A Political History of Post-WWII Architecture in Europe

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From De-Nazification to Globalization

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PREFACE

In our cities, full of all sorts of buildings, we still love the older ones. They stick out because they use features that we always remember since we noticed them the first time. They are also designed using familiar details from historical styles we all recognize.

In the 20th century this changed. Architects rightly noticed that such buildings no longer corresponded to the life, technology, economy, and culture of the times. These architects began to design buildings in new materials that required new construction methods and resulted in different forms. Eventually, this new style of architecture became known as Modernism. Because it was a style that became popular in all the Western industrialized countries, it was also called International Style.

In the 1960s, a reaction against this style began. Its overt functionalism was no longer seen as promising. We are still calling this change Postmodernism. With that the question of what architecture means, and how it communicates these messages became more difficult to decide. No answer has yet found overwhelming support.

As users, visitors, and owners of buildings, all of us want to know what they mean. Modern designs are very hard to read because their forms tend to be of the cubical kind and their exteriors are usually just clad in the chosen building materials. They function quite well, but all we can say about them is whether we like them or hate them. We have trouble telling each other what they mean. Contemporary buildings are similarly illegible. Either they are so bland that they do not speak to us, or they are so garish that they cease to make sense. In any case, we feel like strangers in our cities, not sure about what we should do and how we should behave. Many buildings have become strangers to us.

This situation has led to a disengagement between people and their urban surroundings. This is a problem because we spend so much of our daily life among buildings that we should be able to say a bit more about them. We need to be more critical and have opinions about our environment. I have become obsessed with meaning in architecture. All people are able to understand their environment and I want to let them know what is important in architectural expression and communication. In my research I have dealt extensively with how people understand works of art. I then began applying the insights I had gained to architecture. In this book, I am attempting to

come up with a perspective that might assist us better in dealing with our built environment. Since everyone is involved in some way or other in politics, I decided to examine buildings as if they were also a part of our political lives, hence a political history of architecture.

The interpretative method with which I began my research originated from art historians at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century. These scholars noticed that the art of their time had begun to change. This was the development from figurative paintings of the 19th century to Impressionism and Cubism, and eventually to abstract art. These historians realized that a new art style required a new method to read and understand these paintings. Many of them focused on empathy as a good method to comprehend abstract paintings.

This book attempts to apply this method to buildings. It will focus on the architecture after the Second World War. The premise of this book is that everyone knows politics and should therefore be capable of detecting political messages in buildings designed for all. Buildings mediate our way of life and our politics to us. We want to recognize ourselves in buildings that were designed for us by the institutions that govern our life, work, and leisure. While history often suggests models for this, it is not always interpreted as historians would like, but must fit in to present circumstances.[1]

In this book, I have narrowed the focus of political actions and ideas that are relevant for architectural understanding. I was not interested in direct relationships between policy and architecture, as they existed in Antiquity, the Renaissance, and more recently Soviet and Nazi architecture. My focus is on how buildings intuitively address, awaken, and fortify the politico-psycho-social awareness every citizen should feel.

There are not many books that deal with this subject. Most fall under the following research approaches: how do government buildings communicate the power of the authorities, what styles have government buildings historically preferred, and what effect do public spaces have on their users.[2] I have relied most on recently published books that do not contradict those written a decade earlier but widen the perspective of investigation.

I have also learned that this is an encyclopedic topic. My focus has changed a little since I began my research. Whereas I began with political history, the final result reads more like a history of architecture as a political entity. There are so many aspects one could cover that I sometimes risked losing my perspective. In the end, I presented a choice that will hopefully

[1] (*From Postwar to Postmodern – 20th Century Built Cultural Heritage* 2017):64.
[2] (Goodsell 1988):xv.

convince the reader of the significance of this view on our built environment.

This manuscript was helped along by a few supporting institutions and some people. First, I would like to thank the University of Colorado Denver and its College of Architecture and Planning. The University's Library and the internet access to research data bases it provided facilitated my research greatly. I would also like to thank the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich, as well as the libraries of the Eidgenössiche Technische Hochschule in Zürich for granting me access. A research assistantship from the College of Architecture and Planning allowed me to hire Irene Molnar to assist me in my library research. As always, the greatest support came from my wife Susan Woll, who is constantly encouraging me to reach my full potential.

INTRODUCTION

IS THERE AN *ARCHITEKTURWOLLEN*?

