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ARCHETYPE OF THE HOME IN EXHIBITIONS

ARCHETYP DOMU W REALIZACJACH WYSTAWIENNICZYCH

Abstract

Symbols of home are used at various exhibitions. Allegories of home, its intended use, functions connect the recipient and the presenter above cultural and religious differences. The question asked in the article is the following: what model do contemporary displays refer to?

Tracing this phenomenon can provide answers to what archetype of home appeals to the recipient. On a preliminary basis, two main trends can be distinguished in presenting the form of home in exhibition spaces. The first one is a symbol referring to national and regional characteristics; this type can be seen in Expo installations and in exhibitions referring to traditional or national features where home is easily connected with characteristics of a country or region. The second type is home as a universal symbol without characteristics of the place or user. In such installations, the archetype of home boils down to synthetic forms in contemporary interpretations.

Keywords: exhibition, the archetype of house, traditional house

Streszczenie

Symbolika domu stosowana jest w przestrzeniach różnych wystaw. Alegorie domu, jego przeznaczenie, funkcje łączą odbiorcę i prezentującego ponad różnicami kulturowymi i religijnymi. Pytanie stawiane w artykule to: do jakiego wzorca domu odnoszą się współczesne ekspozycje?

Prześledzenie tego zjawiska może dać odpowiedź, jaki archetyp domu przemawia do odbiorcy. Wstępnie można wyróżnić dwa główne trendy cytowania formy domu w przestrzeniach wystawienniczych. Pierwszy to symbol odnoszący się do cech narodowych, regionalnych; ten rodzaj widoczny jest w realizacjach Expo i wystawach odnoszących się do cech tradycyjnych lub narodowych, gdzie dom jest łątowo wiązany z cechami kraju i regionu. Drugi rodzaj to dom jako symbol uniwersalny bez cech miejsca i użytkownika. W tych realizacjach archetyp domu sprowadzany jest do syntetycznych form we współczesnych interpretacjach.

Słowa kluczowe: wystawa, archetyp domu, tradycyjny dom

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1. INTRODUCTION – HOME IN THE EXHIBITION SPACE

The reason for such a perspective on the archetype of home in exhibitions was the author's own design of an exhibition display and a comparison of two pavilions at the Expo 2015 in Milan. The Romanian and the Spanish pavilions presented next to one another were to be the answer to the same topic of the exhibitions related to food; as the form of their expression, the presenters simultaneously chose the symbol of home as the medium for the idea. In the Romanian pavilion, a direct quotation from the traditional home was chosen, and the Spanish architects used the universal shape of the symbol of home. This combination is accidental, but shows the two approaches that are used in exhibitions – the combination of the modern with the traditional – a home as a defined place with a universal symbol.

The spaces of displays and the displays themselves are combined with a discourse about home and living in a number of aspects: place, content and form of the exhibition.

The place of living, just like the temples, was the place of first displays. Residential rooms were a place where collections were gathered, in time transformed into cabinets of curiosities – the prototype of later museum exhibitions¹. Adapted spaces in places served as the first seats of museums and galleries, and their interiors were an aesthetic template for exhibition interiors². In today's museums it is more difficult to find the analogies to home, as they themselves have become a home to works of art.

The exhibitions and their reception is an important part of the discussion that was going on and is going on about the home, the manner of living and the quality in which human living space is equipped. Exhibitions were a place where new views on the quality and form of the human home were presented and confronted. Such an exhibition, vital for architecture, was the Werkbund's Stuttgart exhibition "Modern architecture"³; the most significant contemporary architects designed and took part in it, and this exhibition's influence on future architecture is indisputable. The topics that were taken up at such exhibitions provoked a new perspective, such as e.g. the Christmas Exhibition in the Austrian Museum. The exhibition presented decorative art, in particular home equipment. After visiting the exhibition, Adolf Loos wrote an essay in which he expressed his remarks that were very coherent with his later views. His deliberations on modern interiors were given the following conclusion "[t]he spirit of modernity requires that the home equipment is first and foremost practical. Beauty is the highest perfection. And because things that are not practical are never beautiful, they can never be perfect." Such a belief was against the contemporary fashions⁴. In the houses he designed, Loos strongly related to the beliefs expressed in this essay by proposing very simplified interior fixtures for reasons of practicality.

Important exhibitions were and are an inspiration for a new, different perspective on the place of living. In Polish exhibition history, the presentation at the Parisian exhibition of applied art in 1925 can serve as such example, where household fixtures exhibited were inspired by interpreted folk art. The choice of pavilion design itself and discussion on the

¹ H. Kossmann, S. Mudler and den F. Ouden, *Narrative space*, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 2012, p. 140.

