

TOMASZ OMIECIŃSKI\*

## BEAUTY – THE MOST PRACTICAL ASPECT OF THE VITRUVIAN TRIAD IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ETERNITY OF ARCHITECTURE

---

### PIĘKNO – NAJBARDZIEJ PRAKTYCZNY ASPEKT WITRUWIAŃSKIEJ TRIADY W KONTEKŚCIE WIECZNOŚCI ARCHITEKTURY

#### Abstract

For architecture to resist the passing of time, rational thinking would seem to incline toward the notion, above all, of creating structures physically resilient and functional for the current lifestyle. Paradoxically, with this goal, the last of the Vitruvius Triad to come to mind here, beauty, usually determines the durability of the building. Léon Krier argues that neither current usefulness nor structural stability will guarantee the material inviolability of architecture. Contrary to rational thinking, it is beauty – the feature which the residents most frequently, and wholly intuitively, grasp – is in fact the most sterling assurance for the protection of the architectural work. Roger Scruton claims that people will happily devote their money to their restoration of an aesthetically pleasing building. Function can be converted along with social transformations, but dazzling, beautiful architecture will keep the work as unchanged.

*Keywords: beauty, solidity, utility, Vitruvian Triad, modernism*

#### Streszczenie

By architektura oparła się niszczącemu upływowi czasu, racjonalne myślenie nakłania do tworzenia budowli wytrzymałych fizycznie i funkcjonalnych dla obowiązującego stylu życia. Paradoksalnie jednak to piękno – ostatnia z witruwiańskiej triady, jaka przychodzi tu na myśl – najczęściej decyduje o trwałości budynku. Léon Krier przekonuje, że ani bieżąca użyteczność, ani stabilność strukturalna nie zagwarantują architekturze nieprzemijalności materialnej. Wbrew racjonalnemu myśleniu to właśnie piękno – ta najczęściej i zupełnie intuicyjnie pojmowana przez mieszkańców miast cecha – jest najrzetelniejszym zapewnieniem dla istnienia dzieła architektonicznego. Roger Scruton twierdzi, że dla zadowolającego estetycznie budynku zawsze znajdą się pieniądze na remont. Jego funkcja także może się przekształcić wraz z transformacjami społecznymi, ale olśniewająca, piękna architektura zachowa dzieło możliwie niezmienione.

*Słowa kluczowe: piękno, trwałość, użyteczność, triada witruwiańska, modernizm*

---

\* M.Sc. Arch., Tomasz Omieciński, doctoral studies at: Department of Architecture and Urban-Planning, The Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Environmental Engineering, Technical University of Lodz, e-mail: tomasz.omieciński@wp.pl.

## 1. Outline of the article

The article is concerned with the paradoxical perception that the feature of architecture which, to the greatest extent, means that its works resist vanishing from our lives, is neither durability nor convenience, but the third element of the Vitruvian Triad, beauty<sup>1</sup>. To begin with, a brief history of the relationship between durability, convenience and beauty is presented. Next, the drawbacks resulting from ascribing an inordinate role to the first two attributes within the context of enduring are enumerated. The conclusion demonstrates beauty's leading role in the preservation of a building.

## 2. Introduction. The vitruvian triad

In the first century CE, Vitruvius, author of the oldest surviving work in the field, proclaimed that good architecture should be characterised by durability, convenience and beauty. These three traits of orderly architecture were deemed equal by Vitruvius in his work, which recorded all that he knew of the Greeks' and Romans' knowledge. Those same three features continued to be considered thus for many centuries after his death. The turning point would not occur until the twentieth century, when revolutionary changes made their impact in the traditional role of these concepts.

## 3. Modernism and the break with beauty in favour of function

The architects of the early twentieth century began to question the meaning of the equality between the three elements of the Triad and renamed them 'construction', 'function' and 'form'. The modernists' motto, 'form follows function', bore fruit in architectural functionalism, which was brought to life in a multitude of buildings and other structures that took convenience, which is to say, utility, as their ruling idea. Socrates most certainly would not have seen this as thrusting beauty into the background, since he himself was of the opinion that, in fact, it depended on the suitability of an object to the task set before it<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, the modernists, in their theory of architecture, itself disqualified by their practice, discarded not only the conscious role as creators of their works' appearance, but also the entire concept of beauty as something worthy of attention. However, focusing on the remaining elements of the Vitruvian Triad and, primarily, on utility, failed to bring the anticipated timelessness to the modernist experiment. Léon Krier, fierce opponent of modernist thinking on architecture, reminds us that, paradoxically, with this question, the last of the Triad to come to mind here, beauty, cannot be underestimated:

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Book I, Chapter III, Section 2, translated and edited by Morris Hicky Morgan, retrieved at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0073%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3Dpreface%3Asection%3D2> on 05.06.2018.

