“International style” and its interpretation at the beginning of the XXI century

Abstract
The article is dedicated to similarities, differences, borrowings and authenticity of the “international style” in the researches of modern architects-designers.

Keywords: “international style”, functionalism, modernism, art deco, architectural theories, architects, architectural schools

Introduction. The problem raising
Nowadays it is much easier to study architecture of Gothic, Renaissance, baroque based on scientific published works of the authors who are representatives of various schools, cities and countries, than have clear understanding of what was happening in the 20th century which eyewitnesses we all were not so long ago. Well-established scheme of understanding the genesis, development and style changes in 14th - 16th centuries is passed from one book to another being added with various examples of buildings and structures that illustrate this theory in various countries. Scientific surveys are directed at discovering new objects of famous masters rather than general understanding of processes. It all has become possible due to the fact that a lot of time has passed between the researched period and present times – whole ages and scientific thought have managed to be shaped and established. 20th century has ended recently, there is a vast amount of primary sources which described the events at the moment when they were happening, very often architects, clients and eyewitnesses of created objects are still alive, families keep archives and photos. Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century – 20th century is still ending its flow and its results do not have established and defined for all character yet. During whole 20th century the history of architecture and art was presented in a bit different interpretation on the territory of the USSR and beyond its borders. The world was relatively divided into socialist and capitalist camps. USSR collapse in 1991 caused the situation that a big amount of countries which appeared on its territory, including Ukraine, actively started being in contact with western partners and conducted experience exchange. In such a way European integration has also marked architecture science. Therefore, terms which have appeared and illustrate certain phenomena in Western and Central-Eastern Europe are nowadays used the terminology of the countries of which these lands were part of during the times of researched objects construction.

In connection to this, recently in order to characterize architecture of the 20th century, on the territory of the USSR and beyond its borders the term “modernism” is widely used, which in its meaning is close to understanding of “international style” by Le Corbusier. Ukrainian wikipedia, as the most accessible source, provides the following explanation of these terms “architecture of modernism generalizes a few tendencies in itself, styles in architecture which appeared in the 20th century and tried to bring the features of dashing technological advance into architecture. Modernism was one of prevailing styles of the 20th century architecture and still adheres to its position in the 21st century” [1]; international style is presented as “leading tendency of modernist thought during 1930-1970s, its aesthetics demanded the refusal of national cultural peculiarities and various kinds of historical décor in favour of direct lines and other clear geometric shapes, light and even surfaces made of glass and metal. Reinforced concrete was a favourite material of international style, wide open spaces were valued in interiors. It was architecture of industrial society which did not hide its utilitarian purpose and ability to economize on “architecture redundancy” [2]. Thus, the difference between “modernism” and “international style” lies in the fact that the first one implies only the idea of refusal of decors and gradual architectural rationalization in the frame of various stylistic differences, the second one is already embodiment of this idea and presents development of industrialization processes. If distinguishing the first third of the 20th century then among general tendencies of “modernism” variations “international style” will only be noticeable in 1930s and most brightly – before World War II. In the west of Ukraine the term “functionalism” is mostly used for such architecture. In the east there was a different course of events and resistant rationalization in architecture was in place in 1920s and was named “constructivism”. Later this evolutionary way of modernization was interrupted by appearance of “socialist realism”, when not only architectural buildings were constructed which aimed at becoming “palaces of Soviet authorities” and glorifying their power but also buildings constructed before were “changed into pompous garments”. However, it did not last for a long time. With the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 and arrival of Nikita Khrushchev to power “fight against redundant architecture” was announced. It lead to the Soviet architecture comeback to global tendencies. Thus, the following may be outlined as the main problems of the architecture of the second third of the 20th century: absence of established terminology and its huge variety for a short historical period; difference in interpretation of processes and phenomena in various countries which shaped the map of Europe; historical belonging to fundamentally different state formations with different cultural values; establishment of terms with more modern and trendy ones, what frequently contradicts with the essence of the meaning which is used. Basic material statement
At the beginning of the 21st century interest in studying art and architecture of the 20th century has increased. Unfortunately, cultural achievement of the period which has begun after World War II has not gained overall recognition yet, it can be at least claimed about the territories of Ukraine. Nevertheless, the first third of the 20th century is currently in focus of the authors who are representatives of various schools, cities and countries which appeared on its territory, including Ukraine, relatively divided into socialist and capitalist camps. USSR of The Soviet Union and beyond its borders. The world was during whole 20th century a perspective on the history of art and architecture of the 20th century.

