

“LEARNING FROM DETROIT?” FROM MATERIALISED DREAMS TO BITTER AWAKENING

Aesthetics around decayed shopping malls

A B S T R A C T

Shopping malls were and are still particularly popular since the first ones were built in the 1950s. Curiously, both their frequent visitors and their most avid critics see them as the materialisation of the consumer society's dream. They are thus often considered as almost being “temples” of consumerism, where the activity of “shopping” substitutes other, more traditional forms of socio-cultural engagement. In the recent years we can experience an increasing interest in the documentation of decayed malls from a melancholic-nostalgic viewpoint in dreamy visions that in certain cases makes the images similar to the classical representation of Antique ruins. Is it only by coincidence, or is there a parallel between the appreciation of ruins of the temples of Antiquity and the ruins of the temples of consumerism? In case yes, then what can we learn from the attempts of aestheticisation of this decay? What can these series of artworks reveal on our present condition and approach to space, entertainment, consuming and life? I am bringing in my examination some considerations on Detroit, not (only) on the city itself, that has become a reference point, and sometimes even a “playground” for the analyses of contemporary decay, but on Detroit as a phenomenon or symbol, as well as some considerations based on the re-reading of Venturi, Brown and Izenour's milestone-book.

Zoltán Somhegyi

College of Fine Arts and Design, University of Sharjah

KEY WORDS

RUINATION AND ITS REPRESENTATION
CLASSICAL AND “CONTEMPORARY” RUINS
AESTHETICS OF DECAY
SHOPPING MALLS
BUILT HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

THE LURE OF MALLS

“There’s a lot of dough in shopping malls.” – as it was noticed by the well-middle aged architect, played by Alec Baldwin in a recent movie of Woody Allen titled: *“To Rome with Love”*. The partly cynical, partly self-critical observation came from the figure in the film who made a significant professional and financial career by constructing malls, and who serves as a semi-imaginary advisor and living conscience of one of the protagonists in his emotional turbulences.

The observation seems right – at the beginning. Malls pay well for their investors and for their designers, shopkeepers and naturally for the tax-collecting state too. And not only: if they “pay well”, it means that you as customer spend well. Both your money and your time. The mall with its fancy and glittery appearance somehow provides you with the illusion of elevating you high above the normal level of your everyday life. In fact, most likely, this illusion is what made and still makes shopping malls so popular since the first modern ones were built in the late 1950s. When you enter, for a couple of hours you can have everything.

Historically speaking, malls were also designed with the implicit intention of creating new centres outside the traditional downtowns. The lure and thus development of the modern suburban lifestyle from the 1940s onwards provided the comfort of having a piece of garden and avoiding the crowd of the city centre. Just a few years later early forms of malls started to appear in these peripheries, due to various reasons: unlike the dense downtowns land was more available that also signified new tax base for the state. The outskirt malls were not only closer to the new homes of the people, but also easier to reach by car. Besides this, the fact of having a new centre with a wide variety of retails and with opportunity of entertainment and leisure – even if artificially constructed, not in its gradual and “organic” development as in the case of traditional city centres – might have seemed like a reasonable urbanism concept. Curiously however, malls became so popular and prolific, that not much later, from the 1970s on they started to appear in the old centres and more inner parts of the cities too, either as a step of the gentrification of the less reputable areas, or as a means of revitalising the downtown that had started to lose customers since they were all pulled out to the outskirts. An early example of this is Horton Plaza in San Diego.

