THE PAST: SPACE AND TIME

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ABSTRACT
The article provides the analysis of an artistic work, a scenography installation on the rediscovered space with scientific means. Research was employed both to design the rediscovered space and to analyse it for this work. The research methods for design include photography, building of models etc. The research methods for the analysis are coming from philosophy (fenomenology) applied to architecture. The concepts of space and time looking to the past are regarded. The rediscovered space is different from the space of memory, but issues of memory are involved in its description. The methods used to make the installation may in restoration work as ancient places can be awaken to life by means of multimedia today, and a similar site imagined for the installation really exists, in Namibia. Other artistic means come to word: the art of gardens, or even film.

Keywords: memory, material, rediscovered, architecture, multimedia

INTRODUCTION
The time passes, is a succession of „now”s [1], which „pass” and is thus connected to the „pas”t, a sintagm which functions in many languages (also in Romanian: „trec” – pass, „trecut” – past). The flux of the time is irreversible [1]. And still Heidegger sees in general in the dimensions of past (of the „understanding”, „affective situation”, „falling”, „discourse” and of the „state-of-being-in-the-world”) an orientation to the future. For example we are afraid of something which we think that it will come. And still in this work we will orient our attention towards the past.

MATERIALS
1. Artistic approaches to express memory
I chose to write about an inscenation, an installation of architectural scenography completed in frame of a research workshop at the University of Arts and Design Karlsruhe called „Rediscovered Space”, idea which can be used also for today’s interpretation of the interwar architecture [2], including the view on photography. Actually it was about the second part of the research, united under the title of the seminar „Spaces of Encounter”. In the first part we had to create the bidimensional images of 1001 spaces, like
the ppes of a book. The memory of these spaces went lost and we were the „archeologists of space” looking to discover that memory and making it accessible to those who read the book. Such spaces can be defined a multitude: spaces of a nationality, spaces with certain attributes (for example white space, like Richard Meier’s singular spaces according to Baudrillard [3]), spaces dedicated to some actors, the spoken space, the vertigo space etc. In the second phase, after the seminar, for Rundgang 2001, the annual exhibition of art schools, I built these spaces virtually on computer, three dimensionally 3D, through simple wall compositions. In the second part of the seminar we had to build the 1:1 model of the access door into the Rediscovered Space (fig. 1). Actually, all the 1001 spaces had to be rediscovered, so a topic of the research was through what becomes this special. The rediscovered space is about the space of own memory, which is covered by forgetting. Starting from the idea that we are archeologists of space, I borrowed a symbol from archeology and I presented the space covered by sand, which has to be diggen out. In the same sand are boxes containing elements which address the senses. Differently from usually addressing the visual and maybe auditive sense, also objects which address the other, not reproductible, are contained. The space has to be diggen out from forgetting, from the sand of forgetting. There is an essential different between the rediscovered space, a space which went lost, somewhen in time compared to the „found” space. In Bucharest Cerasella Crăciun organised an exhibition to “Lost gardens” documenting former green spaces in the city. While these are irremediably gone, as there are buildings in their place, the situation is different in case of the rediscovered space. The „re”-rediscovered space existed somewhen, but we forgot about it, it is past and future at the same time, because we digg it out, so we go back to Heidegger and to the primacy of the future. Sand is not the only element with which something can be buried. In our projects we used more kinds of “material”. Another material was vegetation. Also vegetation can cover something when it gets forgetting as a cover. In Fig. 2 there is a photograph of us of a church transformed in ruin by the 1998 Azores islands earthquake, on Faial, seen 10 years after.

Fig. 1. The door to the rediscovered Space (M. Bostenaru, 2001)  
Fig. 2. Church ruin, Faial, Azores, collapsed in the 1988 earthquake
In the 19th century the romantic of ruins attracted not only photography such as Alfred Capel Cure but also painters such as Caspar David Friedrich. But vegetation doesn’t cover with “forgetting” only in the language of reality, but also in that of symbols. So in „Sleeping Beauty” [4] the rose bushes with thorns which covered the castle simultaneously with the covering with forgetting of what happened in the castle. We started from this beautiful story to build the Paradise Garden (fig. 3), at the University of Karlsruhe, under the supervision of Dieter Kienast.

![Fig. 3. Paradise Garden, model (M. Bostenaru, 1998)](image)

The concept is based on the idea of forgetting and rediscovering, of refining the space of the Paradise garden through multiple „doors” opened by the senses. In the garden of Paradise these „doors” are spaces [5] in the garden cut in the thorns and then roses network, once the access was found. The interpretation of senses was done on the basis of the five elements in Chinese astrology. Also the Paradise is something lost, irremediably lost, which we look to refind today in form of nature and especially of the garden. During Renaissance in European gardens it was introduced the concept of initiation gardens. Poliphilo [5] the way of whom is seeded with forests, grots, ruins, story animals, somptuous palaces, strange gardens, sees that through the descifration of symbols written on stones old of some thousands of years can the secrets of nature be understood: through the knowledge of the physical world the knowledge of the metaphysical world can be understood. The labiryinth gardens in the parks of castles are connected to this symbol.

