proficiency. His work focuses on spontaneous behavior of people in space, where architecture can be either background or target of human interactions. As he admits “for me building is never just about the architecture, (...) it is about people, what people do there the context, the city, the landscape”¹². To confront his work with Shulman’s a similar frame was chosen, which presents an ongoing construction of monumental public edifice, situated in China. It was taken during the preparations to 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing and once again focuses on construction site. This time however, foreground is occupied with a group of construction workers resting in front of a small TV. Bright light of nearby reflector, lights up the scene, revealing some people absorbed completely in watching the program, whereas the others staring directly at the photographer, astonished by his presence. Second, and third plans of the image are filled with construction equipment, such as trolleys, wheelbarrows, or gas cylinders disorderly scattered around the site. In the background, on the leftmost site of the picture, the unfinished structure of Beijing National Stadium drowns in darkness. Its modern, avant-garde form contrast with modest, rudimental surrounding of the construction site. In the picture Baan pays attention of the observer to people, who utmost contributed to the success of the Olympic Games, but their role is often neglected and underestimated. What in Shulman’s picture was hidden in the background Baan decided to expose and turn into major subject of the artwork.

When analyzing the past, image of Shulman clearly demonstrates technical proficiency in terms of composition, lightning, and framing, but it also has unique storyline. Author plays with the theme of construction site to tell the story about vivid, dynamically growing city of Los Angeles, which at the time was experiencing an unprecedented growth. Indeed, Shulman often expressed his fascination with that city and many of his early works were based there¹³. Storyline, and extraordinary way of telling it seems to be key element linking works of Shulman and Baan which helps establishing a connection between past and present. In fact, Baan’s image just as his predecessor’s reflects *Zeitgeist* of his era, where great investments are often accompanied with great social problems. According to researchers during preparations to the 2008 Olympic Games, many underpaid migrant workers risked their health on the construction sites across China¹⁴. Baan’s photographs pose an important question of what stands behind grand designs and by themselves can become a voice in an ongoing discussion about the condition of civil industry.

¹² Iwan Baan, *The Interview*, ERCO, the Light Factory, 2014

¹³ Julius Shulman’s *L.A. Stories (Modern Architecture in Los Angeles)*, Getty Research Institute, 2013

¹⁴ “One Year of My Blood.” (2020, November 13). Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/03/11/one-year-my-blood/exploitation-migrant-construction-workers-beijing>

Working with Context

Using term “Context” architects often refer to location in which they design a building. Site-specific characteristics such as landscape, types of existing houses, building codes and many more might be crucial in shaping the result of their work. Architectural photographers as well as architects work with existing, physical environment and decide which elements of it are adequate to become a source of creative inspiration. Attitude to space surrounding the object of interest vary between different artists and can be confronted with another pair of photographs, which present two opposing strategies towards this matter. First photograph (Fig. 5a), although it wasn’t made by Shulman himself, presents his attitude to treating the context of an image. It was taken by his assistant during the session held in West Covina in 1954. Plot on which the building was situated was still empty and plain due to recently finished construction work, yet with a plan of planting there a garden soon. In this case, Shulman decided to look forward into the future, and add missing elements to the frame, what he referred to as “Dressing a Photograph”¹⁵. Indeed, picture shows how he operates camera, with a peculiar structure of branches and creepers just in front of the lens. The outcome of this session can be seen on the picture Fig. 5b, where “missing” branches and flowers in the foreground make surprisingly natural impression of the garden. Shulman described later, that by using this technique he was able to establish relation between the building and context through creating an impression of spatiality.¹⁶ Thanks to use of “portable garden” image acquired a very strong foreground, which framed the most important element – the house in the middle of composition.



Fig 5a. Shulman “Dressing a Photograph”



Fig 5b. Outcome photograph

¹⁵ Rosa, J., Shulman, J., & McCoy, E. (1994). *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman (First Edition)*. Rizzoli., p. 85

¹⁶ Ibid.

