TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE. NON-DESIGN AND MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCE AS ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT: Architecture plays an important role in human activities and, at the same time, contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Even though it is closely linked with capital and growth, the field is undergoing new directions. Multiple crises like pandemics, climate change, and wars influence designers and thinkers. It results, among other outcomes, in a shift away from the concept of creating impressive architectural masterpieces to designing spaces that prioritize the perspective of everyday and ordinary experiences. One of the most interesting and radical strategies involves the concept of minimizing architects' interventions, at times nearly reducing them to nothing. This paper elucidates a method referred to by some researchers as 'non-design.' It outlines how this approach aligns with critical theory and leads to the analysis of potential links between architecture and somaesthetics. I explore how a pragmatic perspective can potentially transform not only our approach to bodily care and our connection to sensuality but also influence the organization of our living spaces and adaptation to climate change for the sake of maintaining the balance and sustainability of our planet. Just as we train and treat our bodies to resist vulnerability and aging, similar forces have been reshaping architecture recently. One of the probable causes is the prevalent ocular-centric attitude and the demand for rapidly changing, visually striking images in our cities. A potential solution lies in cultivating sensory introspection and the ability to experience everyday moments in a multi-sensorial way, fostering joy and satisfaction. To present a non-design method, the project of Lacaton and Vassal, the Pritzker Prize winners, is described and analyzed. It is the Leon Aucoc Plaza in Bordeaux that kept its original form following architectural intervention, a consequence of the design process. As further elaborated, the project also provides residents with a multisensory experience of ordinary space.

Keywords: architecture, non-design, climate crisis, somaesthetic, ocular-centrism, multisensory, experience

Introduction

The complexity and severity of the climate crisis as a wicked problem underscore the idea that we, as human beings, need to change in every aspect of our lives. Just as scientists who work on IPCC reports show, to adapt to the consequences of global warming and reduce its speed and level, wide-ranging actions are needed. They consist of changes in energy production, agriculture, and industry, but also transportation, waste management, and its reduction (Bińczyk, 2018, loc. 524). Most of them necessitate actions that are beyond an individual's capacity and should be undertaken by political entities and corporations, but at the same time, lots of work is to be done in reshaping how we contemplate our lifestyles and consumption patterns. This always exists in certain relations to the environment, commonly referred to as nature, and to others, often less privileged. It is based on the everyday life experiences organized by bodies, forming its core—a concept crucial to pragmatic philosophy (Shusterman, 2011, 283). As a cultural studies scholar and architect, my interest is focused on the meanings and values embedded in architecture. These are experienced during dwelling or as one passes through them (Ibid., 294).

The building industry is rarely considered an impactful branch in terms of climate change, while it covers about 1/3 of the whole world's emissions. This number consists of "production of materials, construction, and maintenance of buildings, followed by their demolition, storage, and disposal" (Kępiński and Krężlik, 2022, 29). While some architects, and scientists struggle to discover more sustainable materials and building strategies (for example utilizing materials available in nearby neighborhoods), there is also a significant need for critical reflection on what really needs to be constructed. This consideration is based on the observation that many investments do not serve society but rather benefit companies (Ibid., 29), invertors, or municipal authorities who prove their commitment through renovations or reconstructions of public spaces and buildings. This dynamic fits perfectly with the capitalist narrative of continuous growth, modernization, and consumerist fashions characterized by short seasons and a desire to change style and aesthetics from the ones that are currently promot-

ed. While inventing real innovations that help build in a sustainable way may be important, reducing interventions in architecture and urbanism is crucial. A possible and necessary change in architecture towards preserving as much as possible of the urban design and buildings as they are, as opposed to replacing them with new ones, may involve accepting aesthetic imperfections. At the same time, it can be a gesture that maintains a sense of continuity through an appreciation of longevity. As shown in subsequent sections, such architecture has the potential to influence the senses and counteract the anxieties of a culture that desires frequent change and superficial aesthetics. In this paper, this is explained by analyzing successively: the non-design method and its possible references to critical theory, the sensual and somaesthetical potential of architecture, and the problematic ocular-centric attitude that characterizes our culture. Furthermore, these theories are applied to describe and analyze an exceptional architectural project: Léon Aucoc Plaza in Bordeaux, (non-)designed by the Lacaton & Vassal architectural studio, that earned the Pritzker Prize.

