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Strategies of aesthetics in design management and architecture

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The Return of Style

Strategies of Aesthetics in Design Management and Architecture

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Abstract

Architecture as a practice is bound to social, political, economic and material restrictions. It is only as a cultural discourse that it may gain autonomy, revolving around the question of what do the produced architectural forms actually mean for our contemporary setting as argued by architects, academics, critics/journalists, students or friends of the art. This discussion has its roots in the idea of contemporaneity itself and during the 19th century it was labelled as the “debate on style”. Today, the concept of style is undergoing a reconsideration after its banishment under the realm of modernism and the doctrine of functionalism. In the 21st century, contemporary architecture displays an over-production of forms that need to be managed and branded and in this context style re-emerges as a field of business strategies for architects who are willing to develop the identity of their firm and their designs. This paper investigates contemporary theories of style from the field of design management and their possible application in the field of architecture. A research gap has been identified between a) the vague art-historical and philosophical concept of style in architectural discourse where it is regarded according to Ackerman, as a self-evident truth upon which our historical conception is based and b) the relatively recent theories of marketing and design management where effort is made to define style as a process of designing or styling strategies that may lead an architecture firm to get a certain positioning in their target environment. The paper will first consider several conceptions of style from the field of design management, then overview the conception of style as it stands in architecture, and thirdly, it will consider the matter of stylistic consistency in architectural practice as the pivotal turn for stylistic strategies. In conclusion mention will be made on the implications of style and its re-invention towards the notion of criticism. The main objective is to point out that the current consideration of style either as a retrospective tool of historical categorization, or as the central object of criticism is undergoing a paradigm shift. More as a tool of marketing than as the result of a collective consensus, style is being employed by architecture firms for their prospective endeavours and market engagement and as such should it be critically looked upon.

Keywords: Style; Styling; Design Management

1. Introduction

Although it is rarely brought up, architecture is an industry largely focused on turning art into profit. Amongst the fine arts, architecture is the most business-like of them all, considering the amount of money that is at stake being in the centre of the building industry, its complicated decision-making system and the effort that is needed for the management of the process of its design and materialization. Recent developments show that architecture is more and more shaped by management for its strict regulation: BIM, the new software trend for architects, promises to bridge design with construction, project management, client and facility operation. Furthermore, design managers, marketers, brand developers and creative communications agencies are hired by firms to contribute in office management (e.g. who designs what) or project management (e.g. how to actually build the design) or brand management. However, focus is mostly given in the process of designing (verb) and not in the actual design (noun). Management has not yet interfered with the actual design itself. This is something that architects do themselves. Nevertheless, we are still treating architecture, as a cultural object and the criticism on that matter is bound to fall under aesthetic issues, not managerial. There exists the supposition that these two notions are separable and in between them lie the margins of architecture's autonomy.

In the field of industrial design these two are combined in the term of style. In terms of design management, a product's formalistic features are modelled towards its market positioning. For example, light coloured products are aimed towards women, darker products toward men and bright towards children. This phase in product phase of product design is called –interestingly- *product styling*. It is the final stage before distributing the product in the market. Naturally, equivalents can be traced in the practice of architecture. Cultural buildings have strong ornamental characteristics. Civic buildings are neutral, white and ordered. Industrial-mechanistic, shops-pop and offices-generic. It is obvious that architects shape their buildings accordingly to their market. The concept that covers that gap of aesthetic values and their correspondence to environments of affectation, is style as the correspondence between outer form and inner content. In this paper we will consider how style in architecture bridges both business and culture of architecture while comparing the design management theories of styling to our current understanding of style in architecture.

2. Recent Developments on Style & “styling” in Design Management

Product Styling in design management is defined as “the act of keeping the technical and functional characteristics unchanged while altering the styles and fashions of a product”¹. The last couple of decades, with the rise of customization and the emergence of design as the dominant factor of profiting, style and its process of “styling” are emerging as pivotal concepts that make the difference for the success of a company. A widening research on the subject has brought forward theories focusing on style which mostly aim at:

- the management of a product's form, style, fashion or trends as scientifically as possible
- the incorporation of scalable and flexible capability into a product styling platform to support product family design in order to satisfy different market niches, and
- the anticipation of trends of a product styles².

