COMICOPOLIS

A B S T R A C T

The architectural presentation is composed of one rendering, or a series of rendering, a perfect moment, representing the idealization of the not yet realized project. What would happen if we could find out how the project was designed, how each layer was added until the final form was reached and the people represented could help telling the architectural story?

The flexible hybrid graphic medium of comic strips, which combines in their structure, the narrative element, space and movement, has always had a strong connection with the notion of architecture (symbolic protagonist or even center of the comics' story). The doctoral thesis, *Comicopolis. An alternative manner of presenting, discussing and designing architecture*, analyzes through theoretical study, interviews and experiments, the way the characteristic elements of comics can improve the traditional architectural representation, the way we interact with architecture and the design process of space.

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KEY WORDS

COMICS

SEQUENCE

FICTION

NARRATION

HIGH INTAKE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between architecture and comics, not being a recent phenomenon, can shape its starting point from the moment when Le Corbusier manifested his fascination for Rodolphe Töpffer's comics.¹ The architect himself chose to use the graphic narrative in „Lettre a Madame Meyer” (1925), for the presentation made for his client, of the unrealized project of the Ville Meyer (Neuilly-sur-Seine, Paris). Exploring the degree of variety that can be achieved in a single family home, Le Corbusier illustrates the project, using both *image* and *narration*, in a *sequential presentation*, consisting of fluid sketches, unframed, with similar proportions, depicting the indoor and outdoor space of the house, urging the client to examine the proposal space, step by step.

Comics represent the point where *words*, *sequences* and *images* meet. The flexibility of this hybrid medium of graphic representation combines *narration*, *space* and *movement*, possessing a big potential of building powerful stories about people, places and emotions. A rich and varied manner of expression, not only used as an amusing artistic medium dedicated to children and teenagers, comics can be a stimulating manner of rapidly promoting the culture of the country of its origin.

The doctoral thesis, *Comicopolis. An alternative manner of presenting, discussing and designing architecture* discusses through theoretical study, projects analysis, interviews and experiments, a brief foray into sequential art history, a presentation of architectural visionary groups, who have used this type of graphic representation, along with a number of architects who experienced with sequential art, bringing strong arguments for the development of this direction of analyzing and designing the built space.

Since immemorial times, sharing a story is deeply rooted in humans' social behaviour, stories being the channel to impart knowledge, to discuss moral principles or to satisfy various curiosities. The fact that sequential art was used for centuries to tell stories is underlined by Scott McCloud in his book „Understanding Comics.”² The author nominates a series of artistic manifestations, starting since prehistory, using sequential art, like: cave paintings, paintings on the tombs' surface of Egyptian leaders, scenes engraved of the surface of jewelry, Japanese medieval parchments, silhouettes painted on Greek vases, scenes depicted on the surface of heroic and religious monuments, paintings found on the interior and exterior walls of churches and monasteries, etc. Evolving rapidly into paintings and engravings (still considered remarkable today, William Hogarth's series of paintings, *A Harlot's progress* (1731) and

A rake's progress (1733), or Rodolphe Töpffer's satirical illustrations) comics show a massive increase in popularity with the advent of the printing press, thus making them accessible to the general public.³ The first contribution of illustrators in American newspapers like *New York Times* (1851), *New York World* (1860), and *New York Journal* (1895), marked the moment of explosion of this type of artistic expression. Although it was initially presented only in the content of American newspapers, the natural evolution of things led to the moment in which the comics became an independent publication.

Different comic book series from the late 1930s explored the city, as the definition of the framework within which daily life runs, but also as the origin of modern myths, noticing a more careful study of the aesthetics, atmosphere and writers possibilities in superheroes or detective stories. There is a famous joining of fictitious cities and consecrated superheroes: Superman fights crime in the luminous Metropolis, Batman lives in the violent Manhattan in 1939, but from 1941 in Gotham City, Marv, Dwight McCarthy and Jon Hartigan explore the dark Basin City (which becomes Sin City), Judge Dredd is a policeman in Mega-City One, etc.⁴ The city, an atmospheric element, is the support frame of the entire action, a key element for the manner in which events run in a comic series, being able to go from the role of a symbolic protagonist, to the center of attention.

METHODS

The research method of the doctoral thesis *Comicopolis. An alternative manner of presenting, discussing and designing architecture* contains four different approaches: 1) a theoretical study, analyzing the time evolution of comics, (including a short history of American comics, Romanian comics, visionary architectural groups and architects that have used this type of artistic approach); 2) analyzing a number of comics, graphic novels, and movies which support the theoretical study; 3) performing a series of graphic and photographic experiments, with participants of different age (during the five experiments, I had the opportunity to work with children and students, with ages from 3 years to 10 years, as well as teenagers and young people, with ages from fourteen to twenty two years); 4) a series of interviews with comic artists and architects, that have chosen comics as a way of presenting, discussing and designing the built space.