<sup>2</sup> M. Napiórkowski, "*Nie to co ładne...*". *Nieco ironiczny przewodnik po definicjach piękna dla architektów*, RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warszawa 2015, p. 5.

(...) is it not true that even the most robust of buildings has but a short life expectancy if it is lacking in beauty? Likewise, utility and structural are absolutely no guarantee of material permanence<sup>3</sup>.

#### 4. Against the concept of form as incidental to function

First up for consideration is faith in the flagship feature of modernist architecture; utility. One authority, Socrates, does not prejudge the question of usefulness as a guarantor of exquisite appearance. In the view of other thinkers, it is never possible to attain beauty when it is to be incidental to other circumstances. In this dispute, Immanuel Kant, the greatest philosopher of the Enlightenment, took a position opposed to that held by the Athenian. In his opinion, function has no impact on the reception of a work, because beauty is that:

(...) which one likes not via an impression and not via a concept, but that which one likes from a subjective necessity, in a general way, directly and wholly disinterestedly<sup>4</sup>.

As Kant sees it, discerning serviceability quite simply agitates the aesthetic judgement. Modernism should, after all, be more akin to the philosopher of the Age of Reason. It is his concept of aesthetic judgements of taste, a concept which has its wellspring in the power to judge on the basis of reflection, that is the key to understanding the spirit of modernism<sup>5</sup>. According to British philosopher Roger Scruton, the modernists would have done better had they trusted in Kantian inquiries regarding the category of beauty. In a documentary film entitled *Why Beauty Matters*, he proffers a disarmingly simple argument as to why so many modernist structures are threatened with emptiness:

This building is boarded up because nobody has a use for it. Nobody has a use for it because nobody wants to be in it. Nobody has a use for it because the thing is so damned ugly<sup>6</sup>.

These deserted behemoths are illustrations of the contemporary want of human faith in the entire concept of modernism as it was fifty years ago. Drawing together his reflections on the importance of beauty in art, Scruton concludes that, when utility is placed above everything, then everything is lost. He sums up with some optimistic advice; *Put beauty first and what you do will be useful forever*<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> L. Krier, *Architektura wspólnoty / The Architecture of Community*, trans. Choynowski P., słowo/obraz terytoria, Gdańsk 2011, p. 259. Original English text: Dhiru A, Thadani + Peter J. Hetzel (eds.), Island Press, Center of Resource Economics 2009, p. 259, retrieved at [https://books.google.pl/books?id=MchfvovmHeUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=pl&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.pl/books?id=MchfvovmHeUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=pl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) on 05.05.2018.

<sup>4</sup> M. Napiórkowski, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> P. Schollenberger, *Kant według Duchampa. Sądy smaku i sztuka współczesna*, in K. Kaśkiewicz, P. Schollenberger (eds.), *Aktualność estetyki Kanta*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2016, p. 199.

<sup>6</sup> R. Scruton (author and presenter), *Why Beauty Matters*, Louise Lockwood (dir.), BBC, Great Britain 2009, time code: 19:13–19:23; retrieved at <https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/why-beauty-matters/>, 29.05.2018 and 05.06.2018.

<sup>7</sup> R. Scruton, *Why Beauty Matters*, *ibidem*, time code: 21:49–21:54.