2.1 Quantifying Style

In 2005, Fung and Chong, proposed a “styling platform approach” for the analysis of product style families and the development of products in a mass customization environment to satisfy diverse consumer needs. Although style per se is an immeasurable concept, customers, peers and followers that embrace them provide valuable data for style's analysis. The authors proposed that a “scalable” and quantitative platform is needed in order to map the diffusion of styles as a diagnostic tool to represent the establishment of a style's popularity according to the degree of a designers' perceived obsolescence (its end).

-One way of tracking the evolution of a style is the market positioning that a style develops. That means that a style can either have dynamics to cover a large spectrum of the market if it holds a key positioning in the first place (beachhead), remain in a high or low quality zones (horizontal) or have an evolution through low and higher zones (diagonal). These are called diffusion styles”.

-Another way of tracking a style's³ evolution is through the number of adopters (followers) that it gets and in what sort of momentum. It can be either be chronologically limited, therefore forming a lifecycle, or attaining a classic status: remaining constantly appealing.

-Another interesting distinction is made according to styles³ chronological stage of obsolescence in three categories: a) “high” style: the newly launched or vanguard, b) the “mass style” the currently popular in the market and c) the out-dated, retro style, that always has the dynamic for a comeback.

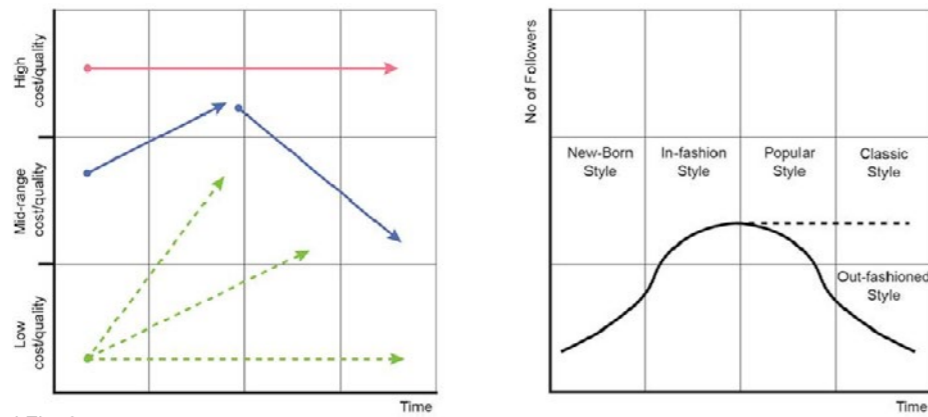


Fig.1 and Fig. 2

2.2 A Style's Development

Not so much style itself, but the whole process of product design (or its product family) and the management of this process is taking more and more solid structure in the field of management in various forms such as brand-specific product design, corporate identity, project or design management. In theory, various professions participate in a company's design process. Most commonly in 3 stages: A) Vision, provided by the design leader, who conceives of the overall strategy. At that stage, the design strategy is not separated from the business strategy (the long-term aims) and the marketing plan (how to engage with the market). B) Process: supervised by the design manager, who directs the manpower and the resources over the specific project and C) Content: The actual design, carried by the designers. Style, as part of this process, emerges in the final stage, right before the product is sent to be massively produced. However, this was not the case in previous ages and it most certainly will not be the case in the years to come. In the 1960's design management was considered to be under the perspective of "design as style", having the role of communicating the products quality. In contemporary matters, styling is subjective to design and the doctrine of "design thinking"⁴. What seems to have changed is that while styling in the 60s was a way to wrap up the product into a notable design, in post-industrial and more importantly, "post-functional" era, design is taking over everything. But still the concept of style, as long-term design strategically thought and positioned both in cultural context and profitable to the company, is difficult to pin down.