The series of interviews and discussions, in addition to the theoretical research, were conducted with comic illustrators that are also architects, who chose to

combine the two arts or they preferred, in the end, to dedicate themselves completely to the art of illustration (prof.dr.arch. Zeno Bogdănescu, Mirel Drăgan, Răzvan Chelaru, Mati Botezatu), comic illustrators (Robert Obert), comics critics (Romanian historian and comic critic Dodo Niță), architects who analyzed the visionary architectural groups' buildings (Fala Atelier, architects Ana Luisa Soares and Fillipe Magalhaes lived for an year in Kisho Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower) but also dialogues with architecture collectives that use comics to present and analyze their projects (Peantuz Architekten collective, Mrs. Pea+ Mr. Nutz).

The results of experiments carried out during the research aimed to highlight the advantages of comics' features when we explore the architectural project. We can create, using the attributes of this type of graphic representation, stories around the architectural object, bringing into discussion at least one character, that through the activities that he or she carries out, can help the process of understanding of the building or of the architectural ensemble, which we aim to design. Once the story was created – the workshop participant had the freedom to experiment with the limits of designing, without the constraints imposed by contemporary methods of building – the next step was the graphic representation of the architectural project. Sequencing as well as the in-between spaces compelled the presentation to tell the story of the architectural objects, built in time, so we could add new perspectives from which we observed space.

RESULTS

Architects who choose comics as a means of presentation, critical analyse, or in some cases use the characteristics of comics as a method of designing, may face hostility not only in professional circles (often, architects consider that the seriousness with which architecture must be treated, may profoundly contradict the exclusive joviality nature, that was wrongfully associated with comics, for a long period of time) but also from the world of comic artists, which don't want their universe invaded by outside specialists. In an interview with the anthropologist Mélanie van der Horn, the comic artist, François Schuiten, the illustrator of the series *Les Cités Obscures*, indicates he is afraid the use of comics in architecture, could have a negative influence, with the side effect of underestimating the complexity of this means of expression. The artist continues, adding that one should not commit this injustice, the comic strips being a mature and complete artistic expression (that has its own rhythm, follows a script, gives its readers the opportunity to experience strong emotions, not needing sound, motion and sometimes, not even colours to tell a story), not

just a simple replacement.⁵ Schuiten defends its firm position, in relation to this topic, while declaring his fascination for the expressive quality of early architectural drawings, arguing that his personal experience,⁶ determined him to reach this conclusion.

But architects who chose comics as an alternative manner of expressing have a great respect for sequential art, hold deep knowledge about the concepts of this art, recognizing the complexity of its creative process. Far from being considered a free gesture, only used to attract another category of public, comics require an intimate research, allowing the architect who creates it, because of its mixed nature, to present analytically and critically the story of the architectural proposal. All these elements lead to a number of different graphical results (in terms of composition, dynamics, colour, rhythm in which the story takes place, etc.) differing from traditional comics. Clearly, it is necessary not to forget, when we approach a sequential presentation of the project, the essence of the traditional architecture representation, its defining elements, ensuring ourselves that we can provide just as much information about the architectural proposal.

A strong inspiration for the experiments conducted throughout the research, were the visionary architectural groups, who made an important contribution joining this type of sequential presentation and the traditional architectural representation. In a decade dominated by the moon landing, The Beatles and pink Floyd, the music festival Woodstock, the hippie current, the Vietnam War, were formed architectural groups with a creative thinking and an optimistic view about technology. These groups of young architects created poetic proposals, defined by a strong technological enthusiasm, they explored the possible evolution of machines, embracing or questioning the technological utopias, the social aspirations, deeply concerned about the rapidly changing needs of society. At the end of this decade, the enthusiasm began to diminish, but not before leaving a vast graphic legacy. The used combination of visionary architecture, pop culture, art and rebellion, made their works known beyond the limits of the circles interested in the history and evolution of architecture and urbanism. To this day, largely due to the exceptional aesthetic quality, remain fascinating groups like: Archigram, Archizoom, Metabolist Movement or Superstudio.