> (S)pace was produced before being read; nor was it produced in order to be read and grasped, but rather in order to be lived by people with bodies and lives in their own particular urban context.
>
> Modernity expressly reduced so-called 'iconological' forms of expression (signs and symbols) to surface effects.
>
> (Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 143, 146)

Architecture is the quintessential public art.[1] In well-designed cities we can observe how buildings and people interact. There, we encounter urbanity, characterized as an intense experience like that enjoyed in the crowded cities of the late 19th century. At that time, the population had ethnic, social, and political differences, and came from different class situations, life forms, interests, and desires which generated tensions, discontent, and tolerance.[2] The historical development of the built environment is to a large degree the history of mankind.[3] It shapes the spaces and places in which our lives happen.[4] No matter what the activity, it always takes place in a building, on the street, or in the garden. The only exception happens when we find ourselves in unspoilt nature. The built environment should not just accommodate these physical activities but must acknowledge that it stands ready to satisfy these and communicate how this is done in a humanly understandable manner. Buildings should be relevant. "Architecture … as discourse, practice, and form operates at the intersection

[1] Manfred Sack, "Bauen als öffentliche Aufgabe," in (Sarnitz 1986):11.
[2] (Diefendorf 1993):279, 364 (n. 12).
[3] Oscar Schneider, "Kulturelles Bauen," in (Sarnitz 1986):14.
[4] See on this the essays included in the section "Learning from Interdisciplinarity," in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 64:4, Dec. 2005, pp. 417-440.

of power, relations of production and culture, and representation."[5] Architects themselves should want to detect social behavior, beliefs, and aspirations they can visualize in their designs. Buildings exploit forms, shapes, and decorative systems in a manner that is clearly influenced by the "unity of a life context (Lebenszusammenhang)." Buildings are not independent but accompany a particular societal use.[6] One would expect of public buildings that they order, cause, and educate.[7] A philosopher said recently, that through architecture human beings evolved from their original animal existence, because buildings caused language to appear. He posited that we need an architectural environment that assists us in developing language.[8] Buildings for clearly defined functions do this in a straightforward comprehensible way. Single-family homes, apartment buildings, office buildings, stores, or churches are good examples of this. At the same time, we must acknowledge that architecture does not always have such a cultural impact on people.[9]

However, when we get to the part of the environment where cultural, historical, social, and psychological themes and needs are satisfied, the situation is deplorable. Take for example the *TITAN/KUBUS* Addition to the Historical Museum of Berne, Switzerland (mlzd architects, 2006-2009). (Fig. 1-1) Like many contemporary buildings, this has rather unique form properties. How does it tell us that it contains things about history? The architects gave it a name that refers to its cubical form. On the ground floor are a "black box" and storage spaces which accounts for the solid walls there. Above these are staff offices. There are none of the conventional stylistic attributes everybody equates with museums, such as columns or pediments and other parts used in many old buildings. The emphasis on solid geometric forms stems from the characteristic Modern cubical shapes assembled of flat planes. Here, the façade is not flat, but an inverted triangle is formed by the receding sides. This cube is placed so that it complements another isolated building part across the courtyard and thus creates a proper

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[5] (Dutton and Mann 2007):117. Influenced by current political events, architectural historians are beginning to ask such questions of architecture. A case in point is the investigation of the roots of functionalism in Modern architecture in 19th-century natural sciences, which has been accused as being racist. See on this: Charles Davis, *Building Character: The Racial Politics of Modern Architectural Style* (2019).

[6] (Gadamer 1986):76. Others have claimed the opposite, namely that social organization and behavior are a result of the built environment. (Lawrence and Miljački 2018):50.

[7] Gerd Bacher, "Der Bauherr als Impulsgeber," in (Sarnitz 1986):9.

[8] (Schwarte 2019).

[9] Manfred Sack, "Bauen als öffentliche Aufgabe", in (Sarnitz 1986):13.

frame for this open area. Toward this court, the façade of the new building is completely of glass.

Figure 1-1: TITAN/KUBUS Addition to Historical Museum

Many buildings constructed during the first half of the 20th century popularized this kind of design. At that time, architects wanted people to use their common sense to understand buildings, not just to identify them from their learned memories or knowledge. However, all one can say here is that this is a container. Admittedly, what is contained is space, but to state this fails to indicate the unique quality of a museum's function and meaning. Works of architecture influence not only through their forms and shapes, but also by activating our own memory. We decode spaces through psycho-physiological clues and remembrances. Late-19th-century art historians began using this sensual approach to interpret buildings. August Schmarsow (1853-1936), e.g., saw architecture primarily as shaping space. Before that, interpretations had focused on façade articulations to discuss the artistic value and meaning of a building. Now, movements, including those of the

eyes, were used to form psycho-physiological understandings of buildings.[10]

The interesting part of this understanding is the combination of the psychological—sensual—and motion abilities of our bodies and sense organs to achieve a deep comprehension. Georg Simmel used these, as well as cultural and esthetic areas to explain how we generate a concrete understanding of history. This does not mean an objective interpretation, but one that is influenced by theoretical perspectives and different sciences (of perception). In this way, reality is altered to fit a personal perception derived from the individual life and historical time. This allows each person to form an understanding of history that makes sense to him or her. We project our own psyche on historical events to reach our interpretation. Our awareness of reality is derived from its subjectification.[11]