Curiously both the frequent visitors of malls and the most avid critics see these centres as par excellence materialisations of the consumer society’s

dream. The invitation is to buy everything and thus to realise your dream. Or, perhaps we can say they promise that you have the chance to become part of your dream, or even become your dream: You are what you buy, but what's more, you are what you dream (of buying), you are your dream. This lure results in the peculiar phenomenon that malls attract a massive crowd to spend enormous amount of time inside them – even without the aim of buying a concrete product.¹

They are thus often considered as almost being “temples” of consumerism, where the activity of “shopping” substitutes other, more traditional forms of socio-cultural engagement and interaction, as anticipated already in 1970 by Jean Baudrillard when writing about the fact that “*We have reached the point where consumption has grasped the whole of life*”.² This is why already in the 1980s they were started to be considered as new “town squares”, though many people were heavily criticising this tendency, and some countries were trying all their best in “postponing” their introduction.³

What we saw in the case of Antique temples with their courtyards, Christian churches with the Sunday market around them or mosques with bazaars built in their vicinity has changed in the case of modern malls: they provided the opportunity of shopping and passing time without the spiritual background behind them – background physically and metaphorically. The *shopping experience* or *shopping as a form of entertainment*, as this originally practical and straightforward activity is now referred to, tends to replace any other types of social or spiritual experience, in order to practically provide the “temple of consumerism” the same qualities as a classical one has. What's more, malls are often globally uniform, characterless typical “*non-spaces*”, just to quote Marc Augé's famous category, adding to that Claudine Isé's observation that these are “*spaces in which a number of dialectically held oppositions – between the diurnal and nocturnal, consciousness and unconscious, real and artificial, body and environment – suddenly become untenable.*”⁴

However, here I am neither examining the moral consequences of this and the state of consumerism, nor judging people whose main entertainment is to spend time in malls. I am rather interested in the potential aesthetic qualities connected to run-down malls and in what questions on our contemporary condition these may lead us to. Therefore, my current (aesthetic) examination starts when the malls' fancy days are over and signs of decay appear on both their formerly glamorous exterior and interior.

MALLS AND DECAY

I find it particularly curious how these malls can “survive”, perhaps not physically, but at least on an aesthetic level. Even after their active life is over, malls can actively influence our life in an indirect form. In recent years we can experience an increasing interest in the documentation of decayed malls. Several art projects and art itineraries, exhibitions, blogs, publications and conferences examine the questions connected to these edifices and also enquire how our attention and attitude towards them modifies and influences our current state of mind and the interpretation of our present condition and our future. Among these, the analysis of some photo series can be of special interest as these compositions often show an unexpected viewpoint, and successfully try to highlight the potential aesthetic values in the run-down state of these sites.

There are definitely many reasons for this increased interest, among which we can mention the general curiosity in ruination that fascinate many people, even without having a deep or specialised aesthetic education. Another reason can be derived from a rather nostalgic and/or melancholic approach of those who like to “mourn” over the passing and not-everlasting state of anything and everything that, in the case of malls might also get a bit of an extra “twist” of anti-capitalism and social critique. However, certainly one of the most curious features and reason of interest in the decayed malls is the fact that their ruination was definitely not planned. Of course, none of our buildings are neither planned nor desired to get ruined, nevertheless from the history of modern architecture we can occasionally find architects who took in consideration even the potential ruination – both “natural” and forceful or aggressive: as two famous examples we can quote Albert Speer and his ideas on “*Ruinwert*” or ruin value, or Sir Basil Spence, who, when designing the Trawsfynydd Power Station in Wales in the late 1960s and that is now getting partly demolished, asked himself: “*Will it make a beautiful ruin?*”⁵

Thus even if as notable exceptions we find Speer and Spence who were visionary enough to consider such factors in their constructions, malls are typically buildings that try to position themselves as far from ruination as possible. Continuing our metaphor, as their being temples of consumerism, malls must be pretty optimistic about eternity, including not only theirs, but continuously providing the (illusion of) eternal joy for their customers too – as a kind of extended present and presence or everlasting moment, where happiness never ends.

But let's concentrate on the decay, with a special attention to its representation. As mentioned above, decayed malls invite the observers to visit and document them. Even if the photo works are in most cases merely contemporary allegories of the transiency manifested in the ruined buildings – and, in fact, in less successful representations they come too close to a superficial and kitschy representation of decadence – sometimes they manage to treat the malls from a melancholic-nostalgic viewpoint in dreamy visions, that in certain cases make the images at first sight similar to the classical representations of Antique ruins. Let's briefly list a couple of these primary similarities between ruins of classical buildings and decayed malls – similarities both in their physical state and in their appearance when represented.