## 5. With the passing of time, function loses significance, while form gains

The perspective of time this article deals with leads to the finding that, methodically, function loses significance and form thrusts itself into the foreground. On the basis of the frequent metamorphoses of function seen in historical buildings, Aldo Rossi has proclaimed outright that function follows form<sup>8</sup>. How many times has the intended purpose of an architectural work changed, and more than just once, at that? One instance would be d'Orsay railway station, which has been transformed into a theatre, an auction house and, most recently, a museum. Indeed, whilst reflecting on architecture from the perspective of something enduring, architect and theorist Steen Eiler Rasmussen emphasised the fluidity of a building's function:

*(...) the architect's work is intended to live on into a distant future. He sets the stage for a long, slow-moving performance which must be adaptable enough to accommodate unforeseen improvisations<sup>9</sup>.*

The word 'unforeseen' is highly significant here. Function can be converted along with social transformations, resulting in a building with an intended purpose, the existence of which no one had ever even imagined. In effect, even changes in minor, everyday activities mean that the functional serviceability of every building dwindles, particle by particle, with the passing of time<sup>10</sup>. David Hume was convinced that, with the passing of time, every long-lasting judgement of an object leads to the approval of the aesthetic or artistic aspect<sup>11</sup>. Over the course of the years, all others lose significance. The creators of change perceived the aesthetics of a structure as its only original value. Revitalisation is first and foremost based on saving the solid mass of a building, its details, ornamentation and the character which shines throughout its entire visual dimension. A Dominican church in Maastricht was transformed into a bookshop, yet the spirit of the place, filled with quietness and intentness, is still very powerfully present. The best examples of this thinking are the human efforts invested in preserving the art of antiquity, which, for the greater part of our existence, has been deemed the canon of beauty. The works of ancient times are with us to this day. They have survived technological progress and changes in everyday life, the transformation of political systems in states and religious reformations. Some structures are no longer in use at all. Roman aqueducts are marvelled at today not only as evidence of the advanced nature of an ancient civilisation. We take photos of ourselves with them as our background, deeming them to be beautiful.

---

<sup>8</sup> A. Owerczuk, *Zmiana funkcji a zachowanie obiektów architektury*, Politechnika Białostocka, Białystok 2015, p. 35, retrieved at <http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-52aee908-d4fd-40a1-88ec-22945640c9d7> on 31.05.2018.

<sup>9</sup> S. E. Rasmussen, *Odczuwanie architektury*, trans. Gadowska B., Karakter, Krakow 2015, p. 14. Original English text: The MIT Press, Massachusetts University of Technology, Cambridge, USA 1964, p. 12, retrieved at <https://books.google.pl/books?id=pZ50MeEQRAoC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Steen+Eiler+Rasmussen+experiencing+architecture&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjkqSLp83bAhXNhqYKHcQEC7EQ6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Steen%20Eiler%20Rasmussen%20experiencing%20architecture&f=false> on 05.06.2018.

<sup>10</sup> A. Owerczuk, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> A. Grzeliński, *Kantowski pierwszy moment sądu smaku a kształtowanie się idei bezinteresowności w osiemnastowiecznej estetyce brytyjskiej*, in K. Kaśkiewicz, P. Schollenberger (eds.), *Aktualność estetyki Kanta*, *ibidem*, p. 26.

*For, after all, when building aqueducts or splendid bridges, the Romans were not seeking an outlet for their artistic temperaments. That kind of effect was not taken into account. Neither did they expect that, two thousand years later, their textbooks on art would devote more commentary to their works than textbooks on engineering (...)*<sup>12</sup>.

The value which enabled them to survive in such different worlds was most certainly not the way of using them planned by their creators. Nowadays, the Pantheon of Ancient Rome is a Christian church, but the change of message relating to a different belief system brought no drastic transformation of form in its wake<sup>13</sup>. The Hagia Sophia now fulfils the role of a place of worship for Muslims, who are well-known for destroying buildings associated with other ideologies. The exceptional story of that former Christian church was determined by the impression it made on Mehmed II, also known as Mehmed the Conqueror. Despite the Islamic prohibition on the depiction of human figures, he even gave an order for the images of Jesus, the saints and the Byzantine emperors to be left. In the instances mentioned here, the interference in the places of worship is minor and timid. Even so mighty a notion as religion yields to beauty. Looking at the majority of ancient and old buildings which have survived until now, it is apparent that a lack of change in function is not one of their characteristic features. Only ravishingly beautiful architecture might prove decisive in preserving a work unchanged<sup>14</sup>.