This is also true of political messages, or political iconography. One theory from history is that common folk understand political messages more easily if they are communicated through vision, rather than sound. A picture is a more effective communicator than a speech.[12]

In the early 20th century, Modernism ruled supreme in architecture, either as the dominant style, or—after World War II—the one many architects did not want to use. It was a style that aimed to join necessity to architectural design. Forms did not come out of esthetic reflection, but rather out of incorporating patterns of use and manufacture into their creation. Forms should be utilitarian first, sensual second. Especially ornament was banned. Nevertheless, artistic sense and symbolism were still parts of architectural design. But this was to emerge from need and technology. Exterior form design was to be generated from the plan, not imposed from materials and façade articulation. Since those years, Modernism has become less desirable and has been criticized for being too statist.[13] This is not surprising, as Modernism was a style that emphasized functional solutions and industrial construction methods. Interestingly, since WWII brought massive destruction to European countries, a large part of the building stock was rebuilt after the war, and in many cases followed

[10] Köhler, "Achitekturgeschichte als Geschichte der Raumwahrnehmung," in (Köhler 1998). See also Cornelia Löchner, "Von der Form zum Raum: Kunstgeschichtliche Universalien und moderne Architektur—das Beispiel Wand," in (Aurenhammer and Prange 2016):317-322.

[11] (Müller-Tamm 2005):257-259.

[12] (Warnke 1992). See also Åhlberg, Lars-Olof. "Modernity and Ocularcentrism: A Second Look at Descartes and Heidegger." Filozofski Vestnik XVII, no. 2 (1996): 9–23.

[13] (Petrescu and Trogal 2017):117.

Modern styles. This is the background to the (later) post-War architectural development.[14]

There are many diverse philosophical, scientific, and theoretical developments that founded Modernism in architecture. The three main social theorists of Modern thought were Karl Marx, who defined the modern social and political systems, Max Weber, who established rationalization, and Sigmund Freud, whose ideas were imperative for social progress. Philosophy changed its focus from metaphysics and became human, and personal freedom was the major achievement of this change.[15] In Vienna, artistic and cultural critics advocated for a style that expressed inner, individual concerns in imaginative ways. The expression was to be of the artist's own thoughts.[16]

Buildings communicate through their formal mass, empty volumes, abstract formalization, and corporeal figuration.[17] Obviously, they do have meaning beyond simply the nature of their form, their materials and structures, as well as their stylistic attributes, and this is communicated. Not via semiotic methods or through simple decoding, but through purely experiential physiological, i.e., sensual, psychological, and physical, "reading."[18] How is this accomplished? In his groundbreaking book, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, Reyner Banham argues for the kind of architectural design that relates to the physical senses of the body.[19] Such buildings are constituted like "human" bodies. Interestingly, Banham prefers this method of understanding buildings to the perceptual ability of empathy. Another great 20th-century theorist, Manfredo Tafuri, sees architecture more as communication, where language and semiotics provide the methodologies of reading and understanding.[20]

One of the fascinating conundrums of the post-WWII era is the increasing dominance of the capitalist economic system. As financial and economic solutions are imposing their methods on political and social rules and behavior, individual freedom is dramatically reduced. The individual is powerless against the economic system. Is it still possible for people to

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[14] (*From Postwar to Postmodern – 20th Century Built Cultural Heritage* 2017):74.
[15] (Cahoone 1988).
[16] (Schwarzer 1995):220-223.
[17] (Esposti, n.d.):17.
[18] One might say that works of art should be read, not just seen. (Hatt and Klonk 2006):91.
[19] (Tournikiotis 1999):165.
[20] (Tournikiotis 1999):214-217. Stylistic analysis used to be relevant for understanding buildings but has lost its usefulness when it is applied to Modern architecture. See on this (Goldhagen 2005).

make individual and independent judgements about architecture in such a confusing environment?[21] Georg Simmel advocated combining our senses, since both vision and touch are needed for correctly understanding three-dimensional objects.[22]

In Europe, the Modern Style dominated theoretical deliberations in architectural matters. The aspect of the Modern style that is interesting to the present study is the gap that exists between the designs, which were primarily functionalist, and the ideology of the designers, which was primarily revolutionary, socialist, and collectivist. Modernism during the 1920s wanted to save the world, in the late 20th century it wanted to enrich and dignify people's lives. During the 1960s, Modernism came under attacks from architects who thought a less elitist and more popular style was more appropriate for the changed political and social ideology. This would become known as Postmodernism, which aimed at more easily decipherable building forms and styles.