As it is well known, during any kind of ruination process, Nature starts to reconquer the building. It is a natural phenomenon, since each and all building is unnatural in a way, as we always build against Nature, not lastly to defend us and our valuables from being exposed to various natural elements. Thus not only the buildings' shapes, volumes, decorations and colours, but the very being of any of our constructions is unnatural. However, once their good old days have passed, their status starts to change, and as Nature surpasses the constructions, they become less and less unnatural.

One of the most spectacular and at the same time picturesque consequences of this being re-conquered by Nature – and that we can count as another common features between classical ruins and modern constructions in decay – is that the due to the gradual crumbling and due to the overcoming of natural elements the general tonality of the view is getting more and more homogeneous. During their active functioning, buildings – both classical and modern ones – normally stand out of their environment. After they cease to be used and maintained – for example, regularly repainted – edifices start to get dissolved in their context as it was sensibly described by, among others, Georg Simmel more than a century ago.⁶

Regarding the representation of decay of old and contemporary buildings, we can again find similar features: images (both painted and photo) highlight the signs of gradual decomposition of the construction. However, this gradual decomposition does not automatically mean even and parallel decrease, on the contrary: one of the most appealing specialties of ruination as well as one of the most often documented and represented features is the randomness of decay – we enjoy observing the unconscious “*Artist Nature*” in sculpting the building, sometimes leaving a whole wall almost intact, while other parts of the building are already erased completely. In many cases, both in depiction of classical

ruins and in photos of contemporary constructions in their ruination we can observe a particular focus on the random forms, the accidentally survived parts amidst the decayed elements and the concentration on the signs of survival and resistance within the general ruination. Connected to this, we can also often notice how professional artists and documentation-driven ruin-fans focus on anomalies in the appearance of the ruin: for example putting a strong visual accent on the reversion of the traditional relationship of inside-outside: the fact that we can enter the building not only through its usual openings, but also through the former walls, or that we can directly observe the sky from the once covered interior.

In a similar way, particular emphasis is given on the showing of “foreign” or “alien” elements inside the building, e.g. vegetation growing out of the former tiled pavement or small plants sprouting on the walls of the building – just remember how much the English botanist Richard Deakin was impressed by this phenomenon, such as he published a book in 1855 titled “*Flora of the Colosseum*” to list the not less than 420 species that he had found inside the monument.⁷

Further similarities between the representation of classical and contemporary buildings in ruination can be found in the silence and peace that these sites emanate – a kind of silence that is quite alien to the original function of the buildings, both temples and malls, as they are supposed to be filled with life and lively users... although here we find a significant difference: without repeating my earlier examinations on this subject in detail, I wanted to mention that while Antique ruins can be considered (and “felt”) as calming, contemporary decay is more “*incongruous*”, just to use Oliver Broggini’s expression.⁸

OLD AND NEW “TEMPLES”

Now after listing some of these similarities, our question should be if it is only by coincidence, or is there a – perhaps only unconscious – parallel between our appreciation of ruins of the temples of Antiquity and the ruins of the temples of consumerism, and if yes, what do they reveal for us?

Obviously, some of these features of the buildings are natural consequences due to physical reasons, i.e. the crumbling, deformation and erosion are common challenges to any building exposed to Nature. But the way these sites are presented in paintings or photos is a deliberate and conscious choice – for example the composition, the viewpoint, the special focuses and emphases. Why are these places described in such way, and what can be behind these attempts of aestheticisation of decay?

If we agree that classical ruins have in most cases a kind of nostalgic and melancholic ambiance or radiance then it is understandable that contemporary buildings at the start of their ruination process are depicted in a similar way in order to try to make them look like their noble forerunners. Hence, the similarities in the way of representing classical temples in ruins and decayed malls can be interpreted as an attempt – perhaps even unconscious or instinctive attempt – to *de-dramatise* the modern constructions' decay by providing the illusion of being able to place them on the same aesthetic level as the Antique ones. We try through all our possible means to avoid having to face the failure of our belief that the glamorous dreams materialised in the form of the mall will last forever.