Non-design method and its connections with critical theory

The non-design method was anticipated and developed by Tony Fry and Cameron Tonkinwise. It does not concern architecture alone but more widely refers to the design industry in general. The fundamental insight of non-design theorists stems from the awareness that the process of design leads to destruction in two ways.

The first is the result of how we define it: after Herbert Simone understood design as a process that "chang[es] existing situations into preferred ones," (Simone, 1969, 111) it consists in creating new products with novel features or resembling their already-existing forms. A product that ceases to be attractive because it has been replaced stops being used or bought, and then whole consignments of unwanted equipment end up as rubbish and certainly cease to be produced. In this sense,

design based on the creation of preferences is ultimately a matter of the life and death of products (Tonkinwise, 2018, 74). As Cameron Tonkinwise writes, "designers do not change existing situations into preferred ones; they destroy what exists, replacing it with the preferred one" (Ibid., 75). To illustrate this mechanism in relation to architecture, one can cite situations in which existing buildings are demolished to construct new ones that will generate more profit, manifest wealth, or possess other qualities. Sometimes, if demolition is not legal, historic buildings are intentionally exposed to destruction by stripping them of their roofs or windows.

The impact on infrastructure is the second type of harm that new designs have the potential to cause. This occurred, for example, when new kitchen appliances were popularized. Because they required a different installation than primitive kitchens, it resulted in a change in the entire electrical system (Ibid., 76). Another similar case is the replacement of fuel-powered cars with electric ones. This change necessitates adjustments across the entire network of petrol stations, requiring the addition of charging stations. Thus, a significant modernisation was required when cars were first invented. Their current number and drivers' expectations mean that wider and wider or simply new roads are constantly being built in cities, often cutting down trees and destroying valuable natural places in the process. As research by David Lewis and Martin Mogridge shows, there is not necessarily any potential in this to solve the problem of the congested city (Lewis, 1997, 155–16; Mogridge, 1990, 8). More road capacity only encourages more drivers to use it, and in this way, perpetuating traffic jams. To eliminate them, we need fewer cars. Thus, an intangible but once-promising design action would be to improve public transport; only this has a chance of preventing traffic jams. But it is not only new infrastructure that may be required for new projects or new actions. What also emerges is a new habit: the way we read the news may influence our breakfast, and in turn, how we get to work

implies other facts. Opting to cycle, for example, might prompt us to bring a second, clean t-shirt and allocate more time for commuting than if we were driving. Additionally, we can anticipate an improvement in our fitness; thus, some innovations also require managing expectations (Tonkinwise, 2018, 76).

The double-edged nature of design, understood from an ontological perspective as 'emergence' and a way of creating the socio-material world (Fry, 2012), is expressed through both its power and its harmful potential. "In other words, human creation, including design culture, encompasses the totality of Promethean power and is both far-reaching and destructive. Creating new devices, objects, and technologies is like opening Pandora's box: once created in the world, things create a life of their own, which does not always correspond to what their creators expected" (Mareis, Greiner-Petter, Renner, 2022, 9). That's why non-design does not succumb to the fad of green products, because de facto, they do not affect the greater sustainability of all consumption that exists in the world. As Tony Fry points out, substituting objects and services for those that are more sustainable is ineffective insofar as it only creates an alternative product liked by those interested in environmentalism, and among the dominant user base, unsustainable designs have little clout (Fry, 2015, 146). In a reality where the very existence of objects and innovations can be problematic, the non-design method appears as an interesting alternative. One of the representatives of this movement, Cameron Tonkinwise, calls for deprogressive design and the renunciation of objects. Refusing to design and build, to alter things needlessly results in a fresh perspective on design itself.