2.3 Values and Goals of Styling

According to Oscar Person, in commercial setting, styling's goals are: a) to draw attention, b) to establish recognition, and c) the creation of symbolic meaning⁵. What style is seen to contribute to design is the ability of a product to relate to its product family, and in a wider perspective bringing "creative equity" to a company, an artistic quality that can be turned into surplus value or competitive advantage in a wide perspective. Likewise, he goes on then to describe three domains of value contribution⁶ of styling: a) financial profitability, b) market visibility and c) professional acknowledgement (Fig.3). In short, a product's well-designed appearance, is seen to attract attention that can be immediately bring sales, to bring recognisability and a strong positioning of the company as a whole in the market, and to provide symbolic and cultural meaning to a company's identity, largely boosting its brand as well as its individual employee's profiles in the long term.



Fig. 3

2.4 Styling Strategies

Mono's semantic theory (1997) indicates that designers should always consider 3 dimensions: a) the present product portfolio, b) the succession of product generations of the company (past portfolio) and c) the products of competitors. Warell (2001) proposed that these 3 dimensions can be applied also in the positioning of the product in the market and Person-Schoormans-Snelders more recently, considering the previous thoughts, defined styling strategy as a decision of differentiation (D) or similarity (S) over these three dimensions (Fig. 4). Therefore there are 6 main styling strategies that "allow managers to plan their styling efforts more strategically"⁷:

- Similarity towards the present product portfolio
- Similarity towards previous succession of product families
- Similarity towards the competition
- Differentiation towards the present product portfolio

- Differentiation towards previous succession of product families
- Differentiation towards the competition

From those mentioned, the most normative approach is to maintain a similarity in the present product portfolio and the succession of products while maintaining a differentiation from the competitors. This, however, does not imply that it is the other styling strategies are not viable⁸. Lastly, on the matter of choosing a strategic styling decision, according to Person, specific factors should be considered either as internal or external factors. Some of those are: the current stage of a product's lifecycle, its assortment size, the value for the consumers and the available resources for design.

3. The concept of style in Architecture

Before tracing parallels with the aforementioned theories of style from the field of design management to architecture practice, we will note some preliminary remarks on the consideration of the concept of style in architecture.

3.1 Definitions of style

– The first modern academic reference on style in architecture was made in 1834 by Quatremere de Quincy, in his *Dictionnaire Historique d' Architecture*. There, avoiding to deliver a clear definition, Quatremere elaborated on the use of the word in architectural and historical context and indicated that style's meaning can only be understood through its etymological root: from the Latin *stilus* and the Greek *stylos* (στυλος) a writing tool that took on a metaphorical connotation, describing the ability to write pieces of literary value. From then on, it became an indispensable concept for all artistic endeavors.

– Later on, in 1854 Violet le Duc, attempted the first clear definition of the term: *style is the manifestation of an ideal based on a principle. It would have been truer to speak of form [...] but usage has rendered its judgment*. Central to this definition is the idea that *there is Style; then there are the styles*. What that means is that the absolute *Style* is an objective ideal upon which our cultural conscious is based linked with immediacy to our contemporaneity and then there are *the styles*, the other styles, historical, traditional in comparison to which our definition of the absolute *Style* is measured.

– The major contribution to the definition of style, as well as its popularization in the 20th c. was Gottfried Semper's two volume book titled: *Style in the Technical and Tectonic arts; or practical aesthetics: A Handbook for Technicians, Artists and Friends of the Arts*. There, style is conceived as the *correspondence of an art-object with its genesis, with all the pre-conditions and circumstances of its becoming*. Semper, being a prominent architect himself, and one of the pioneers of eclecticism⁹ triggered the debate on style that was meant to last until the emergence of the modern movement as a new "absolute" abolishing all the rest. As Le Corbusier, noted in 1936, "In a hundred years we could speak of a "style". We should not do so today, but only of *STYLE*, which is, the moral tendency of any work created, truly created"¹⁰.