In this way, nevertheless they were trying to be convincingly similar to classical heritage, when observing the often eye-catching images of run-down shopping malls, they clearly show the end of the dream. From the *bittersweet* melancholia and nostalgia traditionally connected to the classical ruins what remains here is only the *bitter* awakening from the *sweet* dreams. If the building and the values and all the happiness – fake and temporary happiness – connected to the functioning of the malls were the materialised dream, then the malls' defeat and decay may be the bitter awakening that our eternity that seemed to be guaranteed through the active consumerism can also be over one day, actually, pretty soon. And this makes the realisation of all this even more worrisome and tragic, i.e. not only the understanding of the fact that believing in the dream was a dead end, but also that already in our life we can get awareness of the Potemkin-like scenery of this failed dreams.

The long-before canonisation of Antique values had secured the survival of the aesthetically appealing character of the classical buildings, even in the form of ruins. But our current run-down buildings' future is more ambiguous. During the Neo-Classicism and Romanticism, at the turn of the 18-19th century optimistic architects and designers just couldn't wait that their buildings become noble, pleasing and sublime ruins – that could obviously not happen during their lifetime, as it is a longer process – so they imagined them as ruins, as well-known examples we can quote Joseph Michael Gandy's two images from 1798: the one showing the interior of the Rotunda of the Bank of England intact, while the other one in ruins, or Hubert Robert's pair of images depicting the suggested reconstruction of the Louvre and its ruins. Now it is just the contrary: when we see our very recent dreams – contexts of our desires from yesterday – in a ruined form, then instead of pleasing and sublime aesthetic objects, they rather look like worrisome and intriguing signs, and like question marks about our (near) future, question marks growing out from the decay,

just like the vegetation that starts to grow inside the former building. Perhaps exactly this feature explains the recent interest in the future that goes hand in hand with the rather retrospective interest of ruination. Actually in the last few years various large-scale art events started explicitly to examine this future perspective, including the 2015 edition of Venice Biennial (titled: *All the World's Futures*), the same 2015 Sharjah Biennial (*The Past, the Present, the Possible*) or the 2014 Istanbul Design Biennial (*The Future is not what it used to be*), just to mention a few examples, where many exhibited artworks directly analysed the aesthetic potentialities of ruination and rubble.

LEARNING FROM THE DETROITIFICATION?

Of course I do not intend to say that the representations of ruined malls should directly lead us to the Rilkeian aestheto-existential imperative to change our life or our lifestyle. But I contend that they might help us asking what we have learned or what we can learn from the “detroitification” of our modern and postmodern culture and its symbolic and iconic elements, including the malls that we all use on a daily basis, even if we had started to face their decay. What’s more, we face it in a way that is not even pleasing aesthetically, despite all our efforts of de-dramatising this very decay. Obviously, the expression of “detroitification” stands not only for the concrete US city itself, but it can in general describe how even an entire city can get devastated due to economic decline, depopulation, speculation, large-scale bankruptcy and all this, basically because of the exaggeratedly optimistic belief of continuous and constant economic development and prosperity. What’s more, for art lovers it is certainly a quite tragic and symbolic sign that currently more and more often the idea comes up of paying part of the city’s debt by starting to sell works from the Detroit Institute of Arts’ collection.⁹ Hopefully this will not be an example to be followed by other bankrupt cities.

The detroitified shopping malls, i.e. those that start to get ruined because of the lack of visitors and consumers who should provide life and drive (or economic fuel) to the malls are thus worrisome not only because they show the end of a dream, and not even because they are still too close to our time to get the classical noble patina – as I have suggested in the aforementioned article of mine as one of the reasons of the “worrisome” character of recent building’s decay – but also because we feel a bit impotent, helpless and even powerless when observing these sites. We just somehow cannot stop thinking of the large number of new ones that are being built at an ever growing pace, for example in the Middle and Far East, even though we see the dead-ends of the first ones as warning signs – in this way, feeling ourselves entering deeper and deeper in a downwards spiral.