Thinking about design as an ambivalent and destructive activity is not only a reflection of the designers but also aligns with past considerations of thinkers from the Frankfurt School. As Bińczyk recalled, following Herbert Marcuse, the structure of human actions in capitalism is dualistic: "satisfaction is always tied to destruction. The

dominance of nature is tied to the violation of nature. The search for new sources of energy is tied to the poisoning of the life environment. Technical progress is tied to the progressive manipulation and control of human beings" (Marcuse, 1992, 33, cf. Bińczyk, 2022, 2, 121) and it "has the character of a superficial and inauthentic 'euphoria in misery'" (Ibid.). Marcuse criticized consumerism, showing that it transforms „waste into need" (Ibid. 120)—which can easily be connected with the design industry supported by the advertising sector that produces „artificial needs and aspirations [...]" (Ibid., 121). In "Dialectic of Enlightenment," written by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, an engine of self-destructive processes is identified as technocratic rationality. The authors pointed it out as a danger for both human and natural existence. With this base, the founders of critical theory postulate a complete shift from material objects to the immaterial sphere of the intellect (Geiger, 2022, 39). In this way, philosophers from the Frankfurt School deny the possibility that material objects would have the capacity to serve as media for critical thinking (Ibid., 36).

I do not think that an absolute renunciation of production of new objects or buildings is possible; nevertheless, strict limitations are both possible and essential. Since most objects already exist, what is sometimes needed is only some change, refurbishment, or reconstruction. Also, if the paradigm of architecture (or more broadly, design) changed from serving capital to serving people and their everyday life experiences, this new attitude could improve not only the quality of human lives but also our relationship with the environment. I believe this can be reinforced by reflective thinking and theoretical analyses. Still, what is also crucial is the experience of our bodies and senses—the field of interest of somaesthetics.

Somaesthetic and overproduction

"The body is the storm center, the origin of coordinates, the constant place of stress in [our] experience train. Ev-

erything circles round it, and is felt from its point of view," wrote William James, who continued by explaining that our experience of the world "comes at all times with our body as its center, center of vision, center of action, center of interest" (James, 1976, 86, c.f. Shusterman, 2011, 288). While this may seem problematic at first due to the anthropocentric perspective, especially in relation to the climate crisis and the non-human, the pragmatic perspective does not ignore the experiencing subject's relationship with the environment. That is why I am eager to consider the pragmatist tradition as useful and important, which I identify for one more reason. Studies by Pierre Bourdie, Judith Butler, and Susan Bordo demonstrate how the body is both sculpted by and used as a tool to uphold power, how social pressures are reflected and sustained in bodily norms of ability, health, and beauty, and even in our classifications of sex and gender (Shusterman, 2008, 23). But just as the body, when treated as an object, can be subordinated to culturally promoted aesthetic requirements, somaesthetics suggests, it might have the potential to create embodied wisdom and become a place of emancipation (Koczanowicz, 2016, 10-12).

As it is understood by Shusterman, *soma* means "living, feeling, sentient body rather than a mere physical body that could be devoid of life and sensation, while the "aesthetic" in somaesthetics has the dual role of emphasizing the soma's perceptual role (whose embodied intentionality contradicts the body/mind dichotomy) and its aesthetic uses both in stylizing one's self and in appreciating the aesthetic qualities of other selves and things" (Shusterman, 2008, 1-2). The somaesthetics project is broad and encompasses several areas, but what is specifically of interest here is the improvement of self-practice as a strategy of adaptation to the climate crisis. This provides more ideal means in the pursuit of the classical philosophical aims of knowledge, self-knowledge, virtue, happiness, and justice. I believe that experiencing architecture and the city in general, but also designing it, if done consciously, can trigger a

new attitude towards it and promote new expectations about how the city should and shouldn't be changed. As it was pointed out, "if the soma is the crucial medium through which architecture is experienced and created, then developing its critical discriminatory powers could enrich architecture's critical and creative arsenal, since critical perception is always part of the creative process" (Shusterman, 2009, 290). Let's compare Shusterman's views to the seminal thinking about architecture that characterizes Pallasmaa.