## 6. The illusion of a structure's durability

The durability of a structure has also failed to fulfil the hopes laid upon it for timelessness in modern architecture. One of the modernists' aspirations was for an architectural structure to withstand the terror of passing time. Setting it alongside the concept of history they were fighting so hard against. For architecture to resist the passing of time, rational thinking would seem to incline toward the notion, above all, of creating structures from the best construction elements. Materials such as glass, steel and concrete were supposed not to show signs of aging and architectural works were intended to appear as if they lay "beyond time".<sup>15</sup> This utopia suggested that a world thus constructed would endure, unchanging, until the 'end of history'<sup>16</sup>. Beauty had long been perceived as an entity ideal, objective and complete.

While a structure might, if the mere handful of examples of historical sites are brought into play, be thought of as an unchanging entity, such thinking is impossible in the case

---

<sup>12</sup> L. Niemojewski, *Siedem cudów świata*, Wydawnictwo Ex Libris, Warsaw 1948, p. 15, after W. J. Affelt, *Estetyka zabytku budownictwa jako wyzwanie dla jego adaptacji*, in Szmygina B. (ed.), *Adaptacja obiektów zabytkowych do współczesnych funkcji użytkowych*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Lubelskiej, Warsaw-Lublin 2009, p. 14, retrieved at <http://bc.pollub.pl/Content/631/adaptacja.pdf>, access: 31.05.2018.

<sup>13</sup> A. Owerczuk, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> M. Miłobędzki, *Niežnośna lekkość*, *Autoportret 4* [59] / 2017, małopolski instytut kultury, Krakow 2017, p. 102.

<sup>15</sup> J. Pallasmaa, *Materia, haptyczność i czas. Wyobrażenia materialna i głos materii*, *Autoportret 1* [48] / 2015 *Materia/Materialność*, Małopolski Instytut Kultury, Krakow 2015. pp. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

of a city or town. Cities and towns are organisms which change all the time. They evolve through adding to, and removing from, their fabric and through the transformation of their citizens and the ways in which they function<sup>17</sup>. Cities and towns which are not subject to these laws are places we are interested in visiting, as ‘heritage parks’ frozen in time and as a highly particular history lesson. There is something repugnant in their stagnation, though. Their exquisiteness gainsays life<sup>18</sup>. Relatively low durability, such as the highly demanding structures of Amsterdam and Venice, for instance, will always be maintained and renovated at vast financial cost, while the buildings will find new uses just as long as the atmosphere of a unique city or town is preserved in as much of an unchanged condition as is possible. Tourists visit London, Rome and other beautiful, dynamic cities, not the capital of Brazil which, with its clear, functional division, arouses nobody’s interest.

### 7. Beauty. The source of solicitude for a building

What the residents of the Villa Savoye, the guru of modernism’s building-cum-manifesto, received from Le Corbusier was a leaking roof and damp in the walls, making it impossible to live in. Not that this hindered the building when it came to finding favour with the critics on account of its beauty<sup>19</sup>. Alain de Botton considers this to be an obvious example of what we value in architecture. After all, the great buildings are not those with no draughts or a well-designed floor plan. We appreciate them for their charm. We visit them for their beauty. For that which is not, in fact, prosaically functional. As is apparent, even the modernists fall into that pattern. The staircases they often expose behind glazed screens are not glorifications of the latest achievements, but a semblance of aesthetic treatment in the form of utility. From the architects’ point of view, functionalism has proved to be downright fortunate. More and more frequently nowadays, the buildings of the communist era, rehabilitated after the passage of time, are being entered onto the list of protected sites. The younger generation is far bolder in according them the virtue of beauty<sup>20</sup>, by reason of which they should be left in our cities and towns. The very notion of a cultural heritage which, by law, requires protection, was originally driven by the appraisal of aesthetic values:

*(...) only buildings which were ‘entrancingly beautiful’ were an object of interest to a small, well-educated, affluent elite<sup>21</sup>.*

It is, indeed, the genuine, preserved form of a building, together with its original ornamentation, which is the object of efforts in terms of protection. Without them, a historical site

---

<sup>17</sup> W. Kacperski, “Piękne” w przestrzeni miejskiej jest nie zawsze to samo, RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warszawa 2015, p. 68.

<sup>18</sup> D. Bartoszewicz, *Boimy się ładności*, in conversation with Gąsiorowska M., Płoska Z., RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warszawa 2015, p. 81.