Both of these styles present problems to the interpreter. Modernism because the link between forms and ideology is not very strong, and Postmodernism, because the ideology is too populist. In European Postmodernist architecture, the ideology aimed to counter the Modernist Marxist themes. Nevertheless, the architects did not plan to replace this ideology, but aimed to adapt it to the post-War times. Consequently, their architectural designs intended to improve Modernism, not replace it with something different.[23]

However, given the rather strange signals many contemporary buildings emit, a purely experiential physiological attempt to "reading" works of architecture seems most promising. The built environment is more than just a series of containers. Buildings are designed so that we can use innate abilities to understand them.

In 1893, Viennese art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905) introduced the term *Kunstwollen* as a novel method to be applied to the interpretation of works of art. Riegl used it to identify the intention that impels artists to create their works. This creative urge thus derives from inherently psycho-physiological human drives. As such it can also be exploited by the viewer in his attempt to understand what the work of art intends and means. While the German *Kunstwollen* has a clear definition, along the lines of "the will to (create or produce) art," this term becomes messy when translated into English. I have found it translated as "art will, will to form, esthetic urge,

[21] (Meyer 2021):221.
[22] (Simmel 1968).
[23] (Pommer 1980).

that which wills art, what art wants to do, artistic intent, artistic impulse, will to art, artistic will (with the difference between drive and will to specify), or artistic volition." I prefer this last translation.[24] Walter Benjamin thought it should be identified as "material volition" (materiales Wollen).[25] In coining this term, Riegl could rely on a few German art critics, historians, philosophers, and even psychologists who came before him, and focused on psychological methods of interpretation.

As Riegl used it, this method of interpretation is cultural and social, not material; it connects language communication to architectural space in a biological manner.[26] It is a cultural/historical method, not an iconographic one, hence imitation is not seen as the major definition of art.[27] One could credit Riegl with having ended the concept of styles that treated each artistic period as having a specific life span characterized by the sequence of birth, maturity, and death.[28] Instead, he subsumed into the term *style* those characteristics that are common in works of art. Moreover, these common traits were compared to similar developments in the humanistic and social sciences to make them even stronger.[29] Scholars have recognized that there is a social component in Riegl's theory.[30] Moreover, some saw it as an effort to develop art history into an autonomous scientific discipline, independent of the various sciences from which it had previously borrowed insights and methods.[31]

In everyday life, *Kunstwollen* is perceived, and enacted, through empathy, in a kind of objectification of the viewer's feeling of self. Through empathy, one sees (psychic) movements, which are then empirically read by the mind as mechanical forces.[32] In this respect, this form of perception

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[24] These translations have been gleaned from a variety of monographs and articles on Riegl and his method. See my *The Meaning of Modern Architecture: Its Inner Necessity and an Empathetic Reading* (Routledge, 2015): 91, note 47.

[25] (Kemp 1973):34. He defined these as religious, metaphysical, political, and economic tendencies of an epoch.

[26] Sabeth Buchmann, "Einleitung," in (Buchmann 2015, 7, 11). See also Kirsten Wagner, "Die Beseelung der Architektur, Empathie und Architektonischer Raum," in (Curtis and Koch 2009):17, 49; Robin Curtis calls it an urge to enter the object. (Curtis and Koch 2009):17. (Simons 2007):100.

[27] (Buchmann and Rike 2015):11, 50. Rykwert also sees it as a "spectator-based method (Rykwert 1976):69.

[28] (Grenzmann, Burkhard Hasebrink, and Rexroth 2017):187.

[29] (Riegl 1928):43-44, 47.

[30] (Volkenandt 2009).

[31] Klaus von Beyme, "Politische Ikonologie der Architektur," in (Hipp and Seidl 1996):20.

[32] (Mainberger 2010):114.

is like seeing through bodily re-enactment.[33] We feel ourselves into other people or objects, thus reading them through an act of humanizing our environment.[34]

The term *empathy* came into use in psychology in the late 19th century. Having arisen as *sympathy* during the 17th century, it was changed by German philosophers and psychologists partly influenced by the esthetic movement towards abstraction. At one time, empathy was defined as: "our mental-sensory ego is projected into the object."[35]

Many art historians applied empathy to their architectural interpretations.[36] August Schmarsow realized that architecture creates spatial images (Raumbildnisse) and the analysis of buildings requires that one perceive space in order to identify the characteristics of architecture. Human beings use both physiological and psychological capacities to understand buildings; a physiological psychology, so to speak. One relies on one's own body—especially its movements—for perception of depth and dimensions. Some architects proposed an experiential method of understanding. Sensual perception was deemed more important than material structure.[37]

Riegl himself also used this term in his interpretation of architecture. Buildings are usually seen from a distance. He was adamant that optical perception was the most efficient way of perceiving modern works of art.[38] There are specific building parts which convey the architect's volition, namely the characteristic flat planes that form walls and have delineated edges. The eyes grasp these through their outlines as linear configurations. From experience, we are familiar with the materiality of these planes and transform the whole into solid shapes defined by clearly outlined planes. In the same manner, additionally confirmed through light and shadow, we see the forms as three-dimensional.