As he analyzes the process of creation for the last decades, it has been focused on developing new technologies, optimization, and aesthetics, while usually avoiding analyses of natural science, neuronal science, and what is experienced by humans, both consciously and pre-counsciously (Pallasmaa, 2022 [2013], 321). Nowadays, a possible shift can be observed in slowly developed tendencies that focus on care and vulnerability. Usually connected with buildings used by us, health care centers, or social care should extend to widely understood architecture of all functions. The need for architecture that strengthens the well-being and balance of humans and non-humans is recognized and could serve as a new proposal for a world that is immersed in climate and ecological crises. If, as Juhani Pallasmaa says following Maurice Merleau-Ponty, we live in "the world's body" and architecture should be seen as a part of it, in a perspective where these connections are becoming important, it could involve environmental-aware decisions too.

"'My body is made of the same tissue of corporeality as the world (that is, that which is perceived), and, moreover, in this tissue of corporeality of my body, the world participates,' explains the philosopher [Merleau-Ponty]. Both doctors and architects operate on the living body of the world; it is in this body that their achievements are intertwined. We also grasp the essence of the meanings of our own existence intuitively through this body, which is the real condition of our life: we are creatures of this world. At the same time, it seems that the rational, con-

ceptual, and utilitarian thinking of our time increasingly distances us and cuts us off from a state of inclusion in the world and a silent, embodied understanding." (Pallasmaa, 2022 [2021], 360)

Usually, thinking about the body (or *soma*) starts when something is wrong with it, and this problem needs to be solved. Rarely do we think about our lives as vulnerable, like the whole life and ecological system on our planet. For architects, thinking about designing spaces with a careful understanding of the fragility of life begins when they design for healthcare. Nowadays, the attitude has changed a bit, and in those cases, instead of prioritizing the doctor's or caretaker's comfort, the emphasis is placed on the patients and the idea that architecture can itself have features and atmosphere that support the healing process. I believe this is true and can be expanded to every form of architecture that could heal and train multisensory but mild experiences of everyday life in an information-crowded society. As researchers have shown, people receive a significant amount of data every day. According to a report prepared by the University of California, San Diego, the average person who lives in the USA consumes about 34 gigabytes of information daily. This is estimated to be equivalent to reading or hearing approximately 100,000 words every day (AskWonder, Wahira, 2022). The abundance of information, but also the eagerness to seek intense experiences, leads to hyperstimulation. Consequently, rather than bringing happiness as predicted, it degenerates sensory sensitivity. The culture of late capitalism, with its imperative of continuous growth, also promotes "constantly greater stimulation, ever more speed and information, ever stronger sensations, and louder music" (Shustermann, 2008, 39).