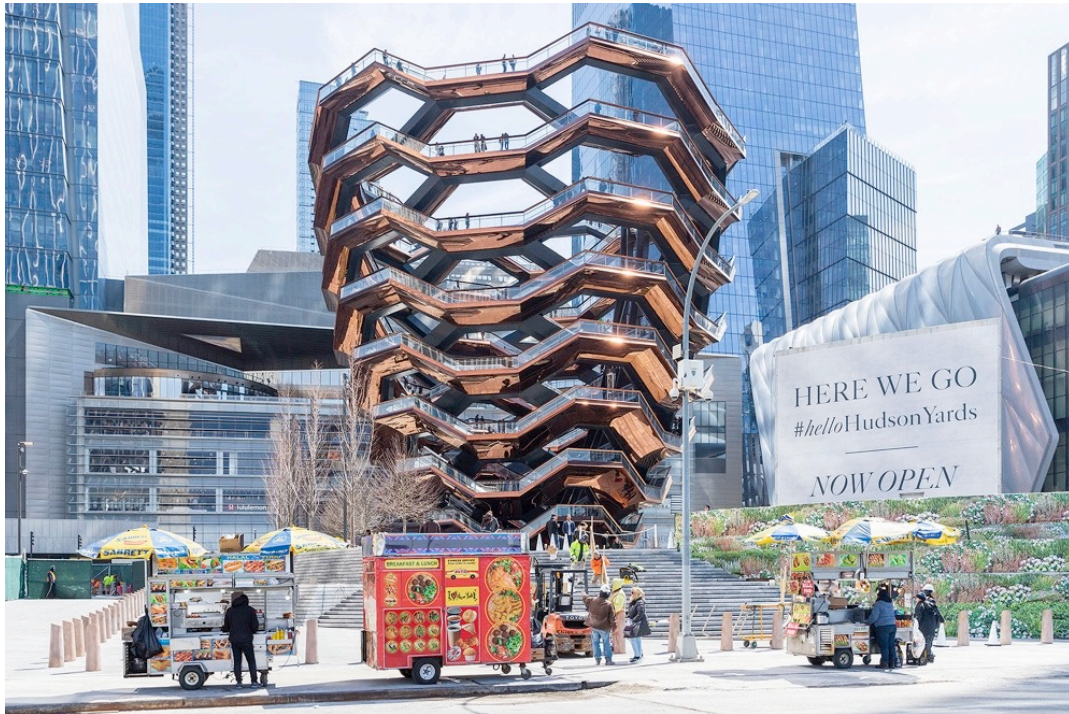


Fig.6 *The Vessel, New York* by Iwan Baan

Many modern and past architectural photographers manipulated the context to underline important qualities of the object in the frame. Shulman's "dressing" was undoubtedly such kind of manipulation. But Baan to fulfill his vision decided to interact with surroundings in a more straightforward way. In the central part of the picture taken in New York in 2019 one can see a giant, modern monument designed by Thomas Heatherwick. Lookout tower named "The Vessel" drawn attention of the public thanks to its unique shape and quickly became a top-rated tourist attraction. Minding that fact, foreground of the picture feels particularly striking, as it reveals poorly designed, cheap-looking stands with fast food and souvenirs, displaced just in front of the entrance to the tower. The latter itself stands in the middle of the picture in its full glory, reflecting sunlight shining on copper-colored elevation which contrasts blue, glass facades of the surrounding buildings. Overall, the picture renders a feeling of chaos and disorder, even though it is composed in an uncomplicated way. Cluttered space, disharmonious colors and variety of forms blend together and overwhelm the observer. That brings up a question about condition of public spaces in contemporary cities like New York, which tends to be a patchwork of highly commercialized objects devoid of architectural qualities and character. Architect Rem Koolhaas in his essays refers to this phenomenon as "Junk-Space" which he describes as "a territory of impaired vision, limited expectation, reduced earnestness. The junk food of architecture, (...) the shopping malls and casinos that are bloated on fillers and chemicals"¹⁷. In Baan's photograph, we can clearly see this kind of environment and it might be questioned whether "the Vessel" is an integral part of it.