The Archigram architects introduced the defining elements of comics in the process of designing and presenting the architectural project: *the high intake of the individual*, (which in the traditional architectural presentations was present

only to give scale to the designed object), or using him/her in the design process of the space, as architect Yona Friedman did in his proposals, *the flexibility* of the object (like Archigram's Walking City, the town-building that was able to move or Friedman's architectural frames in which users build their own housing units) and *fiction* (as means of exploring utopian scenarios in order to test the design's limits).⁷

Essential for this research was the fourth issue of Archigram manifesto - magazine, that was returning to the concerns of the first manifesto, namely seeking new ways to get out of the architectural scene continues stagnation. For the issue *Zoom!*, the Archigram architects found inspiration in the comic strips universe, arguing that the design of the new architectural proposals was appropriate to the period that they were crossing. Elements such as the capsule and the spacecraft had to cease to exist only in the fantastic universe of comics, and their characteristics should be able to be transferred to the newly designed buildings. One of the weaknesses of urban space is the inability to contain in its landscape objects that can move rapidly and freely, but the imaginary space of comics gives the freedom to create such elements.

Little Architects workshop

In 2011, when I worked as an art teacher in a small association (Atelier Aici), I decided to start with the children I was drawing every week, a project related to the subject of my research. This workshop completed another perspective on a broader experiment, in which I tried to prove that an architectural project can be presented and discussed using sequential art.

The workshop's theme was the illustration of an experimental architecture project. With Archigram's projects „Walking City” (Ron Heron, 1964) and „Gasket Homes” (Ron Haron, Warren Kal, 1965) in mind, I began working on a script. I chose the architectural project to be presented within a story, being careful not to omit the usual information presented in a classical representation of an architectural project, naturally adapting these requirements to the age of the children I worked with.

From June 1 to September 2011, I held four workshops, for different categories of age. The story was adapted for each of the four sessions. (Figure 1)

The base story (a man comes into contact with a group of strange architectural objects, similar to insects, that was capable to move throughout the desert landscape of an unknown planet, in the purple sunset of its two suns), which

Figure 1. Little comic architects, drawing a fantastic story about the encounter between a lost man and an insect like form of mobile and flexible architectural object (photographs by the author)

Figure 2. Drawings made by children from North Namibia, Africa, during the workshop *SuperSimetry* (photographs by the author)

each of the participant developed, was divided into six moments. During the workshop conducted for the age group four to eight years, a seven year boy stood out, and through his interpretation of the story, enriched my vision on the subject. He clearly explained me, in his own words, that there is not a unity of the general concept, which should be included into the smallest details, (plants, animals, the general landscape, not only on the architectural object which the presentation focuses on). While he was drawing one of the comic strip's frame, he gave an example of a special flower, that during the day was capturing light and solar heat, then during the night, it would keep people warm. The little boy personalized the series of events created additional links within the story, that weren't in the original script.

During the workshop for the age category sixteen to eighteen years old, who were preparing for the admission exams at the Faculty of Architecture, I noticed the participants having difficulties in adapting and responding to the freedom of the unusual theme (for example: the size of the console, the size of the windows, the location of the structure, etc.). Their interpretation of the story consisted in architectural objects, adaptations, very similar to examples of contemporary architecture, drawings that offered few personal notes.

SuperSymetry Project, Namibia

In 2012, along with my fellow architect Brîndușa Tudor, I spent six weeks in a school campus, in the North part of Namibia, near the Etosha National Park. Our project consisted in a different kind of comic strip workshop, working with twenty five children with ages between six and fourteen. The whole process was conducted in a range of techniques, based on a story populated with real and fantastic characters, focusing our attention on the specific architectural objects of that part of the world.

We created a fictional story around an episode from the life of a little boy, who on his way back home from school was taken up in the sky by a big storm. During his adventure, he meets another young boy, a *mukua* (the local name for white people), visits his house, his church, and together end up saving a little girl who was kept prisoner by a wizard (a very important figure in the Namibian traditional culture). They all get acquainted with a fantastic creature, obtained by the crossing of two animals, and at the end of the road they help to rebuild a magic city, owned by ants and bees. As a reward for their help, the ants and bees will dig up an old flight instrument, which will take the protagonists of the story back to their homes.

During the workshops, the discussion was focused on the architectural objects, from the little boy's house, the earthen hut covered with hay, to the lush house of the little *mukua*, the wizard's hut full of mysteries, the church they spent the night in, and also the fantastic city of bees and ants, a collage of housing, tailored to the different requirements of the two groups that inhabit it. The characters used helped investigate the architectural objects and of course supported the linearity of the story. (Figure 2)

We used a wide range of techniques, from crayons, markers, tempera, coloured cardboard and foil collage, potato stamps, chalk drawings on the floor, face painting and models made of sand, to better understand the complexity of the drawn architectural objects.