3.2 General facts in considering style

In our current understanding, style in architecture is mostly seen as:

- an art historical term
 - a term that is still stigmatized by modernism's conflict with the revival styles
 - a moral notion. In contrast to design management theories, style in art is not considered as something that can be structured by several individuals. Instead, it requires a filtering by a larger cultural and historical context.
 - the unity of the work of art, as well as the use of the medium by the artist on a meta level. It has to do with the assumption that there is something interiorized, an idea, an underlying thought, function or structure that needs to be expressed. It is not something however that can be produced, instead it is a matter of perception.
- Lastly, the contradiction between "Style" and "styles" is inseparable with any consideration of the term, therefore underlying its schizoid nature and the limitations to its utilization as an operative tool. This however does not keep us from using it. In fact, we cannot do without it. And any attempts of overlooking the subject as an object of either criticism or research is bound to fall in contradictions. The biographer of Semper, Dr. H.F.Mallgrave from IIT, in his doctorate thesis "The Idea of Style" notes that contemporary architecture has much to gain by again making the distinction between "the styles" and "style". Indeed, recent publications have shown a recurrent interest from the part of academics, as well as from practising architects. On this distinction, lies the consideration of style as a a) high principle of cultural value and something to aspire to and b) as an operative tool for design and its interpretation. For both of these cases, style is becoming an indispensable term for architectural practice as well as its criticism and consequently, we can expect the tendency to process style into a strategic tool to spread in architecture as well.

4. Stylistic strategies of Similarity and Differentiation in Architectural Practice

The first difficulty while applying the design management theories on architectural practice is the identification of architecture's nature: is it a product of built setting? Is it the service of designing? The form, or its representation? There is also the role that writings and post-production contribute. Even more, the bigger picture is that architecture is much more than a profession it also has to do with education and social value? Although for obvious reasons we cannot apply the previously mentioned theories on all of these dimensions of architecture, a parallel can be drawn on the tendencies of consistency or differentiation regarding the style of each architectural practice.

4.1 Consistency of style

Partly due to the fact that clients need a strong-willed and trusted partner with solid arguments, most architects tend to demonstrate a profile of coherence, both in their designs as well as their business affairs. Although some phases or series of similar projects become apparent during the growth of the firm, most architects maintain a strong commitment to a specific style. Either an existing one, or one of their own:

Following an already established style: Staying committed to a certain style that is already established amounts to a firm's recognition and a strong positioning in the market being able to ensure with safety a certain level of success of an already tested formula. Keeping a coherent style and identity, a firm can step out from the race of developing a "new" or "innovative" style, and is devoted on evolving or preserving a style that is already established. Typical examples of firms that follow this stylistic strategy, are the ones that promote traditional design, or the most prevalent modern style. Others, revitalize past styles or build upon the "classics", such as the gothic or the renaissance style. The concentrated knowledge of such a specific field allows them to master it quickly and emerge as the top connoisseurs of a past-style (e.g. Porphyrios Associates) or give it a less-conventional twist as often do firms such as Robert Stern Architects. It is also usual for firms, instead of following a widely accepted style, to elaborate on a very specific idiom of a known style. Richard Meier's practice for example, is committed to the expansion of Le Corbusier's style of his 8 white villas from the 1920's. Other firms, are even more specialized in focusing on one archetypical model and repeating its features. Such an example is the practice of Peter Eisenman that can be seen as an obsessive reconsideration of the Maison Dom-ino¹¹.

Striving for an individualistic style: A different approach in having a consistent style is the development of an individualistic style that bears the signature of a sole creator as the sole inventor and conveyor of it. This approach has largely been seen as an opposition to the formation of a discourse and it might be the cause of any productive criticism or consensus between architects of the last couple of decades. But the rise of architects to the status of celebrities (star-architects) has made this the main goal of most practices. The advantages of such a practice are well known: there is immediate attention and recognition, whereas on the contrary there might be a gap in professional acknowledgement as is the case with one like Santiago Calatrava. Another disadvantage is that from a certain level, the architects are subjects to their own brand. One profound illustration of that was Frank Gehry's complain on clients who dismiss his own designs on the ground that they are not "Gehry enough". Moreover, apart from recognisability the firm also gains team-spirit and consistency during the design process in the sense that all the work force are committed to the same vision of practice which they practice repeatedly and collectively, even if in most cases, the name of the company is taken solely by the leader.