Julius Shulman modified existing context to create an impression, that photographed house stands in the middle of lively, charming garden. This strive was not only a vision of the artist but also derived from the commissioner's intention to print the image in the lifestyle magazine. The problem with that was that greenery required time to grow while images were needed shortly after construction was completed in favor of promotion and advertisement. Accordingly, Shulman's idea was brilliantly suited for the need of his client even though it was not entirely representing the facts. On the contrary, at first Baan's photograph can be read as documentary picture of yet another monument of prominent architect. However, when inspected more deeply one can see a critical approach towards the photographed object. Iwan Baan is a keen observer of public space, who records tensions, inaccuracies, and contradictions. "Context" in his works often becomes equally important as the subject itself and so it does in the analyzed picture. Instead of trying to underline the qualities of "the Vessel" by manipulating the foreground he uses it to start a dialogue between architecture and its surroundings, which regardless the outcome can be described as truthful. Indeed, a critique of newly developed district of Hudson Yards, where "the Vessel" was built emerged after its completion and discussion is being continued up to this day. Alan G Brake, editor of "Architect's Newspaper" and author at "Dezeen.com" stated, that the area "is all shine and no substance, and New York City deserves better."¹⁸. Photography might have a powerful impact on shaping the public opinion on the buildings, cities, and public spaces. Decision of how much context should be filtered through the lens of the camera is a crucial factor to form a meaningful image. Both Shulman and Baan understood that fact and used it for purpose either their clients or their own.

¹⁷ Koolhaas, R. (2020). *Junk-Space*. treppe b Galerie & Verlag., p. 176

¹⁸ Brake, A. G. (2022, February 12). "Hudson Yards is a billionaire's fantasy of the future of city life." Dezeen. <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/03/19/hudson-yards-new-york-city-opinion-alan-g-brake/>

Architecture and People

People were always an important subject of art, and photography makes no exception in this matter. Despite being relatively young comparing to painting or sculpture, it created many distinctive ways of making portraits. However, architectural photography traditionally did not focus on individuals in favor of buildings. In fact, Julius Shulman was one of the pioneers who showed how people occupy the built environment¹⁹. In his works, people were significant elements harmonizing the composition and bringing life into the scene. Apart from the increased aesthetic value, they were also important from the perspective of promotion of architecture, which Shulman understood and learned how to take advantage of. The idea of introducing human figures derived from the fact, that lifestyle magazines, were much more popular than their architectural equivalents. Architectural press at the time, magazines such as “*Arts & Architecture*” were focused mainly on representing buildings, models or conceptual drawings which were targeted to the very exclusive group of professionals. Shulman’s point of view, which considered their client’s intention to advertise their work to the broader audience was to expand with his photographs in more inclusive newspapers, “*selling architecture*” to the public. His images always included individuals inside modern interiors of photographed houses, “*visual witnesses*” who showed how the space can be used. Thanks to that, he not only sold architecture, but also certain way of life associated with it.²⁰

Modern photographers like Baan approach people in a different way. To show how buildings are really used he pays more attention to spontaneous human activity and tries to capture the moments instead of planning them. Thanks to that people become equally important as architecture in which they live, and together create very coherent, lifelike image. He approaches building without a specific knowledge of how it should be used and tries to record the way of the how people use it.²¹ This type of work reassembles the reversed manual, where photographer learn from the users of space the intention of architect, which sometimes may not be compatible with each other. Those two contradictory strategies of treating people in architectural photography are to be seen in yet another pair of images (*Fig. 7, Fig. 8*).



Fig. 7 People as models in carefully arranged scenes.