At the beginning of each workshop we covered a condensed version of an episode of the story, leaving all features of the characters and the form of the architectural objects to the student's free interpretation, and also the total freedom to add additional elements to the base story, to complete their own version of the comic strip.

From the students' drawings you could easily capture touching details of their lives (one legged boy drew the main character looking like him, the poverty of their own houses, in strong contrast to what they believed the mukua's houses looked like – because many of them never left the small villages they were born in), but also the vision they had on the architecture that surrounded them. Most surprising was to see how some of them were drawing houses overlaying on the building's facade blueprints of furniture elements, though no one had taught them such notions. Two little girls drew the windows outside the house, and the sun's rays were strongly pulling a car. I noted very creative representations during the workshop in which we talked about the comic strip characters venturing into the village church and cemetery (the students drew blueprints of the graves, with intact skeletons inside of them). The children received with great delight the workshops where we used the technique of collage with colourful cardboard and flowers, giving the fantastic city of bees and ants highly concentrated interpretations, worthy of abstract paintings, or in other cases, great minutely detailed drawings.

At the end of the workshop, and also at the end of the school semester, we chose to put on stage the whole story, writing a small play, rehearsing it together, building and painting our own sets and costumes. This way we were able to completely understand the story told in the weeks that had past, during our workshop.

Because we got very used to utilize sequential representation, at the end of our time spent in Namibia, we decided to document other elements using this technique: the local houses' doors, which were of powerful creative variety, the same model of plastic chair, used by all the locals, and also the way we dressed during our time spent in the villages (the locals asked us to always wear skirts, or cetenge – the traditional Namibia skirt – and so, we got inspired by their colourful cloth choices, and decided to experiment ourselves).

During the six weeks we spent in Namibia, we had the opportunity to participate in the building of a house, using only traditional methods used by the locals. We worked alongside two locals, Jonas and his wife, building a house about thirty square meters, with a wooden structure, the roof made from hay, with packed earth walls. The physical work was carried out with a slow rhythm and was often interrupted by the difficult communication, Jonas spoke Sifwe – a Namibian dialect – and very little English, we spoke English and too little Sifwe. Even so, we got to see and participate in all the stages of the house construction, protecting ourselves from spiders that appeared when digging the foundations, and taking lessons from one of our former students, who decided to help on the construction.

MicroArchitecture workshop

Wishing to continue the experience we have had with children in Namibia, we decided to continue the experiment – telling stories through architecture – these time, choosing the narrative element, as part of the comic strip structure I proposed along with my colleague architect, Brîndușa Tudor, in the autumn of 2013, a two hours weekly microarchitecture workshop, for children with the minimum age of six.

We started by creating a character, a pirate, a princess, or even the workshop participant, trying not to impose a certain typology but to urge the children to imagine a one day route for their character. And on this route, we tried to underline the architectural objects that we encountered: schools, kindergartens, restaurants, museums, the neighbor's house, etc. We tried to draw general ideas about the neighborhoods, cities, services they have created, so in addition to what they imagined, we could add some theory information about the structure and functions of a city, without canceling the functions that don't exist in the real world (for example: the school with a suspended beach, the kindergarten with a windmill room, leading to a lookout with a telescope and a cat, which was bind to a maze, that was the center of a portal who was able to send you directly to camp).

Figure 3. Children drawing and making models of fictional neighbourhoods, during the *MicroArchitecture* workshop (photographs by the author)

Figure 4. Rooms from Tei Dorms, University of Architecture and Urban Planning „Ion Mincu”, Bucharest, as part of a reading architectural space experiment (photographs by the author)

For the building of the models, we used balsa wood and polystyrene, combined with toothpicks, wool and tinfoil texture, to spend as little time as possible on this part of the project, thus focusing a great part of our time, on the story about architecture. (Figure 3)

We talked about all of the new imagined cities (the Pirates' City, Rapunzel's City, Sleeping Beauty's City) where we developed examples of common functions, like restaurants, schools, kindergartens, but also fictional functions, like tower castles with pizza places on the ground floor, hotels with ladies having a bad hair day and talking statues.

In the last workshop we approached an alternatively way of investigating architecture within a story, when we chose to develop a complex function, such as the airport, who contained: the runway, the hangar, the heliport, the waiting room, the news stand, the bus station, a clothing store, a pizzeria, without neglecting the planes, the helicopters or buses.

Once we played for a few weeks with polystyrene, in the second part of the workshop series, we decided to increase our team by adding a volunteer architect student. This time, we tried to explore various functions, drawing buildings on generous pieces of cardboard, and then placing them in layers in a fictional small neighborhood, at the end of each session.