<sup>19</sup> A. de Botton, *Architektura szczęścia*, czyli barbarzyńca press, Warszawa 2010, p. 63-65.

<sup>20</sup> D. Bartoszewicz, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> W. Szygendowski, B. M. Walczak, *Adaptacje zespołów zabytkowych we współczesnych realiach społeczno-gospodarczych na przykładzie dziedzictwa przemysłowego Łodzi*, p. 142, in Szmygina B. (ed.), *Adaptacja obiektów zabytkowych do współczesnych funkcji użytkowych*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Lubelskiej, Warsaw-Lublin 2009, retrieved at <http://bc.pollub.pl/Content/631/adaptacja.pdf> on 31.05.2018.

loses the meaning of its existence as a fragment of history and record of a certain concept<sup>22</sup>. Although that attribute is not the sole condition for the valorisation of historical structures, it rules public opinion.

This is why cathedrals, manor houses, stately homes and palaces are prized, while factories are associated more with the pollution of the environment and arduous work. At this point it is worth emphasising that the factories in [the city of] Łódź were initially given protected status on account of their architectural form. Meanwhile, with production facilities, the most important considerations are technical, technological and constructional<sup>23</sup>.

It is for these self-same reasons that London's Bankside Power Station met with a new lease of life. Today, it houses the popular Tate Modern, part of the Tate group of public art galleries. In spite of the strictly utilitarian functioning to which power stations are subjected, the Bankside's architect, Gilbert Giles Scott, endowed it with a unique character. When the architects of Swiss company Herzog & de Meuron were adapting the building to its new purpose, they took great pains to preserve its aesthetic values, such as its solid mass and the material of the elevation. Any changes were restricted to the absolutely indispensable<sup>24</sup>; *vide* the Fryderyk Chopin Polish Baltic Philharmonic in the Ołowianka district of Gdańsk, which was also a power station. The majority of the most popular, recent adaptations in Łódź have involved the revitalisation of closed-down factories. They are suited equally as well to cosy dwellings, covered parades of retail outlets and large cinema auditoriums. Function plays no role. A symptomatic feature is that they are grouped in relation to aesthetics, as post-manufacturing buildings. No one now bothers to hide the fact that they are most strongly characterised by their brick-and-steel aesthetic. With their indisputable appeal, they attract throngs of tourists and, more importantly, they enable the residents to discover their city anew<sup>25</sup>.

## 8. Beauty is most vital to people

According to Kant, experiencing beauty is humankind's most primordial form of contact with the world<sup>26</sup>. The aesthetic appreciation which appears arbitrarily at the point where humankind's freedom and the world of nature meet is an involuntary equality between senses and intellect, will and emotion. Given these premises, Kant considered that aesthetic judgement surpasses all others. They are the first relationship between subject and object, between human beings and the world. The notion of aesthetics as 'the first philosophy', which provides us with the primordial, aesthetically tinged aspects of cognisance, has also been deliberated by Welsch, Marquard and others<sup>27</sup>. Baumgarten, formulator of

---

<sup>22</sup> A. Owerczuk, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>23</sup> W. Szygendowski, B. M. Walczak, *op.cit.*, p. 143.

<sup>24</sup> A. Owerczuk, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> I. Cała, *Piękno spotkania. Esej o mieście*, RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warszawa 2015, p. 71-72.

<sup>26</sup> T. Pękała, *Kantowskie inspiracje we współczesnych refleksjach nad estetycznym doświadczeniem przeszłości*, in Kaśkiewicz K., Schollenberger P. (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 134.

<sup>27</sup> I. Lorenc, *Fenomenologia wspólnej zmysłowości wobec Kantowskiej kategorii «sensus communis»*, in Kaśkiewicz K., Schollenberger P., *op.cit.*, p. 176.