4.2 Multiple Styles

Firms manipulating more than one style in different projects of their practice is gaining more and more ground in contemporary practice. However, it is not a new phenomenon. Since the 18th c. architects were submitting several proposals in different styles for architectural competitions. And by the dawn of the 20th c. firms were offering different options of style to their clients for domestic projects (mostly villas). But the firm that exemplified this approach was Skidmore, Owings and Merrill with the named partners having almost no major design by themselves and managing their talented associates such as Gordon Bunshaft or Walter Netsch. This was the time that it became apparent that the role of the architect changed from an intellectual artist patronized by the aristocracy or the industry to an entrepreneurial businessman. As for the firms that were based solely on one master-architect, in order to be successful in the long term they tended to reinvent their practice in different circumstances. Not only in terms of changing their style every ten or twenty years of practice, but also delivering masterpieces in totally different styles almost simultaneously (e.g. Ronchamp/Maison Jaoul). Off course, the notion of the avant-garde is not the same today as it was then, but the pattern persists, with architects avoiding the label of any style in fear of being trapped and being unable to innovate for long.

Aiming for innovation: What this has led to, is the consideration of the architecture firm as a business of research that produces new-and always more advanced designs. The trend of research-based design that is gaining more and more ground, also has its roots in the prevailing scientism of the profession. Where firms, adopting a more research-like profile to claim that their designs are a product of research. Potential clients of "research-based-design" firms are informed that a certain percentage of their payment is going to be spent to the research department of the firm in order to deliver a guaranteed innovative project.

Another strategy of having multiple styles and still maintaining a strong identity is to construct a theoretical narrative that allows for multiple styles. Such is the case of Peter Zumthor for example, that produces "atmospheres" or FAT architects, who focus on thematic environments. In both cases we can associate the previous notion of style as the carrier of symbolic meaning. Similar is the case with firms that while being engaged in various styles, keep a homogenous format of representation that allows for a differentiation of the content but a cohesive presentation of their practice.

Customization and obsolescence: Having multiple styles allows also, for a wide customization and contextualization of every project regarding the needs of each client and site. This expands the services of the firm, exercising market segmentation (see previous *beachhead* strategy). Furthermore, it allows the firm to have several projects in an innovative and risking effort (leading projects) while also maintaining the viability of the firm with normative ones (secondary styles). Firms such as Foster + Partners, or Renzo Piano Building Workshop are mostly seen as pushing the boundaries of technology and delivering iconic buildings while also have numerous commissions of conventional projects of housing development, urban planning and infrastructure. Having multiple styles provides the firm with the advantage of giving multiple choices to the clients, while also to the firm which can attempt projects of different scale and nature. It is also a way to structure a narrative of progress, in an evolutionary trajectory. E.g. the same architects that were once following the High-Tech style are now focusing on sustainable design, therefore, present the latter as an evolution of the former while acting as experienced in both of them. There is also the case of demonstrating evasion of a cohesive approach. Jean Nouvel, has repeatedly addressed the issue promoting his practice as a personal venture avoiding to fall under a certain style and

refusing categorization leaving his audience hooked on anticipating a surprise-solution and giving a sense of mystification of his design process. Other, such as Herzog & de Meuron have declared the ability of having multiple styles as a response to the market arguing that architectural production will come to the same terms with the fashion industry, delivering styles in shorter lifecycles with systematic obsolescence (having newer and newer styles means that others are falling out of fashion, therefore need to be replaced).

Nonetheless, the role of the architect, is moving away from the master-architect of the 20th c. Nowadays, architecture firms function as corporations either multi-cantered with a think-tank that produces research as a base for design, or with a single leader as the manager, director, or curator of his work-force. As it is, the aim of such firms of multiple styles is the structuring of a "visual landscape", an architectural language that they can claim as theirs without necessarily an inherent content that need to be externalized. This specific phenomenon, has been prophesized even from 1974 in Tafuri's book "L' architecture dans le boudoir: The language of criticism and the criticism of language". Architecture is seen as an *aestheticization of subjective alienation and dispersion* (diffusion in previous terms) derived by the consumer culture of abundance, originating from the post-war USA.