Thus arose: tea houses, that have rooms filled to the brim with only cups, theaters with cats on the rooftops, contemporary art museums harboring paintings with balconies, hands or balloons, factory cakes filled with candy stripes, departing to various buildings in the city, not before losing a cake on a cloud, colorful ice cream factories, hotels with pools accessible only from a suspended disco trampoline. The university of Architecture and Urban Planning building was laid in our fictional town, near a kindergarten, the architect students sharing with the children the same playground, a connecting tunnel and a panel which they can freely draw on.

Reading the architectural space:
Tei Dorms, University of Architecture and Urban
Planning „Ion Mincu”, Bucharest

The architecture of a building brings people's lives together. When an architect designs a house, simultaneously shapes the life of its occupants, but the moment he starts using the space, the new inhabitant shapes the architecture, so the house starts living along the one who inhabits it, thereby constantly gaining a new layer, a new meaning.

Starting from this idea, I thought that for this type of exercise the dorms building of the University of Architecture and Urban Planning „Ion Mincu” was suitable, in which I lived for three years, while I was a student. Trying to read the space of this building, I photographed each room, from approximately the same point of view, to observe the similarities and differences resulting after different people occupied the same type of space.

I managed to photograph fifty-four rooms, during my two visits. I encountered sceptical and suspicious glances, but also excited students, prepared to participate in the experiment. The source of their distrust came from a recent experience. A few months before my visit, in the winter of 2015, a journalist asked permission to photograph some rooms, to have the necessary material to write an article about the freedom of the bohemian life of a student, however, once the article was actually published it turned out to be a harsh critic piece, focusing on the clutter and disorganization of the rooms.

In the photographs we can observe the same architectural space, multiplied by fifty-four, but each room is completely different. We can distinguish a multiple ways in which the students tried to separate the study area from the night area, a whole variety of colours, textures, all of the elements shaping different stories. (Figure 4)

Some of the key elements of living together were still very fresh in my mind: the lack of privacy when five people live in an area so small (problem solved in a room with the help of yellow with white daises makeshift curtains, that housed the space of a bunk bed of a not very friendly male student) the importance of your drawing table, which is certainly the centre of the architect student universe, the desire to transform the room, making it a multifunctional space (example: the little kitchen improvised in the room's hall : “Excuse us, we just fried some chicken. Would you like some?”) the fear that someone from outside will judge the mess of the room, the tension of some students, thinking that their mum could see an ashtray in one of the photographs, excitement that the experiment takes place on their birthday, etc.

Looking at the photographs we can observe: completely different floors, a variety of wood essence used, different shades of carpet, linoleum, old rugs, that were a gifts from grandparents, rooms with one coloured wall, with two different coloured walls, or with each wall having a different shade of colour, with photos, vinyls, projects, or origami animal stuck on walls, which are covered with pencils and markers drawings, drapes, blinds, linen or

lace curtains framed the windows, beer bottles hanging from purchased or improvised lampposts, hammocks, bicycles, skateboards, parts of models, etc.

Super Hero in Polytechnic University

When I was approached by the members of ASSAF association, in the spring of 2015, to do a workshop about creativity, I was uncertain that I could carry out an artistic product with Polytechnic University's students, which in my opinion had a clear professional path that had very little to do with comics, architecture or drawing.

After a first discussion with those who have proposed the workshop's theme, I learned that for a large part of the students I would work with, Polytechnic University was not the first choice. So adding this information to my plan to create a comic with them, which certainly was not in their academic curricula, I decided to develop the theme of the workshop.

I wanted to start from the question we all have to answer at least once in our life: *What do you want to do, when you grow up?* I considered it was a good starting point for students to remember what profession they were dreaming to have, going back in time, at the age when these decisions were taken easily. Simplifying, when we were kids, we were dreaming to be doctors, astronauts, artists, lion tamers or pirates. What would happen if we could go back to that place?

Once we determine the job that he or she wanted to practice, we underline its characteristic feature, and then we transform it into a superpower. The next step is to outline a superhero, and place him or her in the present time, in a place the students know best and where they spend most of their time – Polytechnic University campus. On this occasion we can, even if only as a creative exercise, that is conducted for a period of three days, to reintegrate elements of the job we dreamed to have as kids.

