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## INSPIRATION OR FASCINATION

## INSPIRACJA CZY FASCYNACJA

## Abstract

The essay discusses the issues related to the phenomenon of inspiration in the process of creating architectural forms. The sources of such inspiration are particularly evident during the process of developing temporary architecture, or architecture which does not have a clear function, or in fact none at all, being more of a sculpture than a building. Structures of this type usually reflect the idea behind them in the most vivid manner – the idea that first settled in the mind of its creator.

*Keywords: architecture, architectural form, impression, inspiration, fascination*

## Streszczenie

Artykuł omawia problemy związane ze zjawiskiem inspiracji w procesie tworzenia formy architektonicznej. Źródła inspiracji widoczne są najbardziej w procesie powstawania i w ostatecznym kształcie architektury „czasowej”, bądź też nie obciążonej funkcją. Architektury, która jest bardziej rzeźbą niż budynkiem. Ta architektura oddaje najczęściej obraz idei, która kierowała twórcą w momencie tworzenia. Idei, która go inspirowała i przełożyła się na kształt dzieła.

*Słowa kluczowe: architektura, forma architektoniczna, wrażenie, inspiracja, fascynacja*

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*“From lifeless stones, passion builds a drama. That is architecture.”* [10]

## **1. Introduction**

We live in an age of information overload, in which every emerging idea is being spread all across the global village [11] the very moment it has been recorded and saved. Despite the process of globalization, the world still remains culturally diverse, and each culture can be said to have its own civilization [14]. The process of developing architecture is similar to that of baking bread. Just like bread is made from flour, water and yeast, the material matter of architecture is made of such mundane things like water, lime and sand. The creative process which accompanies the development of architecture can be defined in a number of ways.

## **2. Inspiration**

During the process of the creation of the idea of a space, the inspiration phase is perhaps the most important. The elements which make up a work’s inspiration are often visible in the finished work. These sources of inspiration can often be seen most clearly in both the development process and the finished work of “temporary” architecture, or the type which does not have a defined function, or indeed does not have one at all – a sculpture, rather than a building. Architecture of this type is meant to have a striking external form, with its function often being but a pretext for its design. Structures of this type, due to less stress being placed on its function and a unique financial discipline, often radiate their conceptual idea much more strongly, as it has a much more profound impact on their form. The idea that is behind architecture plays a key and timeless [3] role in its creation. Inspiration can be taken from a nearly endless number of sources. The wondrous works of Gaudi were inspired by the world of nature. As a child, Gaudi would spend his days studying nature, in isolation from his peers due to his rheumatoid disease. It is thanks to this fascination with the finely structured skeletons of animals and plant elements that we can now marvel at his colourful works of architecture, inspired by the wealth of natural forms [2, p. 70–71]. Calatrava’s anthropomorphic [8, p. 158–159] forms are quite similar in this regard. Inspiration can sometimes be drawn from the world of pop culture. The building of a computer game development company in the Fujian province of China has a form that is very similar to that of the Enterprise space ship from the Star Trek television series [6].

## **3. Immaterial architecture**

There is a need among some architects to design immaterial structures that are never meant to be built [1]. Some claim to have never been interested in actual construction, due to the inherent constraints of designing with it in mind. To them, freedom and the ability to do and think as they please is the ultimate goal [9, p. 160]. The limitations that are inherent in the physical construction of a building do not weigh the architect down in his pursuit of refining his idea of architecture.

#### **4. The phenomenon of the moment – temporary structures**

The type of structures which are often meant to last only a single season, month or the span of a given artistic event are often the fullest reflection of their inspiration and the most relatively robust recording of their author's thoughts and ideas. They are a pretext to unhindered experiments with form and volume. The temporary summer pavilions of the Serpentine Gallery that are traditionally erected in Kensington Park in London are a testament to the multitude of inspirations and ideas that architects can have. The pavilions are built on the border between Hyde Park and Kensington Garden. Each year a different world class architect or studio is invited to design such a pavilion, under the condition that they are not currently working on a different building in the UK. A review of the designs of these pavilions from recent years provides valuable material for discussing the topic of the diversity of inspiration and the resulting "playing with form", the effects of which, despite the same function and location, are vastly different each time [7]. The "mirror house" [15] in Worthing, UK, has become a catalyst of social events due to its original idea. Its form is typical of the local architectural vernacular tradition, however its acrylic glass surfaces often provoke passers-by to take "selfies" with it in the background. A playground in the form of a labyrinth, made entirely out of snow, complete with slides, a large lighthouse, benches and seats located in Kiruna, Sweden, draws its inspiration from its context and the season. According to its authors, its visitors should treat it as a challenge and an invitation to live out a true adventure. Its users should feel like explorers entering a lost city, which they have found in an icy jungle. This play with geometry ends along with the coming of spring [13].