Hence we don't really seem to be learning from all this, even if we could and should. In my title, besides Detroit, I embedded another reference as well, to Venturi, Brown and Izenour's book from 1972 titled *"Learning from Las Vegas"*, where the authors urged to study the tastes and values of the common and everyday architectural landscape – as they formulated: the *"commercial vernacular"* as well as the *"vulgar and Vitruvian"*, what they had found just as important as the examination of our classical heritage – in order to define and understand the present.¹⁰ Actually, they examined classical and contemporary (their contemporary) together, a bit like what I suggest here, i.e. that analysing the representation of these decayed temples of modern-age commercialism and consumerism also in comparison with the iconology of Antique ruins might help us in better seeing our present conditions and possibilities – possibilities or perhaps only ever weakening chances...

As a curious parallel, the authors described Las Vegas and drew their consequences when the phenomenon of mass-consumerism and the architectural forms and genres serving it were still relatively at their beginning – while now we can analyse the beginnings of their end. Obviously, what these malls manifest and materialise now is not exactly the future that we would like to face or imagine. Unlike Antique temples, malls do not look nice as potential ruin-candidates. Though perhaps difficult to describe, but the essence is missing from these malls, that kind of coherent symbiosis between the elements of architecture and decoration what makes Antique ruins pleasing even in the form of ruins. Just think of the precise examination of Venturi, Brown and Izenour about how commercial signs and symbols are dominating the Las Vegas landscape in such a degree that at the end architecture becomes *"symbol in space rather than form in space"*, and where *"the sign at the front is a vulgar extravaganza, the building at the back, a modest necessity. The architecture is what is cheap. (...) If you take the signs away, there is no place."*¹¹ This rapid process of becoming sign at the cost of dematerialising the architecture was illustrated by the regular changes of the *"fake"* facade of the Golden Nugget Casino.¹² As a matter of fact, we start to see the consequences of a similarly failed attempt also in the case of decaying malls: the commercial glamour will not provide essential and lasting architectural unity for the construction. As Robert Ginsberg observed it in his 2004 book titled *"The Aesthetics of Ruins"*: *"In making the original invisible, the ruin makes visible what is not meant to be seen. The hidden becomes evident, while what ordinarily is present is absent."*¹³ Hence, though malls tried to hide their vulnerability behind the commercial signs (both physically and metaphorically) as much as possible – when starting to get ruined, they cannot cheat anymore. This

is another symptom that even if they pretended to be eternal, they turned to be ephemeral. Just to illustrate this: often the malls – just like casinos in the exact analyses of Venturi, Brown and Izenour – disorient the visitors through the constant lighting day and night, a bit similar to what Baudrillard described as the „complete homogenization” of the ambiance in the “*sublimation of real life*”, where even the seasons disappear through the “*climate-controlled domestication*” of this artificial environment.¹⁴ Malls are thus denying the existence of time during their lifetime for the sake of pretending eternity, until the point when Time truly shows its existence and power through the ruination.

The images of decayed malls show how their masks – the advertising signs, the eternity-providing commercial symbols and consumer-incentivising messages addressing our basic instincts through refined psychological tricks – start to fall down, just like the non-existing facades of the Las Vegas casinos would unless their owners changed the neons every other decade. Actually, we can agree with Venturi, Brown and Izenour when they wrote that “*There is a perversity in the learning process: We look backward at history and tradition to go forward; we can also look downward to go upward*”, although today we need to be more careful and conscious than ever when learning from Las Vegas having the phenomenon of detroitification in mind.¹⁵ Therefore we need to complete the affirmation of the architect in the Woody Allen’s film when he noticed that there was a lot of dough in shopping malls. Malls truly pay well, but most probably we too are going to get ruined when we will have to pay it back with devastatingly huge interests.