The problem does not lie only in the amount of data but also in the quality and type of perception that influence everyday life experiences. As many philosophers have pointed out, the predominant mode of perception nowadays is visual and excludes the participation of the other senses[1]. The ocular-centric paradigm merges seeing with knowing and leads to the conclusion that sight, as well as any image, reveals universal truth (Pallasmaa, 2012, 18–19). Heidegger wrote that "the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as a picture" (1977, 134; cf. Pallasmaa, 2012, 24). Historically, the system of perception was complex and flexible; however, it has now become isolated. The dominance of sight reduced experiencing the world and environment to its representation that can be seen. David Michael Levin analyzed the way of seeing and divided it into two methods. The first one, called assertoric gaze, is narrow, dogmatic, and intolerant. With its one point of view, it becomes rigid and exclusionary. The opposite of assertoric gaze is aletic gaze, which offers a more democratic and pluralistic perspective. It is conscious of its contextuality, making it more horizontal, inclusive, and filled with care (Levin, 1988, 440; cf. Pallasmaa, 2012, 40–41). What should be done is liberate the eye from its patriarchal domination (Levin, 1993, 112-115; cf. Pallasmaa, 2021, 21), and this can be achieved by promoting multisensory experiences. In such cases, peripheral vision is activated and the eyes are not focused. They abandon their controlling and prejudicial way of seeing in favor of participating and activating all senses (Pallasmaa, 2012, 40–41). The question I am eager to ask is: could architecture help regulate our sensory system, influence our relationships with other people, and heal our approach to nature, which usually suffers from the consequences of human action and (design-connected) decisions, while the loss of multisensory character is also specifically seen in it?

It seems that the problem is caused by commodification and its demand to produce aesthetic images that refer to what's intellectual, in contrast to sensual. This has led architects to design buildings that serve to be admired as artwork, rather than being experienced as

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[1] A brief summary of such views is made by Pallasmaa in the Vision and Knowledge subsection (17-22) of his book The eyes of the skin (2012), often cited here.

places to live in, spend time in, or pass through. However deprived it may be, the sensual character of buildings and city spaces is an immanent feature of well-designed architecture, which "is fundamentally existential in its very essence, and it arises from existential experience and wisdom rather than intellectualized and formalized theories" (Ibid., 107). If architects were to get back on track, the sensual character of architecture would come to light in its practical usage, as architecture has the main potentiality in action: in the touch of objects like handles, experiencing the weight of doors when we push them open, or the kinesthetic feeling when stairs are climbed. (Pallasmaa, 2012; Shusterman, 2011). Its atmosphere and sensual character, which influence people's perceptions, also determine the type of materials used. Natural materials, like wood or stone, show their provenance and age, which are visible in its structure and small imperfections. In contrast, materials produced with a high level of processing through technology are timeless, as their durability can be positive, but they do not show the process of getting older and being used, which may be associated with the fear of passing time and impermanence.

> Transparency and sensations of weightlessness and flotation are central themes in modern art and architecture. In recent decades, new architectural images have emerged that employ reflection, gradations of transparency, overlay, and juxtaposition to create a sense of spatial thickness, as well as subtle and changing sensations of movement and light. This new sensibility promises an architecture that can turn the relative immateriality and weightlessness of recent technological construction into a positive experience of space, place, and meaning. The weakening of the experience of time in today's environments has devastating mental effects. In the words of the American therapist Gotthard Booth, 'nothing gives man fuller satisfaction than participation in processes that supersede the span of individual life' (Pallasmaa, 2012, 34–35)

The not-easy attitude of being focused on what is social instead of individual was also a new idea of what rationality should mean. From the perspective of Theodor Adorno and Horkhaimer, seeking optimal actions that serve all, not just the priviledged, was a process that leads to consensual solutions. As they put it, it means that "not every individual wish must necessarily be fulfilled, because there is a greater comprehensive rationality" (Giger, 2022, 40). Being conscious of capitalistic mechanisms that influence people and their way of consumption, the destructive forces of innovation, problems connected with aesthetics and production, short-term trends, ocular-centric orientation, and more leads to the conclusion that limitations in our production, consumption, and actions should be a direction to follow. The emphasis could shift from the quantity of things and experiences to their quality in a multisensory direction. The reasoning for 'sensory moderation' was provided by Shusterman, who follows Weber-Fencher's law, as he is well aware from everyday life experience.:

> A smaller stimulus can be noticed more clearly and easily if the already preexisting stimulation experienced by the stimulated organ is small. Conversely, the threshold for noticing a sensation will be so much greater the larger the preexisting stimulation is. The light of a cigarette, for instance, while barely visible from a short distance in blazing sunlight, can be seen from afar in the dark of night; the sounds of windblown leaves that we hear in the silence of the woods at midnight are inaudible in the city's noise of day. A strongly clenched fist will not be as sensitive to fine discriminations of touch and texture as a soft hand free from muscular training (Shusterman, 2008, 39)

Somatic introspection and conscious habit formation could be the postulated course of action and development needed to create and receive ecologically rational architecture and influence other fields of life. This would be in line with James's theory of habits, who noted that they are evidence of the connection between body and mind and, above all, saw in them the potential for change. Since "our nervous system grows to the modes in which it has been exercised" (James, 1980, 18; cf. Shusterman, 2008, 140), changing the way we use it can lead to a change in habits toward more desirable ones. "The role of the body disciplined through habit extends far beyond private ethical efforts at self-improvement; it sustains the entire social structure through which habit itself

is formed and within which the efforts of the individual find their places as well as their limitations. "Habit is thus the enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent" (Ibid., 141).

While considering possible individual change, the first step could be conscious, introspective, and personal analysis of the way we use our sense of sight. This involves avoiding its judgmental usage or seeking only aesthetically pleasing images to consume. Instead, the focus should shift towards activating all senses in contact with our environment and cities, done with careful consideration. As it is postulated and observed in this paper, the need for empathetic design, creating spaces that serve life, and sensorial introspection could be connected to the need for limitations for modernization and growth. These unique features are exemplified in the Bordeaux Square project, which will be analyzed below and presented in the context of the design values and methods presented by its authors.

Lacaton & Vassal: Plaza in Bordeaux

The architectural duo of Lacaton and Vassal stands out from other architectural bureaus. As part of their commitment, the first step in designing a new space is not drawing but observing and talking to residents. They are willing to find potential in what already exists—buildings, trees, atmosphere, etc.—and take it as a starting point. Also, people and the social situation are crucial for them, but what is even more special is noticing the natural qualities of a place, such as sunlight, smell, or airflow (Lacaton, 2012, 13–15). For years of their work, they have been guided by several principles. They follow a self-made rule about trying to achieve the "maximum effect with minimum intervention" (Deumeland, Osterholz, 2018), and also about respecting and bringing out the qualities of what is found. This Pritzker Prize-winning duo designs by adding something new but never demolishing what they have found. By building, they mean "adding to and transforming what

already exists, [because] usually a lot of what is needed already exists" (Ibid.). For their action, the priority becomes "bringing out all the existing features. Especially that, what is neglected, disliked, and infinite; everything that is vulnerable." This special attitude can be seen in their refurbishment project of Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France, 2012), but also in the modernization of La Tour Bois le Prêtre (Paris, France, 2011), a high-rise block of 16 storeys and 96 apartments that expanded its size by removing the original facade and adding bioclimatic balconies. This project could also be analyzed here, but I would like to focus on another, which, in my opinion, is the most radical and powerful: the Léon Aucoc Plaza in Bordeaux.

The idea to renovate this plaza was part of urban design initiated by the city council in the 1990s. The first principal's requirements were to completely redesign and 'beautify' it (Lacaton, Reuse). The square itself, with a triangular shape and surrounded by lime trees, serves as a space for daily recreation and meetings. Thanks to its gravel surface, it is suitable for playing boules. Together with the surrounding terraced houses and semi-detached houses, it creates a peaceful, unpretentious urban interior. The architects' analysis lasted three months, during which they observed the square and talked to residents and users. They found out that it is functional, and since the first visit, they have found it authentic and beautiful in its simplicity. They were also wondering:

> What does the idea of "embellishment" [beatification] boil down to? Does it involve replacing one with another? A wooden bench with a more-up-to-date design in stone? Or a lamp standard with another, more fashionable one? Nothing calls for too great a set of changes. Embellishment has no place here. Quality, charm, and life exist. The square is already beautiful (Lacaton & Vassal, n.d.)