¹⁹ Rosa, J., Shulman, J., & McCoy, E. (1994). *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman (First Edition)*. Rizzoli., p. 88

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Iwan Baan, The Interview*, ERCO, the Light Factory, 2014

First picture presents a couple, woman, and man inside the house. Elegant interior design with wooden-cladded walls and patterned carpet on the floor creates an intimate and warm feeling of space. Stylish furniture was carefully arranged to match the character of the building. Horizontal windows placed just below the level of the ceiling let some natural light to get inside the room, which is also additionally brightened with an artificial light. People standing in the room are very static, even though they clearly take part in household activities. Man, sitting on the armchair, reading the newspaper raised his head to look at the woman, which is likely his wife. The latter stands in front of the kitchen annex, holding the bowl with food. In the foreground one can observe a table with only one set of cutleries. This kind of images often acted as a manual of the modern living, being published in magazines like *"The Sunset"* mentioned in the first chapter. Every single aspect of the scene was set to guide the reader how to use the house and its elements from the scale of the room to the single piece of furniture.²²



Fig. 8 Spontaneous use of space; Contradiction between the architect's intention and reality

In contrast, image presented above (Fig. 8) was published in the book richly illustrated by Baan, which brings up the topic of aging of cities built in the 1960s in India and Brazil. These were often designed by architects of international fame who seized the opportunity to test urban planning theories contemporary to them, shaping lives of thousands of people²³. After almost half a century, Baan comes back to these places to observe daily life of its inhabitants. Picture above shows buildings of the city of Chandigarh in a bright sunlight of the day. Raw concrete walls reflect the burning sun, whereas window openings, balconies and roof overhangs cast contrasting, black shadows. On the right side of the picture, through the holes in a part of the Assembly Hall, two people are visible. First man uses a bucket to clean his face, spilling water off the building, and a second one stares at the photographer wearing only a bath towel. Captured scene, beautiful in its spontaneity seems very natural despite the unusual setting of this activity. It can be also read as a commentary on the struggle between the plan and intention of architect, and everyday life of people who now use the building.

The issue of treating people in architectural photography seems to be one of the biggest contradictions between Baan and Shulman, and a gap between past and present. Julius Shulman admitted that he *"always used people in (...) photographs. It is not just a matter of scale; it is a matter of bringing life to a scene."*²⁴. His attitude clearly shows little interest in individuals as they are, instead focusing more on what kind of impact on the picture they might have. During the sessions he always instructed his models how to pose to achieve the deserved result in each exposure, which is close to the approach of a classic studio photographers. Ironically, Baan who at the beginning of his career was a documentary photographer, leaves much more space for improvisation and spontaneity. People in his images, are subjects as important as any other, on it is often the matter of accident that creates a right exposure. History of both actors of this paper poses an important question about the future of architectural photography. Should it continue to show how architects' imagined use of their buildings or rather be a record of how are they being used in reality?

²² Rosa, J., Shulman, J., & McCoy, E. (1994). *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman (First Edition)*. Rizzoli, p. 90

²³ Baan, I., Nooteboom, C., & Stierli, M. (2010). *Brasilia - Chandigarh Living With Modernity (Illustrated ed.)*. Lars Muller.

²⁴ *Visual Acoustics: Modernism of Julius Shulman*, Documentary by Eric Bricker, 2008

Idea of Domesticity

Most of Shulman's work was devoted to the idea of domesticity in very specific form, characteristic for the late 1950s in the United States. Individual house in modern shape became a symbol of a new post-war lifestyle of American middle-class citizens. At the time, images not only promoted architecture itself, but also a certain vision of society²⁵. In this way, Julius Shulman's artwork became influential, and shaped the imagination of hundreds of Americans. First picture presented in this part (*Fig. 9*) resembles the one from colorful magazine, with elements like architecture, furniture, landscape, and people arranged to promote new model of living. Iwan Baan started his career in a modern, globalized world. Even he was born and raised in the Netherlands, his scope of interest as an artist lays way beyond the national borders. Great part of his work as a photographer is dedicated to domestic life in developing countries within areas of informal, spontaneous inhabitation. He shows how people settle inside abandoned buildings and administrate them in self-sufficient, independent communities. Second picture (*Fig. 10*), as much as similar in topic to the work of Shulman, presents drastically different concept of domesticity. Here, instead of imaginary vision of bright future, we are confronted with securing the most basic needs inside the abandoned skyscraper in Caracas due to the lack of affordable housing in Venezuela.