I took into consideration the possibility that I wouldn't have any participants in the classroom, when the workshop started. I met seven shy students, who looked with distrust at the pencils, markers and papers I prepared for them, telling me, almost from the first minutes: „I don't think I know how to draw anymore.” Anticipating such problems, I underlined, starting from the workshop description, that drawing correctly was not a prerequisite for participation. Unlike other workshops I conducted so far, it was necessary to extend the time for our presentation, to try to encourage the students to relax

as much as possible. After a long discussion about what profession each of us wanted to practice when we were children, the participants began to shape their first sketches. Considering important not to directly intervene in their graphic representation, I offered my hand, leg, eye as models, and I tried to give them some technical notions about the composition of a comic strip, the structure of a page, a sequence, etc.

When asked „What bothers you in the Polytechnic University campus?” I received the most varied answers: damaged classrooms, obsolete laboratories, outdated equipment, practical courses that do not have the materials needed to practice, becoming just an exercise in imagination, proposed by teachers, lack of common spaces for relaxation, outdated and rigid architecture, the existence of areas of the campus where students do not feel safe.

Establishing what was everybody dreamed profession, we outlined a few superheroes with highly personal powers: *Asgarder*, the heroine coming to help students when they encounter difficulties learning, taking each of them in a fantastic journey, into the Universe, until they could solve every problem, *Superelement*, a superhero which teleported the students in every step of a process, even though they had to go inside the human body, *Freia*, a warrior princess who was supporting students who had trouble with public speaking, *Miss Galaxy*, the super teacher offering a magic light ball that solves any problem, provided it is passed on, *Telecop*, the heroine, who once struck by lightning became a formidable policeman, who had the ability to teleport anywhere there was a villain, *Sublima*, who helped ladies who had a meager wardrobe and *Webmed*, who when a student was having a bad day, would carry him through the „feelings net” in a place where he or she could find tranquility and regain balance, thus giving him the power to override a difficult time. (Figure 5)

We told the story in a three day workshop. Every day, the ninety minutes turned into four hours, until the last subway train left. The most difficult was to encourage workshop’s participants to modify the architectural elements of their story. I probably needed a longer workshop to convince them to transform this „character”. It is certainly more difficult as you get older, to think architecture around you may be different than the one you see every day. Surely it is much harder to imagine with the innocence of a child, cakes factories, with ramps passing through the clouds to any Bucharest resident, to leave them a cupcake (see Microarchitecture workshop). It’s harder than to imagine a super hero, which by definition is bizarre, peculiar. Architecture isn’t. Thus

Figure 5. Images form the comic strip made by 1st year students, part of the *Super Hero in Polytechnic University* workshop (photographs by the author)

architecture objects remained nearly unchanged, making their appearance in small interventions only. We can observe in their comics, rundown, dull and rigid buildings, outdated equipment, which contributes to the difficult understanding of the taught subjects and the deplorable situation of the dorms.

This workshop was different from other workshops I conducted until that moment, in which I had often worked with children, or students of The University of Architecture and Urban Planning “Ion Mincu”, who did not question their ability to illustrate an idea. I granted more time in this case, to the get to know each other portion of the workshop, I detailed my experience and the participants told me something about themselves, insisting to assure them that there is no wrong answer and any beginning of an idea, can be a valuable starting point.

At the end of the three days we had gathered enough graphic material for a small comic strip, shaped by people who haven’t drawn in years. I believe that despite the difficulties encountered along the way, the resulting material has a special sensibility, different kind of graphic image and finally and a lot of courage.

„Ana and the children” Association

During my collaboration with the association “Ana and the Children”, organization founded in 2006, in order to prevent school and family abandonment, providing educational, psychological and social counseling, I had the opportunity to get in contact with its founders, but most importantly, I got the chance to get to know the children who came to the association every day. The employees, along with a team of volunteers, work with 147 children and adolescents, who come from families with low incomes, and often are victims of emotional and physical abuse. Because in the autumn of 2016, the association received the necessary funds to build a new building, my former employer proposed me a dialogue. The structure of the conversation had the architect Yona Friedman’s approach as a starting point, who considered that the future user of the designed space should be involved in the construction proposal, and the architect intake should be limited to reviewing the existing possibilities and offering advice, respecting the need to create a flexible architecture (being able to change its form, once the new elements appear)⁸. I felt that every step of the conducted dialogue deserves to be documented and illustrated, using a simplified graphical technique), allowing the new users to contribute. (the building users= the association members + children).

DISCUSSION

When we use comics in the presentation and analysis of an architectural project, we don't identify a single universal experience which defines a particular moment, frozen in time, as we do in the classical architectural presentation of an object. Buildings exist in space and time, and the dividing in sequences and the interstitial space suggests the evolution of events in time. Applying the comic strip structure, although the action is guided by a narrator, the reader can impose his own pace of reading. However the potential and the specific comic narrative technique are rarely used in architectural discourse.