This empathetic approach to the understanding of architecture produces an attitude which comes close to the political and ideological beliefs that influence our behavior. In both cases, the approach is not primarily rational, but much more emotional. This characterized especially German and Austrian art and architecture in the late 19th- and early 20th centuries.[39]

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[33] (Braunbart 1995):192.
[34] (Jahoda 2005):162.
[35] (Jahoda 2005):152-154.
[36] (Mallgrave and Eleftherios 1994).
[37] (Zug 2006).
[38] (Riegl 1929):34-35.
[39] (James-Chakraborty 2000):15-20.

Art historians have continued to question Riegl's definitions. Beginning in the late 1980s and culminating in the first decade of the 21st century there has been a veritable rebirth of interest in Riegl. Recent research suggests that this method is now accepted as scientific.[40] Since the method exploits human abilities, it is seen as leading to interpretations that bring architecture close to human life.[41] Even highly abstract forms and shapes can engender empathetic responses in the viewer.[42]

I want to ask whether this term could also be applied to architecture, testing whether there is not just a *Kunstwollen*, but also an *Architekturwollen*, an architectural volition. *Kunstwollen* has made its way into urban design. This question came from Katherine Arens's article "*Stadtwollen*: Benjamin's *Arcades Project* and the Problem of Method."[43] In this publication, Arens examines Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* as object of study with Riegl's *Kunstwollen* as method of interpretation. She defines *Stadtwollen* as "the human drive to create a city as a structure of meaning." This was literally adapted from her reading of *Kunstwollen* as "a drive leading a culture to create works of art as structured artifacts … that reveal an era's self-understanding." Arens transforms this into a distinct view of the city, namely not as revealing something universal, but rather just as forms that "incorporate the given world" by an artist. She proposes that cities should be interpreted as "conditioned by … human activity and existence," and consequently also as conditioning this same human existence. The city is understood "materially-phenomenologically, when a concrete form actualizes a specific world understanding." The city seen in this way is an "artifact demonstrating a *Stadtwollen*." Arens's understanding of Riegl's theory is straight to the point.

Walter Benjamin, the focus of Arens's interest, helps explain what "artistic volition" means. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," he promoted architecture as a medium that is directed toward the distracted urban crowd, since it is a form of art that is perceived best in an indifferent state. Urban architecture has always had an impact on city crowds. Buildings are understood and interpreted through their function and their form. We notice architecture in the city casually, i.e., not by paying particular attention to buildings. Like Riegl, Benjamin combined optical and haptic perception as the best way to become habituated to architecture. Distracted reception has become the preferred

[40] Buchmann and Frank, "Einleitung," in (Buchmann and Rike 2015):7-11.
[41] Wagner, "Die Beseelung der Architektur. Empathie und Architektonischer Raum" in (Curtis and Koch 2009):49.
[42] (James-Chakraborty 2000):3.
[43] (Arens 2007).

method of perception in the age of mechanical reproduction.[44] Benjamin was aware of Riegl's theory, as he had reviewed the latter's *Late Roman Art Industry* in 1929.[45]

Georg Simmel had similar ideas. In 1906, he published an essay titled: "On the Third Dimension in Art." He stated that depicting the third dimension in a two-dimensional medium is abnormal, because it is not really needed to create a convincing sensual perception. According to Simmel, depth cannot be perceived optically, only through tactile sensations. However, touching paintings would not create a more convincing perception of depth. Objects seen in painting are like ghosts. Hence, while a work of art is real, its meaning has a different kind of reality, namely an esthetic one. When viewing it, tactile sensations assist in understanding the optical perceptions.[46]

If one can interpret a city by identifying in its parts the urban volition that has intended it, one should be able to do the same with buildings. In fact, buildings provide excellent case studies for creative intentions, because their interpretation in many instances does not require iconographic decoding.[47]

Riegl himself used this approach in three of his books. It is introduced in his *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts* (1897-98).[48] This was written as a polemic against the followers of Gottfried Semper, who had simplified the master's theory into the short statement that art works were created through functional efficiency, material choices, and efficient use of the material in constructing the final form. Against this pragmatic and materialistic interpretation of art, Riegl posited the artistic volition that determined the artistic outcome. For him, art serves three major needs, namely first it evokes ideas, second it satisfies our own decorative urge, and third, it satisfies functional purposes.[49] In this respect, he purified art of extra-artistic considerations. By stating that art reveals its meaning only when a human being sees it, he eliminated all sorts of rational and scientific attempts at deciphering.

Riegl then refined this concept in his book *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), where the artistic volition begins to be defined through the formal choices and ornamental evolution of buildings and art works. In this book,

[44] (Benjamin 1968).
[45] (Peaker 2001).
[46] (Simmel 1968).
[47] (Iversen 1991):440.
[48] (Riegl 1897).
[49] (Riegl 1897):61-62.