Fig. 9 Promoting new model of life in the United States in 1950s through a photography of Julius Shulman.

Picture marked as *Fig.9* was taken inside the house with a wide-lens camera which captured most of the internal space in the frame and created very dynamic perspective. Modern kitchen island decorated with colorful pots, cups and bowls with fruit stands in the foreground. In the center elegantly dressed man and woman talk to each other while the latter is opening a yellow bucket. In the background, through the glazed window one can see a picturesque view of hills of Los Angeles. Vision of domesticity presented in the picture focuses on an individual, family-owned household with not much attention given to the communal aspects of life. Individualist thinking seems to be deeply rooted in American history and had substantial impact in shaping post-war image of domestic life symbolized by a free-standing, modern house with a view in the outskirts of the city.²⁶

²⁵ Wilson, K. (2021). *Mid-Century Modernism and the American Body: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Power in Design*. Princeton University Press.

²⁶ Ibid.



Fig. 10 Domestic life inside the abandoned buildings in South America in 21st century which emerged organically due to the lack of affordable housing. (Caracas, Venezuela)

Second picture was taken inside Torre David, an informal settlement organized in an unfinished office tower in the heart of Caracas, Venezuela. Construction of the building started in 1990s, but due to several economic and political events it has never been completed. It stayed abandoned for more than a decade until in 2007 it was inhabited by residents who escaped the disastrous flooding of Barrios surrounding. Nevertheless, it was not the first informal settlement in Caracas. When in 1960s the city experienced unprecedented economic growth thanks to massive oil exports, new urban habitats started to emerge inside the city and around it. The latter were usually inhabited by the people, who could not afford living in the center and therefore started forming communities on the outskirts of Caracas. Owing to lack of adequate social housing policies, those informal settlements spread out creating chaotic patchwork of temporary buildings which replaced the once green areas. That led to dramatic change in water retention and made a city prone to floods more than ever before. Natural disasters at the beginning of 21st century made many people look for new homes in abandoned buildings like Torre David, which become one of the biggest informal settlements, having its own administration, services, and utilities.²⁷

In 2010 research group from ETH Zurich hired Iwan Baan to photograph the life of residents of the tower. He made a series of stunning images, which illustrated the publication issued a few years later. Picture Fig. 10 was taken in one of the apartments located in the former office space inside the building. Family stands in the middle of living room, which is arranged between two raw concrete walls of Torre David. Foreground is occupied by furniture and household objects of everyday use, which vivid colors contrast with gray texture of concrete. When looking deeper inside, one can see other rooms of this provisional apartment subtracted from former open space by walls of ceramic blocks, providing private space for each inhabitant. On the level of the ceiling, rhythm of lattice beams reminds the viewer of once logical structure of the office tower, now divided to meet the needs of human inhabitation.

Being one of many photographs representing life in Torre David, Baan's image shows that need of domesticated space is one of the most basic human necessities, which can be secured even under most extreme conditions²⁸. In fact, inhabitation of the tower is being analyzed as a model example of bottom-up activity, which created self-sufficient community capable of securing basic needs of its members. While Shulman promoted ideal, dream-like vision of domestic life, Baan identifies its core functions and presents how are they provided in the most unexpected situation. These elements such as family, privacy, or the sense of belonging to the place are in his opinion essential to turn an abandoned office tower into livable space. He is fascinated how in an intuitive, organic way the apartments met the needs of its inhabitants²⁹. It seems, that representation of domesticity in modern architectural photography can go far beyond strictly defined, commercialized visions in favor of discovering the most essential values which decide whether a certain place can be considered "Domesticated". This approach may result in broaden a common understanding of dwelling and become a vital inspiration for architects to shape future habitats.