In the film „Stalker” [6] the director Andrei Tarkovsky used another „material” which covers: water. The images are very plastical, but more impressive is the symbolic, seen in connection with the monologue of the main hero, the stalker. The stalker talks about the superiority of what is weak, because it is maleable and is a begin, towards what is hard, but old, inflexible, and close to the end. It is a surprising affirmation, but it convinces us, because we see it in connection with the water, element of life and renaissance. Here we don’t try anymore to rediscover the past, we try to
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rediscover the future, but through rebirth, so still connected to the past. The heroes led by the stalker are looking for the room in which wishes come true. The wishes come from the past, but are headed to the future. From this point of view the water is as „material” the closest to the vision of Heidegger towards the time. It is the „material” through which the time is represented in space. But also the rediscovering of the space of the past, of the memory which heads to the future, what happened in the past is in the past, but the memory is of the future, the discovery is of the past, the rediscovery is of the future. All these sustain the philosophy of Heidegger [1]. The connection has been made by a game called “Stalker, the Shadow of Chernobyl”.

I will quote from the vision of an architect about memory: “fragment of the memory of the city. The memories embodied in old walls, peeling fragments, lost edifices. The rubble of decay are houses, preserved and revealed for a decision about what is forgotten and remembered, what is no longer and not yet; in other words, not only the history of the city, but the city of history. Through a precise designation of the potential place that each absence commemorates, a new order emerges, one that no longer imposes upon the city what is foreign to it, but rather one that reveals that what is already there is also what is still to come.” [7]

Also Libeskind see this duality, between past and future, between forgetting and remembering. The past can be forgotten, but once remembered, it belongs to the present and maybe to the future.

2. Philosophical interpretation of the artistic work

According to Nietsche [8], forgetting can make us happier, if we live like the beast. It is possible to live without memory, but it is not possible to live without forgetting. He sees two enemies of history: the anhistorical (who forgets and can this way destroy a culture, a civilisation) and the superhistoric (who distances his view from what develops to the eternal). Between the monumental history (which thinks that the big doings of history can be repeated, because they took place once) and the antiquarian history (which considers that everything what comes from history is valuable) he proposes the critical history.

One more aspect which inspired us is the concept of „shadow”, at Heidegger [1] connected also the measuring, the clock. But the shadow can be much more, can be the shadow of the past. We used the concept of the shadow in the installation. The installation is actually the entrance door in the rediscovered space. But we don’t have anymore access to this space, we don’t have anymore the key, we see only the shadow and the light. The light comes from an element consciously placed outside, in a box. For the
entrance we used other metaphors, of the boxes buried in sand of the senses. These are the key, or maybe they are the „door” itself? Actually they are boxes of light, they are those who cast the light from behind the door because they open the remembering. The light is nothing else than the remembering while the shadow shows us, as at Heidegger, that time has passed. Each sense is such a light, which, as at Proust [9], opens our memory. It reminds us that the archeologists don’t find always buildings, but only objects that remind of a past civilisation. The civilisation is not brought to life through this, but we have a history of it. Mumford says that we didn’t know as much about the stones of the past wouldn’t have the written heritage remain [10]. The museified history, the way it is perceived today, is the future, the vestiges of the past become monument and places for touristic pilgrimage. The culture of the past, the way it is in museum, is something which belongs to the perception of the present and which we want to make accessible in the future, but it is not the bringing to life again of the past. The culture as it was we can rediscover by the means of art, not of the science of archeology, for example through a novel or a film. But we did not threat the archeological space, but the Rediscovered Space. To this belong also things which are not necessarily antique, but only old, for example family memories. Through this it is a personal space. Each one looking at the objects in the installation or through its virtual simulation for the Rundgang can build on its own a personal space.

Starting from Walter Benjamin’s writing on the concept of history at the National University of Arts in Bucharest there was an exhibition in December 2010 called “Fragments”, dealing with how the past is reflected in fragments of life, history, identities, perceptions, impressions as memories and moments. The same approach did we follow 10 years ago. Another aspect in the fragment of Heidegger’s work which serves to this work is that connected to the public time. Heidegger sees the public time in form of the measurable one, connected to the clock [1]. In this work, which threats the past, we will see the difference between the past time and that of the „Dasein” differently, the difference between the individual and the collective memory.