Using the composition, dynamic, colours, and the presence and clear contribution of the individual (who in the case of a comic strip about architecture can be an important element for understanding space, but can also be actively involved in its design), as well as the rhythm of the comics' story (which can easily be controlled by the reader) and taking care not to exclude elements of traditional architecture presentation (plans, perspectives, technical details, etc.) we can obtain varied graphical results.

NOTES

1

In the 11th issue of the *L'Esprit Nouveau* number journal (1921), the architect Le Corbusier published the article, "Toepffer, précurseur du cinéma", in which he analyses the work of the artist Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846), who was considered a pioneer of comics, and also had a strong contribution in the development of cinema. The article analysed the comic strips *Monsieur Pencil* (created in 1831 and published in 1840) and *Le Docteur Festus* (created in 1831 and published in 1846). Also, it must be mentioned that the architect Le Corbusier used to illustrate his first manifestos with characters from comic strips, cut from contemporary newspapers, using them to underline his points of view. The selection of drawings used by the architect were usually provided by the Parisian publication *Le Journal* and can be observed in the article "Coupsures de Journaux", together with its complete version, published in the *Urbanisme* journal (1924), and also in the *L'Almanach d'architecture Moderne* (1925) and *Une Maison, un Palais* (1928) journals, and even in his study *La Ville Radieuse* (1935).

Luis Miguel Lus-Arana. "La Ligne Claire de Le Corbusier. Time, Space and Sequential Narratives." *Le Corbusier, 50 Years later, International Congress, LC 2015* (2015).

2

Understanding Comics is a comic strip about comic strips. The work of Scott McCloud was recognized, shortly after its publication, in 1993, by influential comics artists (like Art Spiegelman,

Will Eisner, Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman and Garry Trudeau) as an important document for anybody who tries to understand the mechanism behind this type of sequential art. The illustrator performs a detailed „intellectual dissection“, as Will Eisner denotes it, explaining how comics are built, read and understood. Indicating that „the potential of comic strips is unlimited and exciting“, Scott McCloud illustrates in detail the history of sequential art, focusing on the elements that are part of the comics structure and on the ways in which they are employed. Another reason for which this comic strip is appreciated is the way the author shapes, from the opening pages, the most complete definition of this type of graphic representation, details its vocabulary and exemplifies the way we use the sequential presentation in everyday life.

- 3 Scott McCloud. *Understanding Comics: The invisible art*. (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 8-23. The illustrated satirical stories, published in the mid 1800's, of the lecturer, novelist, journalist, cartoonist and Swiss art critic Rodolphe Töpffer (31 January 1799-8 June 1846), were the first comic juxtaposition of images and text in Europe. With sixty years before comic strips entered the space of American newspapers, Rodolphe Töpffer, illustrated the first comic strips, naming them, "[his] little madness". Using the work of William Hogarth as model- the pioneer of telling detailed stories in moralizing images- Töpffer created almost a century later, his own graphic manner of expression. The schematic and satirical images of the Swiss illustrator were completely different from the Hogarth's detailed paintings and narrative engravings.
- 4 William Uricchio. "The Batman's Gotham City TM: Story, Ideology, Performance." in *Comics and the City. Urban Space in Print, Picture and Sequence*, ed. Jörn Ahrens and Arno Meteling. (Auckland: Pindar NZ, 2010), 119- 132.
- 5 The illustrator Schuiten spent his childhood studying his architect father's complex drawings, becoming a fine connoisseur of architectural representations, spending his lifetime studying illustration and comic strips, hence the firm opinion, (who comes from a deep emotional attachment to his father's work) when he say he wants the two means of artistic expression to remain separate. „Perhaps I like architecture too much to watch impassively how it amuses itself and makes itself ridiculous.”
Mélanie Van der Horn, "Sensing the Comic's DNA. Excerpts of a conversation with Francois Schuiten," *Mas Context* 20 (2013): 132-143.
- 6 The artist indicates with delight, in the interview with anthropologist Melanie van der Horn, the process of achieving a good architectural drawing, talking about one of his father's project proposals: " Then he produced his pastel Crayons and began to talk to the client. [...] and then my father began to draw the house and – very smart – he introduced the dressing table of the lady of the house, the favorite chair of the man of the house, the dog, and drew it all probably four times as large as it would ever turn out to be. Then he sprayed fixative over the pastels, pulled out a passe-partout, framed the drawing and set it on the dresser of the lady [...] He drew their dreams, he opened a window on what could be their future.”
Mélanie Van der Horn, "Sensing the Comic's DNA. Excerpts of a conversation with Francois Schuiten," *Mas Context* 20 (2013): 132-143.
- 7 Peter Cook, *Archigram* (New York: Princeton, 1999), 42-49
- 8 Yona Friedman, *L'architecture mobile. Vers un cité conçue par ses habitants* (Tournai: Casterman, 1968), 41-47.