² J. Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Visula Culture*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam 2012

³ I. Wistocka, *Awangardowa architektura polska 1918–1939*, Arkady, Warszawa, 1968, p. 32.

⁴ A. Loos, *Ornament i zbrodnia. Eseje wybrane*, BWA, Tarnów, CA Centrum Architektury, Warszawa, 2013, p. 45.

subject divided Polish architectural circles⁵. This exposition was greatly appreciated at the Paris exhibition. The exhibition, the showpieces prepared for it, are the example of first reference to folk art, not applied as a citation but rather used as inspiration and material for modern interpretation.

Another example of an exhibition which materially influenced the views on architecture was the 1964 New York exhibition “Architecture without Architects”. This exhibition presented vernacular architecture created through the experience of the residents with unusual, unique technical solutions for the first time⁶. The exhibition redefined views on architecture that were until then considered primitive. The four exhibitions listed are only a small representation of the exhibitions which have directly or indirectly influenced the concept and form of living. They represent important notions in which exhibitions influenced the shape of architecture and interior equipment, and these are: quality of architecture, dissent against the old and forming of new views, discovering new, unknown or stereotypically understood deliberations and styles.

In modern exhibition displays referencing the home, its allegories and home as a symbol-sign, are also visible.

Reconstructions, citations of home with details, character, and equipment were present in the scenery of exhibitions. And the modern architecture of exhibitions more eagerly refers to the synthetic symbol of home, and weaves it in different scales and interpretations into the display space. The deliberations on the renaissance of the use of the synthetic, archetypical representation of home are related to the author’s own design experience in which the application of such symbol help to solve a design assignment.

2. THE ROLE OF THE SYMBOL IN EXHIBITIONS ON THE EXAMPLE OF AN EXHIBITION DISPLAY

The exhibition at architectural fairs was to present complex control systems for an intelligent house. The investor’s assumption was to provide an active presentation of solutions in the structure representing a house (it was to be perceived as a house but this did not translate into the functional layout). It was strongly emphasised that the display was to be modern, open, and inspired by the design of the equipment displayed (and these were rounded cuboids). The display, with an area of 70 sqm, was an island, and the regulations of the exhibition organizer allowed for a two-storey structure on 60% of the area. The requirements of the scenario were the following: exhibition of an entrance gate, garage gate, entrance door, windows and window roller-blinds presented in such a way as to present that they are centrally controlled. Functional requirements determined the minimum technical background and clear division into the exhibition part and the reception part. A wide exhibition programme and a functional and relatively small area resulted in designing a two-storey display in which the ground-floor level served as the exhibition part and technical facilities. The mezzanine served the reception function and also included a small exhibition for invited guests. The assumption that the display was to present a modern house allowed for references to modern

⁵ I. Wistocka, *Awangardowa architektura polska 1918–1939*, Arkady, Warszawa, 1968, p. 100.

⁶ V. Richardson, *New Vernacular Architecture*, Watson_Guptill Publications, Nowy Jork, 2001, page 7.



Ill. 1. Pavilion of Romania, EXPO Milan 2015 (by the author) Ill. 2. Pavilion of Spain, EXPO Milan 2015 Source: Shutterstock.com, copyright gnoparus Ill. 3. Somfy display, Budma 2016, Poznań. Source: IDEAEXPO.MTP archive Ill. 4. Somfy display, Budma 2016, Poznań. Source: IDEAEXPO.MTP archive Ill. 5. Hermes display in Milan, 2013. Author's drawing on the basis of the picture on <http://retaildesignblog.net/> Ill.6. Hermes display in Milan, 2013. Author's drawing on the basis of the picture on <http://retaildesignblog.net/> Ill.7. Hermes display in Milan, 2013. Author's drawing on the basis of the picture on <http://retaildesignblog.net/>