5. Conclusion: Style and criticism, style as criticism

Regarding criticism, the style of a project or an architectural practice, is the central object of consideration. It is the part of the discipline of architecture that gets to be more freely discussed and be adorned with adjectives of values (high, sublime, pompous, noble, vulgar, natural) cultural or regional references (gothic, ionic, modern, Spanish colonial, ranch). Even though it seems easy to label styles and their expression, it is deeply problematic to consciously produce one and even more, to specify a system of its analysis and objective criticism. Neither the field of the current polyphony of styles is open to sustain criticism, that may prove to be operative in producing a new set of values to follow. Witnessing a revolving exhibitionism that renders us shocked but nonetheless, amused. It seems that we are condemned to have everything. Style however can either be seen as something that one can have as (as creative equity(?)) or instead one can be in style. And that means that while there is not much to be gained in trying to mediate the meaning of architectural styles in words or be critical against, there is hope that styles may consist themselves a language of built form and criticism that speaks for itself.

Notes

1. Fung, R.; Chong, P.Y. 2007. "An active styling platform for designing and developing product families". *Journal of Intelligent Manufacturing*. Volume 18, Issue 1: 47-58.
2. Fung, R.; Chong, P.Y, *ibid*.
3. In that early stage, style is technically not tautological with trends, or fashions with the only difference being, that the status of "style" indicates a more holistic and timeless prospect.
4. Borja, Brigitte; Younk Kim, Bo. "Managing Design as a Core Competency: Lessons from Korea", *Design Management Review*, Vol. 20 No 2, Spring 2009.
5. Person, Oscar. *The Strategic Relevance of Styling and the Management of Design Styles*. Doctoral thesis-TU Delft, 2011, pp 60.
6. Person, *ibid*, pp 93.
7. Person *ibid*, pp 60.
8. Person *ibid*, pp 70.
9. Largely favoring neo-renaissance though.
10. Le Corbusier. *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret, Oeuvre Complète: 1910-1929*, Paris: Les Editions d' Architecture, 1936, pp.2.
11. Hartoonian, Gevork. *Modernism and its Other: A Post-script to Contemporary Architecture*, Texas University Press, 1997.

Fig. 1 Horizontal, Diagonal and Beachhead Evolving Leverage (redrawn from Fung, Chong 2005)

Fig. 2 A product's lifecycle, applied to a style's lifecycle and its relation to followers (redrawn from Fung, Chong 2005).

Fig. 3 Values, Strategies and Goals of styling for businesses. Where D stands for differentiation and S for similarity, (Redrawn, from Oscar Person, 2007)

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Biography

Phoebus Panigyrakis b. 1991, is a PhD candidate at TU Delft, Department of Architecture, chair of History under the supervision of prof. Carola Hein and prof. Herman van Bergeijk. His interest lies within the concept of style and its historical context. His PhD research focuses on the relation between style and lifestyle in post-war American architecture, through archival research of architectural presses. He is also a registered architect at the Technical Chamber of Greece (www.iconic-ironic.com) and has been invited and participated in conferences in New York, Valencia, Berlin and Constantinople.

Un hoyo, un agujero y un vacío. Conclusiones espaciales en Jorge Oteiza

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Resumen

Con mucha frecuencia la arquitectura ha buscado en sí misma las referencias para abordar cualquier problema proyectual. Sin embargo, sobre todo en los últimos años, muchos autores han encontrado su idea de proyecto o su desarrollo espacial en conceptos ajenos a la propia arquitectura, desviándose hacia temas de otras áreas artísticas. En este sentido, la escultura, debido a su inmediatez material y temporal de ejecución, ha sido capaz de investigar más rápidamente que la arquitectura sobre los parámetros que rigen la realidad espacial y la percepción de ésta. La presente investigación se centra en esa transversalidad que permite definir nuevas concepciones del espacio y analizar la posible aplicación de las mismas dentro del marco arquitectónico.

Tal como anuncia el título, se pretende analizar el papel del espacio en la obra del artista vasco Jorge Oteiza (Orio, 1908 - San Sebastián, 2003). Para ello nos apoyaremos en varios instrumentos eficaces que permiten entender sus categorías espaciales. El primer instrumento que se ha empleado para entender el espacio en Oteiza ha sido el análisis gráfico de sus obras, con levantamientos diédricos y tridimensionales, a partir de las piezas conservadas. Junto al dibujo se dotará de protagonismo a la imagen. Con su ayuda se pretende mostrar una interpretación complementaria de las conclusiones obtenidas en el estudio gráfico, mediante otros medios de representación arquitectónica como son la fotografía o el vídeo. No se pretende con ello revisar nuevamente las cuestiones formales o estéticas de sus obras basadas en criterios históricos o de estilo, sino más bien, construir un nuevo discurso a partir de sus esculturas entendidas como cuestionamiento experimental del concepto de espacio que sirva para su traslación al ámbito arquitectónico.