That's how they decided to leave the square unchanged. As Lacaton says, not interfering with the square is not a refusal to do the project, and the decision not to change anything is a conscious one (Lacaton, 2012) and is a design decision. "It has the beauty of the obvious, the necessary, and the right. Its meaning emerges directly. People seem

at home here, in an atmosphere of harmony and calm shaped over many years" (Wojciechowski, 2021). As a result of this non-design, the square received recommendations for maintenance and care. This was not only to improve the appearance of the square but also to serve as an impetus 'to change the perception of what was already there: to recognize, appreciate, and further develop the features' (Deumeland, Osterholz, 2018). It has been suggested that the gravel should be replaced, the plaza cleaned more often, and the linden trees should be cared for (Wojciechowski, 2021). Only a slight modification of traffic has been suggested to improve the use of the square and satisfy those living in the area.

This gesture not to rebuild the plaza "destabilized the ideologies of many iconic architects at the time (...) and questioned the expected role of the architect to produce objects (...) [on the basis of] an assumption that something was wrong" (Alonso L Ortega, n.d). As Marco Enia and Flavio Martella say, "circumstances have changed, and reality often forces architecture to a large modesty by adopting a different set of strategies. Architects capable of making grand gestures are still present. However, another professional figure is becoming increasingly important, namely, an architect who can regenerate a place by realizing few and careful operations. This architect rediscovers the human being as the real protagonist of architecture, using it as the measure for his or her interventions" (2019, 157). In Bordeaux, the idea of the city council that the improvement of public space lies in changing its aesthetics was rejected. Even though it resulted in some hesitations, the final decision made by the city council and residents was to keep the plaza as it is.

That is how it becomes a new story for designers and users. It stems from caring observation, from designing from within, slowly noticing "the superiority of concern for social values over design ambitions" (Wojciechowski, 2021). The priority then becomes "bringing out all the existing features. Especially what is neglected, unloved, and infinite; everything that is vulnerable" (Ibid.). The

approach of this French duo, as compared by Lukasz Wojciechowski with ideas propounded by Jane Jacobs, includes "an interest in the freedom of use of architecture, a sensitivity to the need for encounter and the joy of using space, as well as a retreat from the over-representationalism of finite form in favor of interaction with users"(Ibid.). They also share an opposition to "treating the city… as a rigorous work of art, which is an attempt to replace life with art" (Ibid.). What is also noteworthy here is that the designers "maintain their actions in tactics of suggestion", which aligns with Jacobs' view that "the control imposed by designers leaves nothing for others to discover, nothing to organize, nothing intriguing" (Jacobs, 2014; cf. Wojciechowski, 2021). As the Polish architect would have it, [this] "refusal has the potential to become a milestone in the development of the profession, in the shape of even the symbolic demolition of Pruitt-Igoe, and then the myth of the superiority of building from scratch, of solving urban problems through masterplans and impressive buildings, will finally collapse. May it be replaced by thoughtful design from within—from the everyday little things" (Wojciechowski, 2021).

This project is gaining recognition despite being created more than 20 years ago. It probably happens because, as a society, we are more conscious of our vulnerability, which also became evident in times of pandemic and growing awareness of the climate crisis. The square in Bordeaux is a perfect example of non-design action and refusal to treat material intervention as the only solution and direction for the future. In Bordeaux, nothing was very new, so while the plaza just stayed the same, nothing was wasted, but its authentic character was highlighted. I also believe that the architect's work here can be comparable to that of a psychologist or a good friend who is saying, "You are just fine," and probably this process made residents proud of their plaza and appreciate it even more.