architecture. Deriving ideas from experimental forms and combinations with high-tech solutions presented allowed a coherent message to be created. However, from the semantic point of view, the most important element was for the receiver to unambiguously recognize the object as a house and the showpieces as an integral part of this house. Such emphasis cast doubt on the choice of initial models of modern architecture. Numerous examples of architecture of modern places of living are recognized as houses only by their equipment, and typical functions such as kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms. Modern living is equivalent to adapting space, often not decoded as houses, and only the attributes of home transform and tame the living space. The symbolism of home is more often found from the inside and not from the outside of the building. Such deliberations made the author of the design employ the symbol of home as a synthetic form also used by modern architecture, nevertheless interpreted as a reference to tradition. Modernity can be found in the proportions, detail and contrast with other forms. The symbol of home – described as a home from children's drawings – is a simplified outline of a gabled house without division between the body of the house and the roof. This form of the building has been used for ages. The architectural dissimilarity, apart from the material, is found in the proportions, the gradient of roof slopes, the relation between the width of the basis of the front wall and the height of the building. The shape was not reserved only for houses, this form was used also for e.g. temples, mausoleums, warehouses, and farm buildings. With time, additional attributes such as towers, crosses, and porticos elaborated different symbols for purposes other than housing. The synthetic form of preservation of the shape of a house is constantly present, but from time to time the intensity of references to it in architecture increases, this took place for instance in post-modernism, and such intensification of reference can also be observed in contemporary exhibitions.

In the exhibition realization of the display, the proportions of the house were important; they decided on the character of the composition. The proportion used resembled a gothic-style house rather than a folk house. This decision helped to raise the form of the display upwards, give it a more lofty character, and include a mezzanine in the top part as a consequence. However, the proposed relationship between the basis and the height and the limitations resulting from the exhibition regulations with regards to the height and the shape of the display, resulted in the necessity to add another shape. This helped to meet the investor's requirement of referencing the line of products – rounded cuboids. Here, referring to the examples of interwar architecture was helpful, e.g. to the residential house of the Social Insurance Bureau in Gdynia⁷, the Polish Sailor's House⁸, as well as Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud's complex of houses in Hoek, Holland with strongly outlined balconies⁹. To the initial axially situated white house, a cuboid graphite part with clearly rounded corners was added on one side. The cuboid part served as a technical back-room, and on the wall windows were installed to expose the roller blinds. Unfortunately due to the need of division between the exposition and the functional need, the windows had to be blind from the interior. On the other side of the axle of the ridge, a wall was removed from the house and the roof (only the roof beams were left from the structural and lighting needs). A patio was added to the house opened in this way, which was the strongest reference to the inspirations listed. This helped

⁷ I. Wisłocka, *Awangardowa architektura polska 1918–1939*, Arkady, Warszawa, 1968, p. 199.

⁸ M. J. Sołtysik, *Inspiracje międzywojenne we współczesnej architekturze Gdyni*, w „*Definiowanie Modernizmu*”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej*, Poznań, 2008, p. 49.

⁹ P. Gössel i G. Leuthäuser, *Architecture in the 20th Century*, Taschen, Cologne, 2005, p. 208.

to increase the space for meetings and to obtain a large main room under the mezzanine, which served as an exhibition space for the control system. The solutions assumed helped to create a space for exposition – linear, in the form of a horseshoe, thanks to which the continuity of presentation was preserved and the initial assumptions of the investor concerning the number, type of space and the showpieces such as gates, doors and windows were met. The combination of shapes, their proportion and details resulted in a clear message and at the same time an individual and modern solution was worked out.

3. THE ARCHETYPE OF THE HOME IN EXHIBITIONS

The described design, and the deliberations and inspirations related to it, draw attention to the references to the form of a house, especially from the outside in exhibition designs. Rarely do these references include the functional layout, they are employed in exhibition realizations when the designed element of the exhibition becomes an exhibit as a replacement, and being true to the original is required. In exhibition display realizations, references to the folk house, regional house, but also to tenement houses are often applied as an emphasis to the national, regional message. It is used also as an emphasis to the presenter's nationality, highlighting the regional traits of the presented products. The forms assumed are characterized by the reconstruction of the character of a model with free use of detail, and at the same time, the attempts of interpretation, transposition, are rare. Such realizations are characterised by naivety and symbolism of stage design. In order to assess such propositions the following semantic aspects have to be taken into consideration: on the one hand they identify the place of descent, well-chosen and emphasised with the characteristics of the building they help to obtain a clear message on the source location of the exposition. In such designs the house is the most common reference to the countries which do not have a clear, generally recognized architectural symbol like e.g. the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben or the windmills. The architecture of the house, apart from citation of landscape, is the medium of the symbol of a characteristic of a place – a country. Another important aspect of the application of reconstructions of the architecture of home and its surroundings in the space of commercial exhibitions is the ease of obtaining a less formal ambiance for such expositions. The associations that are emphasized also with reference to a traditional home, e.g. in the case of exhibitions of food products, are tradition and ecology.