the concept of aesthetics, understood it as primarily a cognitive discipline which aims to intensify humankind's sensorial, cognitive abilities<sup>28</sup>. Hence the fact that aesthetic judgement is often the only one that people are capable of voicing... particularly about a building which they merely pass in a public space. It is a well-known fact that first impressions stay with us for a long time, or even forever if we never get to know a person better. The buildings we never go inside exist for us solely as elevations, as the scenery of our lives. Tadao Ando says that it is rare indeed for us to experience modern architecture as a work of art immediately<sup>29</sup>. David Smith believes that there is no such thing as a layperson. Seldom does someone not have an opinion about a work of art. In general, it is an instinctive evaluation as to whether they like something or not<sup>30</sup>. The phrase 'I don't have an opinion' most frequently crops up when the speaker's feelings are ambivalent and the viewer is unable to qualify which of those feelings is having a more powerful effect on them. Even though the concept of 'beauty', a word which has been a key term in the most crucial theories over the course of two millennia, is rarely used in the professional discourse of architects and planners... and only then, with embarrassment... in colloquial conversations, the words 'hideous', 'eyesore' and 'monstrosity' are the most commonly used when criticising the public space<sup>31</sup>. This is most certainly why, when Prince Charles was criticising the design for a new wing planned for the National Gallery in London, he described it as *a monstrous carbuncle in the face of a much-loved and elegant friend*<sup>32</sup>. Seeing hideousness in something close to us is repellent to anyone. Prince Charles was speaking about architecture from a position of inherited majesty. If a person who has inherited their political function raises their voice in public, it is only in the intergenerational sense, on behalf of the future generations over whom his descendants will reign<sup>33</sup>. Presumably he was aware of how crucial beauty is to a building of such importance to the country. In the case of an edifice which has a significant obligation in terms of uniting the nation and which is built to serve for decades, or even for centuries, the question of aesthetics cannot be left as a matter of taste or of any other ideals.

## 9. Beauty. A conveyor of values

We more frequently 'make use' of cities and towns than spend time in them for pleasure. Even so, beauty is the feature which the residents most frequently, and wholly intuitively,

---

<sup>28</sup> W. J. Affelt, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> B. Stelmach, *Prawda, dobro i piękno*, in conversation with Stępnik Ł., Trzcńska M., RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warsaw 2015, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> D. Smith, *Aesthetics, the Artist and the Audience*, in Harrison W., Wood P. (eds.), *Art in Theory. 1900-1990. An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell, Padstow 1999, p. 578.

<sup>31</sup> W. Kacperski, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>32</sup> His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, in a speech given at the Royal Gala celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Institute of British Architects, 30.05.1984; retrieved at <https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-150th-anniversary-royal-institute-british-architects-ribr-royal-gala> on 06.06.2018.

<sup>33</sup> R. Scruton, *Co znaczy konserwatyzm (The Meaning of Conservatism)*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2014, pp. 103–104.

grasp. It is also, in fact, beauty that is the most sterling assurance for the protection of the public space.

[Right up until the twentieth century], humankind drew joy from the structures they built and connected with their beauty, sensing that this testified to their identity. Thanks to this, their bonds to their surroundings were significant and their relationship with their environment was personal<sup>34</sup>.

A sense of community and ties to a place and to one's neighbours are expressed through a liking for similar buildings reflecting a taste akin to one's own.

Saying that a building is beautiful expresses something more than just an aesthetic liking; it also suggests a fascination with the lifestyle that building encourages by way of its roof, door handles, window surrounds, stairs and furnishings. Sensing beauty is a signal that we have encountered a material articulation of our imaginings of a good life<sup>35</sup>.

These words of de Button's could be interpreted as a spur toward building beautiful things for the people whom we would like to bring closer to ourselves. People will repay an architect with solicitude for their work if the architect provides their community with a building which they deem to be beautiful and which they become attached to. Albert Cuypstraat's synagogue in Amsterdam is now a popular restaurant, but it was only the interior which was changed and, even then, it was mainly the furnishings and fittings, which can easily be removed. The public face of the building remained the one that the Amsterdamers had fallen in love with. In cases like these, durability is preserved; however, it is not physical durability, but the durability of form as a symbol<sup>36</sup>. Modernists spurned this view of the building's costume and they also broke away from the resonance between the building and its façade which is described here.

We can admire a great many of the structures that have been preserved to this day thanks not to their solid execution, but because they were the objects of the lasting care invested in maintaining them in a pleasing condition.<sup>37</sup> People will happily devote their money to their restoration, as in the instance of the clock tower of the Youth Hostel in the Biskupia Górka district of Gdańsk. They will just as readily invest their time and energy in defending them against demolition. Franciszek Ziejka has written extensively about the social movement working to save Krakow's historical sites; he describes, *inter alia*, Artur Potocki calling for "responsibility for their maintenance and even their ornamentation"<sup>38</sup>. This is why, if we want something to remain once we have departed this world, if we want our values to survive and the message about them to be passed on, we have to build as beautifully as we can.