Riegl deals extensively with Early Christian buildings, pointing out that these use flat planes for walls. When combined into a building, there are a lot of straight lines and edges outlining individual forms. These individual forms are then composed into material organic individuals, thus using the definition of the human body as analog for the architectural form. Flat planes were not only used in abstract paintings but combined in architecture to enclose spaces. In both cases, outlines and colors were the manifest physical parts that were analyzed in the interpretation of the work. (Fig. 1-2) Riegl stated this as "mankind meant to see the visual appearances according to outlines and color on the plane or in space."[50]

Figure 1-2: Sant'Appollinare in Classe, Ravenna (549)

Lastly, *Kunstwollen* is used in his *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom [The Origin of Baroque Art in Rome]* (1908). By now, it had evolved into a methodological term. In this book, it is mostly used to identify that the artist's volition is the ultimate reason for stylistic change. In Baroque art, everything (sculpture, painting, building) is determined by spatial form and geared toward making this visible. Space is now defined as deep extension. This optical movement is made visible through light and shadow.

[50] (Preziosi 2009):156.

In sculpture, shadow allows optical perception, contour lines tactical (or haptic) one. This could also work for real spaces: in addition to the cage formed by edge lines there is the light washing over the walls to complement this into a complete vision of space. In architecture, deep space is seen clearly, before it is understood empathically. This is shown in his interpretation of the Ancient Roman houses in Pompeii. He saw the peristyle as the essential part of these buildings, where the surrounding colonnades are artistic and define height and width. First was therefore the courtyard, second came the walls. The courtyard was eventually covered and became a "Hallenhof" (hall courtyard). Façades actually point to the interior and Riegl calls them "walls that are made *wirksam* (effective) from the inside." Based on this insight, he proposed an explanation for the change from Old St. Peter's to the new one: The previous building exerted an effect on the Gemüt (mind), whereas an effect on the senses was demanded in the new building. The term *Kunstabsicht* (artistic intention) is also used. Pope Sixtus V's *Kunstwollen* is defined as changing Ancient monuments into Christian ones.[51]

The focus on artistic volition facilitates the description of works of art and the understanding of their structural organization. This obviously makes one's interpretation much clearer and more convincing.[52]

From these books, it appears that when Kunstwollen is applied to architecture, it manifests itself primarily in the spaces buildings enclose. Spatial conceptions are different from one another based on the uses performed in the spaces and on the different civic significance determined by the world view of each age. Consequently, each age has its own artistic volition.[53]

Elevating space to one of the significant agents that leads to architectural understanding has appeared here and there in German 19th-century architectural theory. A case in point is Arnold Göller's essay "What is the Cause of Perpetual Change in Architecture?" of 1887. He begins by stating that architectural perception is both intellectual and esthetic, defining the latter as "an inherently pleasurable, meaningless play of lines or of light and shade." Thus, architecture offers us abstract, geometric forms that do not remind us of objects. Consequently, architectural form pleases even if the viewer is not thinking much about content. Architecture is then "the true art of pure visible form." We see an architectural form and convey this

[51] (Riegl 1908):32-98.
[52] (Simons 2007):160.
[53] (Simons 2007):161-165.

perception to our mind, where a conception or image is formed. In this conscious imaging, pleasure appears.[54]

Riegl's method was influenced by such explanations of architectural beauty. It is interesting that he applied his concept to Early Christian and Baroque Architecture. One could scarcely find two more contrasting styles. But, seeing them side by side demonstrates the evolution of spatial form and design from the earlier to the later. According to Riegl, everything in Baroque architecture was determined by spatial form and geared toward making this visible. Space is visualized in the façades and seen as receding into depth. Contrasted to the planarity of Early Christian churches, in Baroque ones the spatial depth is revealed through light, not lines. In addition, these two identify the main compositional manners used by most empathy art historians and theorists, namely "painterly (optic) and haptic."[55]

The first is perceived visually, the second through touch. In Early Christian architecture, space surpasses material in generating the main impression. Hans Berthold Busse, in his book *Kunst und Wissenschaft*, calls Riegl's theory part of formal esthetics, being as such primarily descriptive. In addition, it must be intellectually thought through. Immanent formal relationships in a work of art or architecture are grasped in the transitions between individual parts. These are scientifically analyzed and become the esthetically significant elements of a building. Such elements are formed of clearly delineated surfaces that are seen in a haptic manner, meaning that they look as if they could be touched or grasped. This can be illustrated by cartoon drawings. Busse writes that Riegl was only interested in how art works become visible, i.e., how they are structured for depiction. The creation of works of art is a process that contains requirements that can only be decided by the will of the creator. Riegl wanted to establish a theory of how "artificial visibility is produced."[56]