²⁷ Brillembourg, A. (2012). *Torre David: Informal Vertical Communities (Illustrated ed.)*. Lars Muller Publishers., pp. 53-70

²⁸ Iwan Baan: *Ingenious homes in unexpected places*, TED presentation, 2013

²⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion

At the end, we shall return to the initial question of this research paper, and summarize relation between works of Julius Shulman and Iwan Baan, establishing dialogue of past and present in architectural photography. Structure of the paper advanced gradually from general introduction of both artists and their methods, towards revealing their attitude to important issues directly related to the field of architecture. Thanks to that it was possible to recognize the context in which artists found themselves and be able to understand their decisions regarding the subjects of “Context”, “People” and “Idea of Domesticity”. Shulman was the first one to notice the potential of architectural photography to sell the building as a complete product both physically as a creation of architect and as an abstract idea of new way of living. His successor Iwan Baan, inherited broad knowledge from American photographer and cleverly uses it to call attention to the problems of contemporaneity. In his works architecture is also more than aesthetic background of human life. It is an important element of complex socio-economic structure of the world and reflects many of its issues.

Furthermore, both artists’ careers accelerated after meeting prominent architects, who became their first, most important clients. Even though, they didn’t have background in architecture, they quickly became successful thanks to the presence in major magazines or social media. Iwan Baan admitted that “*Small knowledge about architecture*”³⁰, makes his “*getting distracted by everything around it*”³¹ which he considers a great advantage and helps with having a fresh look at the photographed objects. Indeed, architects valued their specific methods because they enabled them to look at their projects from a fresh, distant perspective. It can be said that Shulman and Baan shared the same ability to successfully convince their clients to their own, personal way of understanding architecture.

In terms of attitude to the profession, a difference between photographers seems to be personal and each one established unique way of work. Julius Shulman was a “*director of each frame*” who works in a rigorously controlled environment, maintaining order and discipline towards composition, lighting, or placement of actors. These practices, although used to picture architecture, resemble ones used in studio photography. On the other hand, Baan defines himself as an observer, who patiently waits for the “*actors*” to emerge and fill his frames with life. He also tends to picture the same buildings multiple times, to participate in the changes which take place from the beginning on the construction site, to the actual opening to the public. Popularity of his works may reflect contemporary appreciation of architecture not only as a product of single designer, but also as a continuous process with many stakeholders included.

Architectural photography, as represented by Julius Shulman and Iwan Baan has changed over the years. Chapters regarding “Context”, “People” or “Idea of Domesticity” show that vector of these changes is pointing towards more realistic representation of not only buildings themselves, but also life around them. The most striking contrast can be seen in presentation of people, who from being “*visual witnesses*” of surrounding space became a main subject of interest. Their interactions with buildings are now less controlled by photographers and resulting images are often more natural and open to interpretation than in the past. Moreover, idealized representations of buildings and life within them are now being replaced by broader and more thought-provoking attitude to the concepts like “*Domesticity*”. It seems that, evolution of architectural photography leads to further exploration of topics related with built environment in that way.

Julius Shulman and Iwan Baan are by far one of the greatest figures in architectural photography who significantly contributed to its development. Shulman’s technical proficiency and unique style laid solid foundations for Baan to take over this profession to the next level, by redefining the relation of humans and buildings. Thanks to them, architectural photography is much more than aesthetic description of space. It is a form of art, which tells stories about how people shape environment to meet their needs and aspirations. It can be assumed, that in the future more followers of Shulman and Baan will continue their paths eager to look closely at architecture and trying to reveal many more fascinating aspects of it.

³⁰ *Iwan Baan, Photographer, The Second Studio Design and Architecture Show, Episode 269, 2022*

³¹ *Ibid.*



Fig. 11. Guggenheim Museum, New York – Julius Shulman



Fig. 12 Torre David, Venezuela – Iwan Baan

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