---

<sup>34</sup> W. Kijewska, *Zniesławiony ornament*, RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warszawa 2015, p. 32.

<sup>35</sup> A. de Botton, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>36</sup> J. T. Królikowski, *Współczesna interpretacja witruijskiej definicji przestrzeni architektonicznej*, Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura nr R. 106, z. 1-A / 2009, p. 74–77, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, Krakow 2009, sp 75, retrieved at <http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/bwmeta1.element.baztech-article-BGPK-3455-3270> on 30.05.2018.

<sup>37</sup> A. Owerczuk, *op.cit.* p. 34.

<sup>38</sup> F. Ziejka, *Ocalić dla potomnych narodowe pamiątki... O społecznym ruchu odnowy zabytków w Krakowie w XIX w.*, Czasopismo Techniczne 2-B, 9 [106]/2009, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, Krakow 2009, p. 373, retrieved at <http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/baztech/element/bwmeta1.element.baztech-article-BGPK-2984-1846> on 02.06.2018 r.

What other human art might sufficiently protect a building to save it from human attack? (...)*No other means is as effective in protecting a work from damage and human injury as is dignity and grace of form*<sup>39</sup>.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Roger Scruton argues that there was a time when people valued beauty above utility.

People need useless things just as much as ever, even more than they need things with a use. Just think of it. What is the use of love, of friendship, of worship? None whatsoever<sup>40</sup>.

I personally agree with him. I consider it a plus that this thought is still constantly valid. The highest form of ownership is possessing an object on account of its beauty. It contains no urge to consume and no perception of the object as one of many equivalents<sup>41</sup>. Much the same applies to owning a property for reasons of its beauty. Nothing will induce the owner to replace it with another, even one that better meets the demands of utility. Of course, aesthetic value has not succeeded in saving every important work. The list of structures which have been destroyed is a lengthy one and most certainly hasn't come to an end; Michelangelo's statue of Julius II in Rome, the Royal Tombs in the Basilica Cathedral of Saint Denis in Paris, the Orthodox Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, and then, most recently, Palmyra...<sup>42</sup> However, if there is one feature which can help to preserve a wondrous building, then that feature is beauty. Karl Friedrich Schinkel proclaimed that this is not merely an inessential, luxury extra, but that the obligation of the art of building is:

[t]o turn something useful, practical, functional into something beautiful – that is *architecture's duty*<sup>43</sup>.

As far back as 1943, one of the greatest critics of modern architecture, Nikolaus Pevsner, supported that standpoint, stating that:

---

<sup>39</sup> L. B. Alberti, *Książ dziesięć o sztuce budowania / On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, PWN, Warsaw 1960, p. 200, after Wysokiński K., *Piękno odczuwane. Po co nam wychowanie estetyczne?*, RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warsaw 2015, p. 11. English translation by J. Rykwert, N. Leach, R. Tavernor, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts-London, England 1988, retrieved at [https://books.google.pl/books?id=OFGTd1gQBXC&printsec=frontcover&dq=leon+alberti+ten+books+about&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewj-\\_OSlmM7bAhXOhKYKH eE0CgYQ6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=leon%20alberti%20ten%20books%20about&f=false](https://books.google.pl/books?id=OFGTd1gQBXC&printsec=frontcover&dq=leon+alberti+ten+books+about&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewj-_OSlmM7bAhXOhKYKH eE0CgYQ6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=leon%20alberti%20ten%20books%20about&f=false) on 07.06.2018.

<sup>40</sup> R. Scruton, *Why Beauty Matters*, *op.cit.*, time code: 15:18–15:32.

<sup>41</sup> R. Scruton, *Co znaczy konserwatyzm*, *op.cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>42</sup> K. Wysokiński, *Piękno odczuwane. Po co nam wychowanie estetyczne?*, RZUT +7. Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warszawa 2015, p. 11-12.