The other representation in the exhibition presentations is the simplified, symbolic shape of a home, already mentioned in the example of the described project. Observation of modern exhibition realizations proved that the citation of such a form is noticeable and, despite being increasingly often applied and of very similar shape, the designers managed to obtain an individual character in the realization. The natural conclusion would be that the exhibitions where the archetype of home is used refer directly to the technical and functional equipment. Here, the need to present the products and solutions in a defined space, if only symbolically, for which they are intended. In the search for the source of these symbolic references, and in particular the fact that they became prominent in 2010, it may be assumed that the current renaissance of the archetype of home in exhibition displays was influenced by architectural realization. In March 2010 another building in the Vitra campus complex was opened – Vitrahaus. The entire campus comprises of buildings designed by eminent architects and the architectural works created here are appreciated, quoted and reproduced in numerous studies. Even more so that the Vitrahaus

was designed by Herzog & de Meuron. This duo of designers, as well as the place and tradition cultivated by the investor, guaranteed that this realization would also be appreciated. The architects used as an inspiration for the form of the building a symbolic house, which in their opinion can be observed in the vicinity of Vitra, but also all over the world¹⁰. The building comprises horizontal tubes with the section in the shape of a symbolic universal home, the front wall of each tube is glazed and the exhibition interiors are visible from the outside. Thus two qualities were created: a framework in the shape of a symbolic home and the interior taking place in it. Herzog & de Meuron in this design returned to the archetype of home as a central idea for a building. In 1997, the house in Rudin¹¹ interpreted the traditional shape of a house in an ascetic form made of concrete. The well-known form, interpreted at the level of symbol, raised on a platform with graduated windows and finished in concrete with only slightly marked difference between the body of the building and the roof, translated the archetype of the shape of home into a modern language. Similarly, Vitrahaus, by treating the house symbolically, revived that notion in exhibition realizations.

The most prominent inspiration by the Vitrahaus building was the exhibition of Hermes during the Milan Design Week, designed by Filippo Nigro, who was also the author of the presented collection of furniture and interior accessories. The presentation was located in the hall of the Circolo Filologico building – the historical interior allowed the exposition to be admired from the ground floor and from the gallery. The designer called his exhibitions “Les Nécessaires d’Hermès” (The Necessary of Hermes)¹². Just as with Vitrahaus, the structure was built from overlapping forms citing the symbolic house, but here the particular forms were raised in space. The designer Filippo Nigro did not apply long tubes, but rather a form based on a square, thus creating a sort of room for presentation. In the Milan realization the symbol of the home was interpreted, the author reshaped its form in the record of a share created by asymmetric shifts, by pulling the top of the roof up to the interior in the shape of letter “M” and breaking the slopes of the roof. Parts of the surfaces of the designed structures were used to present the designed wallpapers, and their use supported the proposed shape. Exhibition in seven rooms reproduced the ambiance of a residential area by presenting the furniture and details of fixtures, and making this allegorical structure more home-like. The presentations raised high on columns could be admired from the gallery level of the hall, but the designer also devised an intrigue by designing ladders on which it was possible to climb to the top of the exhibitions (we don’t know if it was possible to enter them, however)¹³.

The archetype of home in the symbolic record can also be found in other realizations, such as the display of Eternity at the Bau Exhibition 2013. The concept of the architectonic form of the display involved spaces encased with two houses but interpreted as parted frames. The two structures were parallel, partly passing each other on the layout forming open spaces at the opposite sides of the display, at the same time, by overlapping of the forms; a common part was created, also referring to the home-symbol. Designed by the German office Astrid Bornheim, the display strongly refers to the universal symbol; by the use of parted frames in

¹⁰ P. Jodidio, *Architecture Now! 7*, Taschen, Cologne, 2010, p. 204.

¹¹ M. Janowski, *Współczesna architektura domu prywatnego i jej przemiany*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań, 2013, p. 128.

¹² C. Voyatzis, <https://www.yatzer.com/best-milan-design-week-2013/>, access 31st May 2016

¹³ Designboom, <http://www.designboom.com/design/les-necessaires-dhermes-by-philippe-nigro/>, access 31st May 2016.

changeable articulation, an open display was created – an open house, and at the same time, a house with a strongly outlined interior and exterior¹⁴.