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KOMIKOPOLIS

Gențiana Cristina Dumitrașcu

Arhitektonski prezentacija obuhvata jedan render ili seriju rendera, savršeni trenutak, predstavljajući idealizaciju još ne-realizovanog projekta. Šta bi se desilo ako bismo mogli saznati kako je projekat nastao, kako je svaki sloj dodavan dok nije postignut konačni oblik, a prikazani ljudi bi mogli da ispričaju arhitektonski priču?

Fleksibilni hibrid grafičkog medija stripova, koji u svojoj strukturi kombinuje narativni element, prostor i pokret, je oduvek imao jaku vezu sa pojmom arhitekture (simboličkog protagoniste ili čak centralne figure u stripovsko priči). Doktorska disertacija „Komikopolis – Alternativni način prezentacije, razmatranja i projektovanja arhitekture“ analizira kroz teorijske studije, intervjue i eksperimente način na koji karakteristični elementi stripa mogu poboljšati tradicionalnu arhitektonsku prezentaciju i način na koji se ostvaruje interakcija sa arhitekturom i procesom projektovanja prostora.

KLJUČNE REČI: STRIP, SEKVENCA, FIKCIJA, NARACIJA, IZRAŽENA INDIVIDUALNOST

KONCEPT NAPRAVE KAO ANALITIČKO SREDSTVO U ISTRAŽIVANJU ARHITEKTONSKOG KVIR PROSTORA

Branko Burmaz

Postoje arhitektonske analize prostorne prakse koje se koriste konceptom arhitektonske strukture kao naprave za percepciju. Metafora naprave omogućava da se kombinuju statične reprezentacije prostora sa dinamičnim prostornim iskustvima. U istraživanju arhitektonskog kvir prostora, prostora koji je proizveden kroz samoorganizovane prakse i ignorisan od strane arhitektonske discipline, koncept naprave kao analitičkog sredstva kojim se suprotstavlja življeno i zamišljeno može biti od velike koristi. Ovde razmatram dve različite naprave. Jednu je koristila Beatriz Kolomina (Beatriz Colomina) u svojoj analizi rodnog prostora, nazivajući je *naprava za uramljivanje*, a druga naprava je *naprava za orijentisanje* iz „Kvir fenomenologije“ Sare Ahmed (Sara Ahmed). Ono što pokušavam da pokažem je da na početku procesa normalizacije arhitektura, funkcionišući kao naprava za percepciju, proizvodi kvir prostor simultanim mehanizmima uramljivanja i skrivaja, odnosno orijentisanja i dezorijentisanja. Snagom ovih naprava nastaje zjapeća podela u prostoru i u društvu.

KLJUČNE REČI: ARHITEKTONSKI KVIR PROSTOR, NAPRAVA ZA URAMLJIVANJE/SKRIVANJE, NAPRAVA ZA ORIJENTISANJE/DEZORIJENTISANJE, PERCIPIRANI PROSTOR, NORMALIZACIJA PROSTORA, PODELA PROSTORA

RAZVOJ PODRUČJA DELTE I BRAJDICE U RIJECI NAKON DRUGOG SVETSKOG RATA: IZMEĐU VIZIJE I STVARNOSTI

Lidija Butković Mićin

Formalnopravno ujedinjenje Rijeke i Sušaka po završetku Drugog svetskog rata, u međuraću teritorijalno i upravno samostalnih gradova, nametnulo je pitanje prostornog i funkcionalnog povezivanja dvaju polutki grada. Područje Delte i Brajdice, postupno nasipavano od 1850-ih godina nadalje za potrebe lučkih i željezničkih postrojenja, percipirano je kao dragoceni prostorni resurs za lociranje zgrada administrativne i javne namene te kulturnih, rekreativnih i komercijalnih sadržaja, primerenih novom regionalnom središtu. Članak prezentira urbanističke planove te (ne) realizirane arhitektonske projekte za transformaciju Delte i Brajdice tijekom 1940-ih i 1950-ih godina, koji svjedoče o rastućem raskoraku između vizionarskog urbanizma i realnosti političko-ekonomske konstelacije tih desetljeća.

KLJUČNE REČI: RIJEKA, DELTA, BRAJDICA, POSLIJERATNA ARHITEKTURA, POSLIJERATNI URBANIZAM, URBANA REGENERACIJA