DOI: 10.4467/25438700SM.18.048.9213

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already promoted in theories, slogans and manifestos of architects and artists as far back as since the end of the 19th century. Thus, in 1896 Louis Sullivan publishes the following article “The tall office building artistically considered” where he states his famous maxim – “form follows function” [4].

Certainly, theory is always ahead of practice. Thus, since “international style” is in its essence antagonism to historicism, it was not immediately accepted as its ideas were considered to be too way too revolutionary. The process of creating new tendencies in architecture and art can be generalized by the word “modernism”. The epoch of classical avant-garde modernism in architecture – its experimental period – ended after after World War II. Those new forms and styles which appeared in the first half of the 20th century get new full value life in its second half (approximate-ly until the 80s) when there was no need to fight for novelty of thoughts anymore. At that time modernism ideas are common and spread around the whole world – affirmation period, or which the name “international style” is more suitable.

Conception of “international style” and simplicity aesthetics Around 1900 in Europe there was heated discussion on the topic of the role of architecture and architects in modern world. Frank Lloyd Wright said that “Every outstanding architect is by all means an outstanding poet. He has to be an outstanding, genuine interpreter of his time”. Its emphasis was on the decorative aspect of architecture and technology and economy demands. At that time modernism ideas are common and spread around the whole world – affirmation period, or which the name “international style” is more suitable.

Traditionalism and avant-garde and a lot more The question of style variety is certainly the most interesting of all those appearing while researching architecture of a whole 20th century and interwar modernism in particular. Traditionally increased criticism of historicism and modernism, nationalism and internationalism, local and world context – all of the mentioned above are the definitions which characterize the differences of processes taking place in the 19th and 20th centuries. Modernism movement in architecture did not have one beginning, it was developing independently, in different ways in different countries. Europe at the end of the 19th century was actively studying its past in both overall European and in local contexts, what at the beginning found the reflection in exploitation of historic styles on facades of the buildings. However, in America, where patriotism building strategy was excellent, the ideology was directed at the future, not past. The same tendencies could be observed on the territory of a former USSR, the 20s of the 20th century when a newly established country had to self-identify in architecture using absolutely new methods and declaring not only look into the future but a complete and definite break with the past. Present-day Western Ukraine found itself in interwar twenties between Europe and the USSR what influenced the understanding of architectural history and theory processes as well as its stylistics. First of all, the problem lies in the fact that during the whole Soviet period we were suggested a theory of styles, developed by Soviet authors, which

“the place of modernism death” as following – July 15, 1972 at 15:32 in St. Louis, Missouri, USA at the site of explosion of residential complex “Pruit-Igoe” which consisted of thirty residential multi-story buildings designed by an architect Minoru Yamasaki [5]. It is not surprising at all since between interwar, experimental modernism and a relative end date of its industrial continuation about thirty years passed. There were tendencies of mass quick construction with the help of typical project solutions absolutely did not correspond to the thesis of a modernism pioneer – F.L. Wright – “Until construction mechanization serves artistic architecture and not architecture serves mechanization, we will not have outstanding architecture”. It explains this extremely big gap between functionalism (last form of interwar modernism) and final phase of “international style”.