How has subsequent art historical research dealt with Kunstwollen and how does it reveal itself in works of art since Riegl coined this moniker?[57] There have been many attempts to specify what Kunstwollen means today, mainly by screening this term through the lenses of humanistic, as well as social and natural scientific methodologies. Art historians have mainly attempted to shed light on this concept by applying it to the new art forms and media created after the 1960s. Andrea Reichenberger has dealt specifically with the scientific merits of Riegl's term in her various publications. She has written extensively on how this art-historical theory

[54] (Mallgrave and Eleftherios 1994):193-225.
[55] (Riegl 1908).
[56] (Busse 1981):57-69.
[57] "Kunstwollen gained its own life after his death." (Reynolds 2007):117.

fits into the evolution of the sciences during the last few decades of the 19th century. The then reigning method of collecting, viewing, and cataloguing of monuments was not sufficient to legitimize art history as a science. Riegl developed art history into one of the descriptive sciences with laws analogous to those in the natural sciences. Reichenberger sees Riegl's development as beginning with establishing a history of styles by focusing particularly on the evolution of each style. Riegl accomplished this mainly by using language and grammar as the new methods of organization. In addition, sensuality helped him grasp the significance of experience for the understanding of art. Riegl's method eventually was understood as comparative art history.[58] This was corroborated by the philosopher Paul Feyerabend who wrote a short essay in 1984 titled "Science as art," in which he tried to reverse-engineer Riegl's art historical method back to the exact sciences.[59]

In 2003, Matthew Rampley took issue with Erwin Panofsky's view that artistic volition does not have psychological meaning but emphasizes only decisive rational actions by the artist. Riegl, Rampley asserts, saw artistic volition instead as a means to detect the artist's intentions. Riegl used artistic volition more like a law that governs the artistic process. The contrast between Riegl and Panofsky reflects a debate that took place among German historians in the late 19th century. The main question was whether history was the result of individual action, or of a collective ideal. According to Rampley, Riegl's position is between the individual and the general feeling. While artistic volition is used to analyze the impact of the artist on the work, when artistic volition deals with the styles, it focuses instead more on the general aspects.[60]

Some of the Riegl experts have examined the validity of his approach by applying his theory of artistic volition to more recent artistic media. The afore-mentioned Busse explained more specifically what *Kunstwollen* produces by doing just that. He agrees that artistic design is not possible without solving problems through willful decisions. Most of these problems deal with form, so one could indeed say that forms can only be explained as the result of an artistic will. He cautions, however, that these definitions are not sufficient when art is created in more recent media. Film and video, e.g., are not static, but show a sequence, or a development. Here, forms are less important than visibility. In these media, reality is simulated, and works cease to be pictures. In their so far latest incarnation—cyberspace—there is

[58] (Reichenberger 2003):33, 80.
[59] (Feyerabend 1984).
[60] (Rampley 2003).

not even a reality any longer. At the same time, however, cyberspace is no longer symbolic. The equivalent of this in architecture is Computer-Aided Design. Here, pictures should be treated as information, not as expression. Images result from a particular way of seeing, namely the artist's way of seeing. Nevertheless, this also means that art represents reality in a way that can be understood by other people. This is the way we humans see and understand the world around us.[61]

Regine Prange, in her "Konjunkturen (= booms) des Optischen," lays out a potential trajectory from Riegl forward. For her, Riegl's definition of *Kunstwollen* and the definitions of what we see have instituted a "Flächenraum" (flat space) as a category of space found in both painting and architecture. As mentioned above, Georg Simmel made similar comments. The art historian Max Imdahl added recognition of objects to recognition of forms in his updating of the definition of seeing as influenced by *Kunstwollen*. With that, artistic volition has now also expanded to understanding the content of works of art, not just their forms. An example for this would be Jasper Johns's flag paintings, which do show a flag, but can also be analyzed as abstract paintings consisting of differently colored geometric areas.[62]

The critic Clement Greenberg established planarity as the main characteristic of Modern art but stated that such paintings also have a spatial dimension. An example would be a Cubist painting, where the individual flat shapes could connect into spatial appearances. Jackson Pollock's drip lines could also impress as having a spatial feeling. Here, lines are formed through actual bodily movements, so that reading them through empathy makes perfect sense.[63]

Minimal art then abandons this content and emphasizes pure opticality, where the physical work is secondary to its optical impression. These works now address purely the viewer's phenomenological capacities.[64]

Margaret Olin's article "Was bleibt von Riegl's Theorie: Riegl auf Amerikanisch," deals with photography, especially how the haptic view has transformed—through the smart phone cameras—into the acceptance of photographs (= selfies) as better proof of life than real life.[65]

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[61] (Busse 1981):68-203.
[62] (Prange, Konjunkturen des Optischen n.d.).
[63] (Mainberger 2010):207.
[64] Regina Prange, "Vom textilen Ursprung der Kunst oder: Mythologien der Fläche bei Gottfried Semper, Alois Riegl und Henri Matisse," in (Buchmann and Rike 2015):109-124.
[65] (Olin 2010).