NOTES

- 1 See for example: N. R. Kleinfeld, “Why everyone goes to the mall,” *The New York Times*, December 21, 1986, and an answer for this as a letter addressed to the editor by John Sumser, then Instructor at the Department of Sociology of the State University of New York, published in the same newspaper of 18 January, 1987.
- 2 Jean Baudrillard, “Consumer Society,” in *Jean Baudrillard – Selected writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). trans.: Jacques Mourrain, 33.
- 3 Cees Gorter, Peter Nijkamp and Pim Klamer, “The attraction force of out-of-town shopping malls: A case study on run-fun shopping in the Netherlands,” *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 94/2 (2003): 219-229., as well as Tony Hernandez and Ken Jones, “Downtowns in transition. Emerging business improvement area strategies,” *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 33/11 (2005): 789-805. See also the detailed analyses of Philipp Dorstewitz, from the perspective of John Dewey’s philosophy, of an attempt of converting an abandoned freight depot into a shopping and entertainment centre in Duisburg, Germany: Philipp Dorstewitz, “Reconstructing Rationality. Agency and Inquiry in John Dewey’s Project as a Foundation for Social and Urban Planning” (PhD diss., Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method, London School of Economics, 2008), especially chapter 9: Mines and Malls – A Tale of Two Cities.

- 4 Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. trans. John Howe (New York: Verso, 1995); Claudine Isé, *Vanishing Point* (Columbus: Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, 2005), 15.
- 5 Quoted in Clayton Hirst, “Pulling down Snowdonia’s power station would be a nuclear waste,” *The Guardian*, December 21, 2009, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/dec/21/snowdonia-nuclear-power-station-wales-architecture>
- 6 Georg Simmel, “The Ruin,” in *Georg Simmel 1858-1918. A Collection of Essays with Translations and Bibliography*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1959). trans: David Kettler, 263-264.
- 7 Christopher Woodward, *Tra le rovine. Un viaggio attraverso la storia, l’arte e la letteratura* (Parma: Ugo Guanda Editore, 2008), 29.
- 8 Zoltán Somhegyi, “Ruines contemporaines. Réflexion sur une contradiction dans les termes,” *Nouvelle Revue d’Esthétique* 13 (2014): 117. See also: Oliver Broggini, *Le rovine del Novecento. Rifiuti, rottami, ruderi e altre eredità* (Reggio Emilia: Diabasis, 2009), 9.
- 9 See details of the debate at: Laura Berman, “Van Gogh for sale? DIA tiptoes into art auction market,” *The Detroit News*, May 15, 2015, accessed May 29, 2015 <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2015/05/13/van-gogh-sale-dia-tiptoes-art-auction-market/27280699/>
- 10 Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, n.d.), see especially: XI, 18, 83, 161.
- 11 Venturi, Brown and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, 13 and 18.
- 12 Venturi, Brown and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, 106.
- 13 Robert Ginsberg, *The Aesthetics of Ruins* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2004), 51.
- 14 Venturi, Brown and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, 49. and Baudrillard, *Consumer Society*, 34.
- 15 Venturi, Brown and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, 3.

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‘UČENJE OD DETROITA?’

OD MATERIJALIZOVANIH SNOVA DO GORKOG BUĐENJA ESTETIKE OKO DOTRAJALIH TRŽNIH CENTARA

Zoltán Somhegyi

Tržni centri su bili i još uvek su naročito popularni jer su prvi izgrađeni 1950-ih. Zanimljivo, i njihovi česti posetioci i njihovi najveći kritičari ih vide kao materijalizaciju sna potrošačkog društva. Oni se tako često smatraju gotovo ‘hramovima’ konzumerizma, gde aktivnost ‘kupovine’ zamenjuje druge, tradicionalnije oblike društveno-kulturnog angažmana. U poslednjih nekoliko godina možemo iskusi sve veće interesovanje za dokumentacijom propalih centara sa melanholično-nostalgičnog stanovišta u sanjive vizije koje u nekim slučajevima čine slike sličnim klasičnom predstavljanju antičkih ruševina. Da li je to samo slučajnost, ili postoji paralela između uvažavanja ostataka hramova antike i ruševina hramova konzumerizma? U slučaju da da, šta onda možemo da naučimo od pokušaja estetizacije ovog propadanja? Ono što ove serije umetničkih dela mogu otkriti o našem sadašnjem stanju i pristupu prostoru, zabavi, konzumaciji i životu? Ja dovodim u svom ispitivanju neka razmatranja o Detroitu, ne (samo) o samom gradu, koji je postao referentna tačka, a ponekad čak i “igralište” za analizu savremenog propadanja, već i Detroitu kao fenomenu ili simbolu, kao i neka razmatranja na osnovu ponovnog čitanja prekretnice knjige Venturija, Brauna i Izenura.