suited Eastern and Central Ukraine perfectly but absolutely does not correspond to the situation which has been historically established on the lands of Western Ukraine. Until 1939 Eastern and Central Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union where mainly Stalin socialist realism and soviet constructivism dogmas were proclaimed whereas the western territory was developing under a strong influence of Europe where in the first half of the 20th century not only great amount of styles and stylistic tendencies existed but also the very essence of architecture was more democratic. This situation is brightly presented in the modern publication on history of Ukrainian architecture, publishing editor Tyomfienko V.I., which was published in 2003 [6]. At the beginning of the chapter “Architecture of the 20s – beginning of the 30s” in the paragraph “10.1. General characteristic of architecture development” the following is mentioned: At the beginning “Architecture development on all lands of Ukraine, especially in the 20s, has a lot in common as almost everywhere various stylistic directions coexisted. However, there were also considerable discrepancies connected with existing of various socially-economic systems in the east and west of Ukraine”. Nevertheless, that is all what is said about discrepancies. Further, the chapter tells about artistic groups of architects in Ukraine but on its eastern and central territories which at that time were part of the USSR. Achievements in architecture sphere of this period in Western Ukraine are presented only as fragmentary facts which are automatically interwoven with the text which is generally related to architecture history of Eastern Ukraine. Such examples are not solitary ones. Revolutionary and political changes in architecture and art sphere that took place after 1917 in the Soviet Union caused search for rational architecture – at that time popular in the whole world. Similar to futurists, Russian avant-garde move-ment was united by the faith into the future and technology advance. Thanks to new art, ties were broken with everything reminding about the past. For some time until cult of Stalin period, constructivism served the purposes of communist propaganda [7]. In connection to this “constructivism” style has an interesting explanation in a Soviet dictionary of foreign words, compiled during Stalin times. “Constructivism is a for- malistic tendency in a degrading bourgeois society which emerged after World War I, it characterizes ideological devastation of bourgeois art of imperialism epoch. Rejecting educa-tional nature of art, its ideological contents, constructivism representatives use mainly simple geometric shapes (cube, cylinder). In architecture characterized by showing the very construction and building materials. Constructivism has found its reflection in literature and music” [8]. There is an impression that in Russia there was no El Lis-tizky, Velodymyr Tatlin, Kostiantyn Melnikov and constructivism itself is solely foreign achievement. Indeed, by general conception of building dimensional and spatial composi-tions of buildings and constructions it is really close to functionalism. The difference is that on the contrary to functionalism, constructivism does not involve expensive materials, elite and luxury. Time frames are also an interesting moment: constructivism is architecture of the 20s of the 20th century and functionalism is the one of the 30s. Lately, the term “constructivism” is extremely popular in Ukraine due to its Soviet roots and
As it is evident from all the mentioned above, despite a vast amount of terms and concepts, architectural stylistics of Europe in the 20s-30s of the 20th century is still entirely centered around one style – modernism which in its different phases acquires different shades – stylistic tendencies which colour rational and puristic modernism with various qualities (cubism – geometricality and sculpturality of forms, expressionism – dynamics of solutions, Art Deco – increased stylizing and decorative effect, functionalism – laconism and consideration). Therefore, due to such a big amount of representatives that appeared within a rather short period of time in various parts of the world, modernism is a very versatile phenomenon (collective meaning) in the first third of the 20th century and it expresses rather a way of thinking than specific characteristics. Thanks to constant and active exchange of information between modernist representatives, common features of this style are worked up, the ones which were promoted around the World known as “inter-national style” (Five rules of modern architecture by Le Corbusier). The term “international style” was for the first time used in 1932 by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their essay titled “International style: architecture starting from 1922” which was used as a catalogue at architecture exhibition at Modern art museum.

Conclusions

Regardless of the fact that the question of interpreting and using the terms “modernism” and “international style” does not arouse doubts with most scientists irrespective of the country where they are from, concerning understanding styles and processes within these meanings there are still lots of debates. Despite the fact that the world nowadays is not divided into capitalist and socialist camps anymore, there is still a considerable amount of “hot” questions:

- Is the change of soviet terms adequate if they impersonate the concepts connected solely to soviet society and life-style to such which are widely used beyond this space and have their meaning and connection to the processes;
- Whether there is any point in looking for more specific and subtle stylistic differences which are to be found within an embracing meaning “modernism” and “international style” and on which geographical territories it is possible to do it and on which it’s not;

How different are processes of architecture development in the 20th century in the end, depending on the country, ideology or socialist, or capitalist, of their happening.

These and other questions demand answers to be found. However, it is obvious that no matter how diverse the pallete of styles and stylistic tendencies of the first half of the 20th century was, first of all, behind architecture styles of the objects preferences of their creators are hidden – of specific people – architects and thus the very understanding of their tastes and motivations is a solution key to understanding stylistics of the buildings. V. Sichinsky described this situation extremely well: “...at current epoch there cannot be artistic creativity in the style of a past epoch. Epoch and style are inseparably connected! A person is style! When a person of an epoch dies, style dies as well in order to free place for modern art” [15].

BIBLIOGRAPHY