The Rediscovered Space, the own past, the Paradise Garden we look for or even the space of wishes in „Stalker” are connected more to the individual memory, there must be a memory or a wish of this in order to be able to be forgotten and to be able to be remembered. We will stop in our reflection also on the space of collective memory, namely the Place of University in Bucharest, Romania. For some people this is individual memory, for others, much too young, it is not. On the 23rd of May 2009 in frame of the exhibition „In Favour of Public Space” in frame of the
Architecture Annual 2009 „Public. Public Space”, Bucharest the film „University Place” [11] was projected, the projection being followed by a round table. This film and the aferent discussion referred to a space of memory in Bucharest. The topic of memory is closely connected to the topic of the space. A space can be itself an exhibition object serving the memory, as it demonstrates the Jewish Museum of Libeskind in Berlin. It is not about the rediscovered space, because for many of those interviewed this space was always present, while for the very young ones it did not exist. But is is about creating access to this space of memory for the young ones through the memory of those which were at the age of memory (the generation of ca. 35 years old or even more) when the events happened. Like any space this can be accessed through a „door” to enter the space, the question is which is the „door” to enter this space of memory? Is a memorial an adequate „door”? The pavement was renovated since the film was done without considering these suggestions. Is the cross a „door”? Or the box for candles? [5] In my opinion this aspect was not present in the film and in the discussion. There could be a single element of arts in public space which could be this door, and here we return to the aspect that neither the conference, nor the round table, did discuss which difference can arts make. The problem of identity, for example of immigrants integration, is also a problem of memory, the memory of the roots. It is remarkable that in both cases it is about collective memory, of the group which integrates through the use of public space or of the events in the University Place.

Further researchers have put in connection the philosophy of Benjamin, the phenomenology in the philosophy of Heidegger and the approach to spaces by Libeskind [12], [13].

3. The website of the research project

A few words about the website developed for the “Rediscovered space” (fig. 4, http://bostenaru.natkat.org/hfgrundgang/index.html). The navigation is based on frames and JavaScript.

![Fig. 4. Screenshot of the website of the Rediscovered Space](http://bostenaru.natkat.org/hfgrundgang/index.html)
The entry ppes shows a photo “by night” of the door to the rediscovered space. Two options for a navigation pop-up window are given, which correspond to the two parts of the seminar: the contribution to the ppes of the book on 1001 spaces of encounter and the door to the chosen space, which is the Rediscovered Space. The 1001 spaces of encounter are approached in 2D as collage and in 3D as Adobe Director film. A Shockwave plugin is necessary. The concept is the same in 2D and 3D: contours show the feeling of the space. There are synonimous spaces to those copyrighted by Daniel Libeskind. The collage contours are done with black paper, the 3D contours as walls in a cubic space. The door is shown in two ipostases: as a real door, covered with sand and with an external light lighting it from below, and as possible contents in boxes in sand (just like the ones in 3D), which addresses the 5 senses. These are objects that recall memory, for example old photographs and postcards. The site is based on images, even the links, and gives thus best multimedia experience, hard to describe in words.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER WORK

After making the project we came across photos of Kolemanskop in Namibia, how sand covers man-made artifacts, which was setting to several movies. Covering with sand is of course not the only way to cover by passing of time, the most frequent being vegetation, but also water is an alternative, such as in Stalker. This project wants to contribute with a way on how to see artistically the covering of the vestiges of the past and maybe an introduction to interventions on ruins. The site of Kolmanskop in Namibia (fig. 5 and 6) reminds by the sand which is covering the ancient site of diamond searchers of the installation we did for the rediscovered space. The architect and musician Iannis Xenakis designed the so-called “Polytopes”, some of them calling to life ancient sites such as Cluny (1972) or Persepolis (1971) by placing there a play of multimedia, music and light. Multimedia has passed today from exhibition sites (such as the Esedra fountain in Monstra d’Oltremare, 1938, restored 2006, Naples or the ExpoMedia by Kramm et Strigl, 2000) to everyday integration of elements of the past into new architectural developments, as in the Shopping Centre at Ettlinger Tor by Kramm et Strigl (2005).

Our installation involved multimedia elements, so a placing in real world would maybe use the means of Xenakis in the site of Kolmanskop. The site of Kolmanskop was stage for films, such as Dust Devil [14], so again, we have the means of film, instead of photography, calling for multimedia to awake the past in an artistic performance which follows the principles of philosophy.
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The focus in this research project laid on issues of space, reflecting memory, and not on the memory as such, which is a wider topic, encompassing also literature (see [15] on blindness and memory). It also highlights the links between architecture and philosophy, philosophy directions, such as Heidegger’s phenomenology (and the derived “spirit of the place” of Norberg-Schulz [16]) being a research method in architecture.

REFERENCES

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