KLJUČNE REČI: RUŠENJE I NJEGOVO PREDSTAVLJANJE, KLASIČNE I “SAVREMENE” RUŠEVINE, ESTETIKA PROPADANJA, TRŽNI CENTRI, IZGRAĐENO NASLEDE I OČUVANJE

PREMA POST-DIGITALNOJ ESTETICI

Anna Daudrich

Tokom proteklih decenija, digitalna tehnologija i mediji su se čvrsto integrisali u skoro svim oblastima savremene kulture i društva. U tom kontekstu, internet, kompjuteri i mobilni telefoni se više ne smatraju proizvodima novih medija, već se uzimaju zdravo za gotovo. Sa ovom pozadinom na umu, ovaj rad predlaže uzimanje post-digitalnog pogleda na današnje medijsko društvo. Koncept ‘post-digitalno’ odnosi se na estetiku koja više ne posmatra digitalnu tehnologiju kao revolucionarnu pojavu, već kao normalan aspekt svakodnevnog života ljudi. Tačnije, post-digitalna estetika se bavi okruženjem gde je digitalna tehnologija postala tako uobičajena, da se njeno postojanje često ne priznaje. Na osnovu analize savremenih umetničkih dela i prakse inspirisane svoje okoline, ovaj rad ima za cilj da dovede te fenomene u svest koja je postala neprimetna u savremenom digitalnom okruženju. U tu svrhu, ova istraga prevazilazi formalno-estetske analize, već se fokusira na istragu o receptivnom aktu. Konkretno, post-digitalna estetika nastoji da opiše i analizira promenljive oblike percepcije pod uticajem povećane digitalizacije okoline. U kontekstu ove analize, estetika se stoga razume ne kao cilj sama po sebi već kao sredstvo da se poboljša razumevanje savremene digitalne kulture.

KLJUČNE REČI: POST-DIGITAL, DIGITALNA TEHNOLOGIJA, ESTETIKA, PROMENJENO ISKUSTVO PERCEPCIJE

KONJUNKCIJA UMETNOSTI I ŽIVOTA: ONTOLOGIJA MESTA

Bojana Matejić

Postajanje umetnosti životom i relativna bliskost ovog koncepta idealitetu autarkije (αὐτάρκεια), implicira maksimu koja koincidira sa emancipatorskim obećanjem umetnosti. Autori neomarksističkog kruga su pripisali ovu maksimu, po svemu sudeći, Marksovim ranim radovima, naročito određenom setu teza iz njegovih Ekonomsko-filozofskih rukopisa iz 1844. i elaborirali je, dalje, na ovim osnovama. Ova maksima je bila primenjena u mnogim avangardnim praksama do danas: Brehtovo političko pozorište, Deborov situacionizam, specifična mesta (site-specific), flukus, socijalna skulptura Jozefa Bojsa, itd. Zajednički imenitelj svih ovih avangardnih praksi može biti označen imperativom afirmacije njihove upotrebne vrednosti – njihove realizacije na mestu vlastite proizvodnje, spram apstraktnosti njihovog postavljanja u svet. Mesto ove proizvodnje jeste mesto same proizvodnje društvenosti. Shodno tome, cilj ovog rada jeste preispitivanje maksime o *postajanju umetnosti životom*, u svetlu Badiouove ontologije mesta i na primeru modaliteta radova specifičnih mesta u uslovima savremenosti.

KLJUČNE REČI: UMETNOST, GENERIČKI ŽIVOT, EMANCIPACIJA, SPECIFIČNA MESTA, KARL MARKS, ALAN BADJU