<sup>43</sup> A. de Botton, *op.cit.*, p. 46–47. English translation: Steffens M., *K. F. Schinkel: 1781–1841. AN architect in the service of beauty*, Taschen, Köln-London-Los Angeles-Madrid-Paris-Tokyo 2003, frontispiece, retrieved at <https://books.google.pl/books?id=g1tqD6F1XCwC&pg=PP6&dq=Karl+Friedrich+Schinkel+architecture+duty&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjMv43zn87bAhXPh6YKHRm3CGUQ6AEINzAD#v=onepage&q=translat&f=false> on 07.06.2018.

(...) *the term architecture applies only to buildings designed with a view to aesthetic appeal*<sup>44</sup>.

Neither the Enlightenment nor modernism has persuaded humankind that this is not the most vital feature of enduring architecture.

*English translation by Caryl Swift*

## References

- [1] *Adaptacja obiektów zabytkowych do współczesnych funkcji użytkowych*, praca zbiorowa, (red.) Szmygina B., Wydawnictwo Politechniki Lubelskiej, Warszawa-Lublin 2009, źródło: <http://bc.pollub.pl/Content/631/adaptacja.pdf>, data dostępu: 31.05.2018 r.
- [2] *Aktualność estetyki Kanta*, praca zbiorowa, (red.) Kaśkiewicz K., Schollenberger P., Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2016.
- [3] de Botton A., *Architektura szczęścia*, czyli barbarzyńca press, Warszawa 2010.
- [4] Cymer A., *Architektura czasów nadprodukcji*, [w:] (red.) Pobłocki K., Świątkowska B., *Architektura niezrównoważona*, Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Warszawa 2016.
- [5] Krier L., *Architektura wspólnoty*, słowo/obraz terytoria, Gdańsk 2011.
- [6] Królikowski J. T., *Współczesna interpretacja witruwiańskiej definicji przestrzeni architektonicznej*, Czasopismo Techniczne, Architektura z. 1-A / 2009, p. 74–77, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, Kraków 2009, źródło: <http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/bwmeta1.element.baztech-article-BGPK-3455-3270>, data dostępu: 30.05.2018 r.
- [7] Miłobędzki M., *Nieznośna lekkość*, autoportret 4 [59] / 2017, małopolski instytut kultury, Kraków 2017.
- [8] Owerczuk A., *Zmiana funkcji a zachowanie obiektów architektury*, Politechnika Białostocka, Białystok 2015, źródło: <http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-52aee908-d4fd-40a1-88ec-22945640c9d7>, data dostępu: 31.05.2018 r.
- [9] Pallasmaa J., *Materia, haptyczność i czas. Wyobraźnia materialna i głos materii*, Autoportret 1 [48] / 2015 Materiał/Materialność, Małopolski Instytut Kultury, Kraków 2015.
- [10] Rasmussen S. E., *Odczuwanie architektury*, Karakter, Kraków 2015.
- [11] RZUT +7. praca zbiorowa, Piękno, 2/2015, Fundacja Elewacja, Warszawa 2015.
- [12] Scruton R., *Co znaczy konserwatyzm*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2014.
- [13] (reż) Scruton R., *Why Beauty Matters*, BBC, Wielka Brytania 2009, źródło: <https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/why-beauty-matters/>, data dostępu: 29.05.2018 r.
- [14] Smith D., *Aesthetics, the Artist and the Audience*, w: red. Harrison W., Wood P., *Art in Theory. 1900-1990. An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell, Padstow 1999.

---

<sup>44</sup> A. Cymer, *Architektura czasów nadprodukcji*, in K. Pobłocki, B. Świątkowska (eds.), *Architektura niezrównoważona*, Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Warsaw 2016, p. 327. Original English quotation cited in S. Haines, *Nikolaus Pevsner (1900–1983)*, *The Architectural Review*, 13th January 2014, retrieved at <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/reputations-pen-portraits-/nikolaus-pevsn-1902-1983/8656870>.article on 07.06.2018.

- [15] Ziejka F., *Ocalić dla potomnych narodowe pamiątki... O społecznym ruchu odnowy zabytków w Krakowie w XIX w.*, Czasopismo Techniczne 2-B, 9 [106] / 2009, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej, Kraków 2009, źródło: <http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/baztech/element/bwmeta1.element.baztech-article-BGPK-2984-1846>, data dostępu: 02.06.2018 r.