When thinking of the sensual character of this place and the abandonment of the idea of beautification, it can

be treated as resignation from following visual trends in our culture but also in architecture specifically. Instead of designing a representative space that creates an image, architects decide to follow their intuition focused on the usage and atmosphere that can't be just seen. As one can imagine, the presence of trees here is creating some shade in which residents can hide to avoid sunlight during hot summers. The shape of the row of linden trees that grows around it and the surrounding buildings make you feel at ease, as if you were in the interior. The leaves during the windy days are rustling, affecting aural perception. During autumn, they die and fall to the ground to remind us about the seasons and time passing. The plaza's surface, along with small pebbles, can be felt with every step. This makes it possible to play boules, but also to slowly soak rainwater into the soil and keep it in the ground. Probably, sometimes small puddles form on the surface of the square, allowing children to trample them, splash water, and play. The squere's aura offers a multisensory experience and creates an unpretentious space for the small pleasures of everyday life.

Conclusion

"Although architecture and urban planning are only parts of a huge system of tools of power and capital, they are the most tangible and effective elements of human activity. If we do not change our approach to what we expect from cities and buildings, but also the way we design and build, we will not prevent a disaster" (Kępiński, Krężlik, 2022, 31). Thinking about architecture, limitations, and changes in it, we locate this discussion rather in well-developed, rich places in the world, and it happens also while inviting educated and privileged people to analyze the sensual character of their experience. However, it doesn't seem to be inaccurate, according to knowledge that global emissions are highly connected to class and wealth. That is why emissions can be divided into luxury and survival (Bińczyk, 2022, 364). But where does the line

between these two groups lie? It seems that a lot is in between and can also be defined by societies as groups that are diverse. I believe that Bińczyk's proposal to take the well-known climate-change discourse term 'tipping point' and (re)use it in social, not only scientific, contexts is a hopeful concept. It asks about the possibility of social change caused by accumulated crises and processes that would lead to the dissolution of 'business as usual'. (Ibid.). "Only disasters bring reflection, and they are already close. In my opinion, we are currently experiencing the agony of capitalism as we knew it—economic thinking based on interests. Humanity never learned anything during periods of stability; only disasters caused real change (Pallasmaa, 2022 [2013], 328). Also, as Bińczyk claims after Walter Scheidel, abrupt events make elites more likely to "proceed political changes and redistribution—to share among society the power and goods" (Bińczyk, 2022, 367).

The idea of self-limitation usually raises questions about freedom and causes resistance. If it is motivated by multiple crises, whether it is a conscious decision made by many or not, it is rather inevitable. Is it possible to treat limitations as a joyful concept that, as a part of reality, serves as "justification for our choices and ground under our feet" (Pallasmaa, 2022 [2013], 328)? Sensory introspection and the project of somaesthetics here draw on an additional appealing perspective. In this view, the body, as subject to the symbolic power of capitalism, regains its independence and possibility of self-determination, escaping the rules of the market and the aesthetic-visual imperative, appearing as a political force. This possibility of a turn: from the body that is subject to biopower, towards the body as a tool of emancipation and liberation, is analyzed in detail by Leszek Koczanowicz. It also involves capturing the body beyond its individuality and placing it in a broad communal-context in which *somapower* appears (Koczanowicz, 2023, X).

As Shusterman wrotes "[s]omaesthetics connotes both the cognitive sharpening of our aesthesis or sen-

sory perception and the artful reshaping of our somatic form and functioning, not simply to make us stronger and more perceptive for our own sensual satisfaction but also to render us more sensitive to the needs of others and more capable of responding to them with effectively willed action" (Shusterman, 2008, 43). In this context the turn to corporeal wisdom embedded in the exercise of sensory awareness can elude the power of ocular-centric and capitalist culture, giving birth to the possibility of finding satisfaction in getting in touch with oneself and experiencing the value of ordinary and small pleasures every day. But also it is an act that promotes the development of relationships, collective action, coexistence, and solidarity. In this sense, it is ideologically compatible with the idea of decelerating growth and finding pleasure in non-emissionary ways of spending leisure time. This implies that, by reducing working hours and minimizing production, we can have more time for such activities.

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