The bulk of the house as an inspiration was directly used in the Bosch display. The solution is characterised by synthetics and interpretative conservatism. The display strongly refers to the shape of home; the applied form is a derivative of the archetype but by introducing the details of windows, entrance and glazing, the clarity of reference to the symbol is distorted and the reference becomes more realistic. The manner of composition on the display itself and the spatial narration of the proposed surroundings partly inclines towards stage design. An interesting part of the design was the cut of the form along the axis of roof ridge and setting them apart which suggests the reference to protections and surroundings. While describing such realization the crucial aspect of clarity of message cannot be overlooked, a display, especially an exhibition display, is a space for communication. The unambiguity of the symbols employed and interpretation is to serve the assumptions of the message, which is one of the main functions of such realizations. With this aspect in mind, the house applied and interpreted in this display became an appropriate background for the presentation of solutions. The display was designed by Xilos Design Studio¹⁵.

Another theme in exhibition realizations in which the form of frames-rooms is used successfully to shape the space of the exhibition is multiplying them, not vertically as in the Milan realization of Filippo Nigro, but by creating compositions in the shape of a settlement, or a town. This allows creating separate rooms in which the exhibitions formed individually. The use of these spaces in the form of frames of houses, fully open or only partly closed helps to form the space of the exhibition in such a way as to avoid fully closed rooms. In exhibition presentations, due to the pace of exploring and the intensity of the exhibition, open displays are preferred, which are visible from many points. An example of such a settlement realization, where the symbolic house is multiplied is e.g. the realization of the design office from Poznań Mode:lina for arenaDesign 2015 in Poznań, where the shape of the home-archetype individually compared in different ways or used in a sequence of a few sections, and in three different interpretations, charged not only the space of the house, but also the allegory of a settlement¹⁶.

Similarly, with the use of homogenous forms, the exhibition called City of Light was designed by D'art Design Gruppe for Phillips for the EuroLuce 2011 exhibition in Milan. The island display, with a total area of 880 sqm in the shape of a prolonged rectangle, was designed as an avenue with houses-rooms along it. Each of the 14 fragments served the exhibition function with a different character. Houses-rooms were planned along the main compositional axis of the display, but through slight turning and manipulating the depth as well as asymmetric distribution of 9 sections on one side and 5 on the other, additional interiors and squares were created, increasing the suggestion of the real fragment of a town. The choice of this solution allowed Phillips to create an interesting display and clearly ration the access to particular presentations, this has to do with the particular copyright protection on some of the technologies presented¹⁷.

¹⁴ C. Porter, *A House Divided*, Exhibitoronline, <http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=1848&catID=72>, access 31st May 2016.

¹⁵ Xilos.com, <http://www.xilos.com/en/project/162/robert-bosch-italia-klimahouse-bolzano/>, access 31st May 2016.

¹⁶ Modelina-architekci, <http://www.modelina-architekci.com/>, access 31st May 2016.

¹⁷ D'art Design Gruppe, http://www.dart-design.info/de/arbeiten/messedesign/messedesign_phillips_t3/, access 31st May 2016.

4. SUMMARY

The element of home as a record of emotions appears in the space of exhibitions as direct quotation, physical representation of the share of the symbol, but also as an announcement by adding a frame or hanging only the roof slopes; implicit but still unambiguously decoded. The presentations described refer to contemporary times, present the modern and future conveniences, but in their message they go back to the symbol of the traditional home. Few of the visitors live in buildings represented by such symbols; for most their apartments and homes have a different shape. The modern achievements of architecture include a number of homes-icons which could represent the ideas of a modern home. But still the synthesis of tradition in modern interpretation is stronger. Such a situation can, certainly, be accused of following fashion. According to Janusz A. Włodarczyk, fashion is to lead to a uniform and is an enemy of the unique¹⁸. The observations of current exhibition realizations do not confirm this conclusion; it is characteristic of the exhibition displays that the form assumed serves merely as a background for the main content, and this is mainly unique. On the other hand, the belief that an architect should be a designer of future fashion¹⁹ may lead to the conclusion that there is the need for reproduction of well-known, tamed models in new interpretations. In the realizations described here, the home-symbol was the emanation of the dream of a home, but the universality of the form does not say what the home is like, it is given modern traits by the contents of the exhibition. Behind this conclusion, there is the picture of Leon Krier's drawing on which a house built in 1930 is just the same as a house built in 2030²⁰.

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¹⁸ J. A. Włodarczyk, *Okolo architektury*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Białostockiej, Białystok, 2013, p. 81.

¹⁹ M. Janowski, *Współczesna architektura domu prywatnego i jej przemiany*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań, 2013, p. 99.

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