This conception of the fully developed three-dimensional space coincides with the purely optical world view we have begun to favor during the past few decades. For Riegl, works of art engender a mood in the viewer.[66] In his own time, this mood was seen as leading to a state of harmony.[67]

Emphasizing space in architectural perception allows the viewer to step figuratively into the building, before entering it physically.[68] Riegl alluded to this in his *Dutch Group Portrait* of 1902. Here, he introduced the dual actions of internal and external coherence. In 17th-century Dutch group portraits, the composition is enhanced by the psychological narrative of what is depicted as happening physically in the painted scene. The individual figures in the painting are not just placed as a haphazard grouping in the pictorial space but depicted as interacting with each other. Some of them are even shown looking out of the painting toward the viewer. Thus, the viewer has a role to play in this entire interaction with the painting. The internal coherence deals with the scene in the painting, the external one with how the viewer sees this scene. This makes viewing art part of our psychological and anthropological capacities. The viewer understands this because the relationships he or she enjoys in the world are like those shown in the paintings.

Do these additional explanations of Riegl's concept allow us to answer whether there is an *Architekturwollen*? From the work of the scholars cited above, I propose that we examine first the spatial array of buildings. Because when we look at contemporary buildings, this seems to be the main impression we take away. Our technological skill is so advanced that practically any form can be constructed. According to Riegl's method, we retrieve the spatial configuration optically from the exterior formal composition of a building. Then, we must formulate a thorough verbal description of what we see. This transformation of the visual perception into an intellectual conception seems to me to be the most important task in understanding and interpreting a building according to the "architectural volition" method. This will bring out clearer and more convincing building critiques and evaluations. The active cooperation between the viewer and a work of art, or for my own purposes, a building, might present an interesting way to deal with contemporary architecture. Zaha Hadid designed some wondrous buildings during her career. I have always been frustrated by the reactions of architectural critics to her designs. Most scholarly texts on

[66] Alois Riegl, "Naturwerk und Kunstwerk," in (Riegl 1929):51-64.
[67] (Simons 2007):167.
[68] (Simons 2007):176.

deconstructivist architecture attempt fruitlessly to connect a philosophical point of view to an architectural form. In the case of the Vitra Fire Station (Weil am Rhein, 1987-1993) (Fig. 1-3), for instance, we read analyses that attempt to explain the skewed composition of this building as deriving from the obliquely viewed rectangular fields nearby that then magically congregated into this design. Hadid wanted to bring these lines together in the station, so as to point out the importance of this building. In addition, she thought the factory was too monotonous. Or the forms are explained as having been pushed out of the earth by natural eruptions, so that it almost looks like a volcanic outbreak. Such rational explanations of a highly subjective creative process are disappointing. This building really transcends the restrictions architectural construction usually must obey, such as the potential of building materials, functional considerations, as well as form and ornamental design conventions. Shouldn't we try to understand this building through the search for the architectural volition that generated it? What if Hadid simply wanted to create a building so unusual and energetic that it forces its inhabitants to be constantly attentive to their environment and where they are going. Maybe this building intended to always keep the firefighters watchful, so that they would be instantly ready for the next fire?[69]

Her MAXXI National Museum of the 21st Century Arts in Rome (2010) might have been intended to show its visitors the complex and multidisciplinary intersections, influences, and flows of present and future art. Its interior is divided into terraces that provide separate exhibition galleries. We define interiors through the axes of our movements, hence see spaces kinetically.[70] And here, moving about is smooth. Something similar is attempted in the Riverside Museum, Glasgow (2011), probably with the addition of the danger of sea travel expressed in the angular roof forms? Or it could just be a waveform. "Reading" such seemingly absurd buildings empathically might just allow us to get better in tune with our environment.

It is highly feasible, that the entire history of 20th-century architecture, beginning with Modernism, might benefit from being investigated anew from the perspective of an architectural volition. There are too many highly complex, sometimes even esoteric, attempts at deciphering buildings through methods that are brought in from other disciplines into historiography. Instead, as Riegl advises us to do, sometimes one learns more through a thorough description of the building, which is then completed through a psychological reading of these forms. For instance, if

[69] See Chapt. 8 for a thorough interpretation of this building.
[70] (Curtis and Koch 2009):26.

one looks attentively at typical interiors designed by Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, one can see the different intentions of these two architects quite easily. Mies created an open unobtrusive interior, whereas Le Corbusier tightly controls how one ascends from the entrance hall to the upper floor.

Figure 1-3: Vitra Fire Station