Finalmente nos aventuraremos a proponer una nueva interpretación espacial que yuxtaponga las ideas y las esculturas espaciales de Jorge Oteiza con ejemplos de arquitectura contemporánea que expresen bien las conclusiones espaciales destiladas. Estas categorías se referirán a diferentes modos de construir el espacio por parte de escultores o arquitectos, e intentarán expresar la evolución de Oteiza a lo largo de su actividad escultórica. Nos fijaremos, sobre todo, en tres maneras de configuración tridimensional del espacio: el *espacio modelado*, que nos hablará de la acción sobre la masa, el *espacio tallado* que perforando la masa busca crear un vínculo entre dos ámbitos separados, y el *espacio plegado* que conseguirá condensar un vacío cuando envuelva a la materia suprimida.

Palabras clave: Escultura, Oteiza, Dibujo, Imagen, Espacio.

A hold, a perforation and a void. Spatial conclusions on Jorge Oteiza

Abstract

Architecture, due to its specificity, has frequently sought within itself the references to approach any project design problem. However, especially over the last few years, many authors have found their project idea or their spatial development in concepts foreign to architecture itself, detouring towards themes of other artistic areas. Sculpture, because of its material and temporal immediacy of execution, has been capable of investigating more quickly the parameters that govern spatial reality and its perception than architecture has. Consequently, our research focuses on the transection that makes it possible to define new conceptions of space and to analyse their potential application within the architectonic framework.

As the title indicates, our goal is to analyse the role of space in the work of the Basque artist Jorge Oteiza (Orio, 1908 – San Sebastián, 2003). In order to that, we base our work principally on several efficient tools that make it possible to understand his spatial categories. The first instrument used was graphic analysis of his works, with dihedral and three-dimensional surveys based on the pieces conserved. Also with drawings the image is given protagonism. With this as a basis, we will present a complementary interpretation the conclusions obtained from the graphic study, using other means of architectural representation such as photography or video. It is not our intention to return to formal or aesthetic questions about his work based on stylistic or historical criteria. Instead, we hope to build a new discourse based on viewing his sculptures as experimental questioning of the concept of space, which serves for its transition to the architectural setting.

Finally, we venture to propose a new spatial interpretation that juxtaposes Jorge Oteiza's ideas and spatial sculptures with examples of contemporary architecture most appropriately expressing the *spatial conclusions* distilled. These categories refer how sculptors or architects could construct space, while attempting to express Oteiza's evolution over the course of his sculptural activity. Above all, we focus on three methods of three-dimensional configuration of space: *moulded space*, which speaks to us about action on mass; *carved space*, which seeks to create a link between two separate environments by perforating mass; and *folded space*, which condenses emptiness when it surrounds the matter suppressed.

Key words: Sculpture, Oteiza, Drawing, Image, Space.

Biografía

Peng Xue es actualmente candidata de doctorado y está cursando su segundo año en la Universidad de Edimburgo, Facultad de Arquitectura y Arquitectura del Paisaje (ESALA). Su investigación doctoral actualmente persigue la intersección entre el diseño arquitectónico/urbano y las prácticas filosóficas mediante la teorización de la heterogeneidad encontrada en *Dashilar*, un urbanismo de los márgenes de la Ciudad Prohibida en Pekín, China. Más ampliamente su interés investigativo es la superposición arquitectónica, política y filosófica sobre las cuestiones de representación y producción. Antes de su investigación doctoral, Peng recibió su maestría en teoría del diseño Arquitectónico de la Universidad de Tsinghua en China, donde también trabajó como miembro de un grupo de investigación en estudios urbanos basados en el Departamento de Sociología en el año 2013. Antes de especializarse en el estudio teórico, Peng se formó como arquitecta en China y Alemania, obteniendo experiencia de trabajo en varios proyectos de diseño desde el 2010.

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