#### **5. Fascination**

Inspiration often turns to fascination. Inspired artists develop their work due to an impulse and an infatuation with the form of each subsequent iteration of their design, refining it each time. Zvi Hecker, inspired by the plan of a citadel that he saw in Tel Aviv at an exhibition, went on to use it in many of his designs. The "sunflower" was the inspiration behind an unimplemented design of a housing development with a shopping centre in Berlin, or the spiral residential house in Ramat Gan, Israel, built in the 1980's [4]. Echoes of this idea can be found in the unimplemented design of the Saratov Apartment Tower from 2008 [5]. The idea, evolving from the view of a sunflower in the direction of an open book had become the basis of the floor plan layout of a school in Berlin [12] that was built in 1995.

#### **6. Summary**

One can observe a diverse variety of inspiration in the work of architects. The sources of this inspiration can perhaps be most readily observable in the finished state of temporary architecture, not only of the utilitarian kind, but also that which does not really have a function and is more like a sculpture than a building. This type of architecture, due to a less stringent approach unhindered by the necessities of its function can often express the idea behind it in a fuller manner.



Ill. 1. Parc Güell, Antonio Gaudi, Barcelona, phot. by the author; Ill. 2. TGV Satolas train station in Lyon, Calatrava Santiago., phot. by the author; Ill. 3. Net Dragon Office building, Fujian, China, shaped after the USS Enterprise from the Star Trek TV series, [http://www.designboom.com/architecture/star-trek-influenced-office-building-china-05-26-2015/?utm\\_campaign=daily&utm\\_medium=e-mail&utm\\_source=subscribers](http://www.designboom.com/architecture/star-trek-influenced-office-building-china-05-26-2015/?utm_campaign=daily&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_source=subscribers), [15.05.2015]; Ill. 4. Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, Sou Fujimoto, 2013, London, United Kingdom. <http://www.demotix.com/news/2117989/opening-serpentine-gallery-pavilion-2013-designed-sou-fujimoto#media-2117973>, [07.05.2015]; Ill. 5. Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, Selgas Cano, 2015, <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/serpentine-pavilion-2015>, [07.05.2015]; Ill. 6. Mirror house on Worthing beach, United Kingdom, *Spiegelspiel am Strand: Hütte von ECE Architecture*, Detail Daily, <http://www.detail.de/daily/spiegelspiel-am-strand-huette-von-ece-architecture-33718/>, [01.06.2015]; Ill. 7. *Schwedischer Schnee-Spielplatz von PinPin*, Detail Daily, phot.: PIN PIN, <http://www.detail.de/daily/schwedischer-schnee-spielplatz-von-pinpin-32399/>, [23.02.2015]; Ill. 8. Birds eye view of the Heinz Galinski School, designed by Zvi Hecker, 1995, Berlin, Rattenbury K., Bevan R., Long K., *Architects Today*, Laurence King Publishing in association with Harper Design International, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2004, <http://www.thecityreview.com/arcnow.html>, [06.06.2015]

This idea, does not only inspire the architect, it becomes fascinating to them. It leads architects to become overwhelmed by it. Some architects have become so attached to their inspirations that they used them throughout their entire careers. At times they were almost like an obsession to them. The creative process, which resembles a game at times, but can nevertheless border on suffering, should lead to the creation of a perfect form. It is a very difficult thing to achieve because “A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away” as Antoine de Saint-Exupery claimed. Regardless of whether the end result is built or remains a scribble on the page of a sketchbook, a cardboard model or a computer model.

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