

Architecture at Its Boundary

Artistic Potential of an Interval

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Abstract—The topic of boundaries and boundary phenomena in the new architecture is multidimensional and extremely ambiguous: architecture on the border with an artistic action or stretching the understanding of "artistic" in architecture. The second perspective is perhaps the most relevant resource of mutual germination of architectural and artistic and "non-artistic" in the traditional meaning of spheres of culture. Along with this, a frequent departure from the real translates the architecture (or its significant creative array) into the field of other tasks and another language - into another reality, in which philosophy, literature, painting, graphics, sculpture have long existed – free science and art. Here we find the same elusive, insurmountable, but necessary gap, a developed border, a sparse connection, and at the same time – the prerequisites for integration. On this dynamic boundary, the communication potential is filled, without which it is impossible to build the desired integrity. In addition, the expansion of artistic boundaries of architecture lays the foundation for mutual understanding of the participants in the dialogue and strategically – greater "trust" of modern man to the new architecture as art.

Keywords—*art integration; boundaries of architecture; contemporary architecture; contemporary art; artistic potential; architectural trends*

I. INTRODUCTION

Architecture daily puts boundaries in a man's living space or, rather, he finds boundaries himself and realizes them by means of the art of building. Naturally, this action takes place not at once, but in the historic development in the context of various interests and preferences. In such a way, a system-forming role of architecture shows itself, one of its creative hypostases – to organize a living space. However, by no means always the results of architectural and accompanying kinds of creative activities are obvious and clearly defined.

An issue of the architecture boundaries in this case makes a global problem of disciplinary and world outlook boundaries more urgent. Boundary crossing more often serves a resource of renewal of the possibility field with a simultaneous deformation of the existing form orderliness. The boundary of an object in space, which at first glance in many cases can be defined, turns out to be per se quite conditional. The city long ago has developed almost all its

territories – land-forming, underground parking lots, supply pipelines – all this makes the "architecture" (or construction) practically total. At times, one feels great bewilderment, by chance passing by a site where repair works are under way (especially abroad), when a frightful truth of the absence of anything natural, but at the same time a surprisingly beautiful picture of technology and technical ethics triumph opens up before one's eyes. It should be noted, that the town-planning in itself resembles capture of entire space based on calculations and forecasts: commercial, social, logistical. This is also an integral, mainly not artistic, boundary form of new architecture.

Instability of boundaries in a way may be compared with the change of fashion. Nowadays, temporal architecture and seasonal festival environment are not surprising any more. Indeed, a today's general problem of excessive speeds and information overload, when the addressee "gets tired" very fast from the offered images, which, in their turn, become old-fashioned the same way quickly, manifests in it. Still, it is not completely clear, in what direction one should look for the solution of this morbid problem, but architects already today respond by designing objects with an open function, buildings-forums continuing the city environment, media-casings quickly changing their image.

The architectural space is located at the verge of:

- Times
- Environments
- Functional processes
- Senses and images.

The last one of the above-mentioned marks refers to the symbolic function and tendencies of staging and scenographic presentation of the living environment using practices of the actual art. Human participation creates and strengthens the element of performativity of the space, which is built in the city rhythm and plays with time and in time. It is true, time often defines quality of space perception, duration of man's contact with it. Boundary, initially artistic forms of architecture appear, communicating with their addressee.

Separation of approaches is evident. On the one hand, architecture is defined by a functional programme, which is later filled with “art”: decor, colour, painting and sculpture, art-objects and installations. On the other hand, there is an architectural piece of art as a realization of author’s individuality and harmony of all parts, recognized creative success, best samples of architecture. The third way is also possible, which does not suppose “obligatory” decoration or ascension to the art in its traditional understanding.

But it makes obvious the inconsistency of the attitude to the architecture today. Does a work of architectural art go beyond the “limits” of profession? What problems appear at the border?

Today, the following controversial points should be accented:

- Problem of authorship – professional or every dweller;
- Problem of communication or understanding architectural message;
- Problem of “vitality” – integration of architecture in person’s first-hand needs;
- Problem of criteria – what is to be considered comfortable, reliable, fine...

What is to be considered art, and what answer to this question will give representatives of different generations? Probably, today, it is much more important not to define criteria, but to understand the attitude to possible criteria! Should it be categorical in the epoch of changes? This appears to be one of the main nerves of the today’s cultural field, which architecture is built in.

II. MULTIFORMITY OF CRITERIA AT THE BORDER OF ARCHITECTURE AND ART

The theme of boundaries and boundary phenomena in new architecture is multivariate and ambiguous. At least two viewpoints on this theme are possible. Firstly, one may speak about the architecture at the border of artistic action. Secondly, - about the broadening, extending the understanding of “artistic” in architecture. This is, very likely, the most actual resource connected with intergrowth of architectural-artistic and “non-artistic” in traditional meaning spheres of culture. From this point of view, the second angle of the problem is wider and more important. It is connected with the understanding of the role of an architect by the public and architectural community itself.

It should be accepted that the process of reconsideration of the role of an architect and an artist is very active today, and it is discussed violently. Moreover, this process is accompanied by an evident and latent reform of the architect’s self-actualization, his self-orientation in profession and requirements of the surrounding world. Perhaps, it is an indicator of the crisis of professional thinking. Perhaps, – a precursor of its renovation and harmonization. In the outlined trends we inclined to see potential for integration, synthesis, synergy on the way of creation of new integrities.

An issue of search for potential should be clarified: of a boundary or an interval? Indeed, these concepts in many respects intersect... The potential of intermediate, boundary states of architecture in its various manifestations is interesting and important for us. The difference is in the fact that the “boundary” may be drawn by “one line” having no “thickness” of a layer. In any case, even a “stretched”, “wide” boundary is characterized by certain “density”, “viscosity”, “fullness”...

In the end, definition of a boundary of something is often ambiguous, both in spatial and ideal sense. The boundary then becomes abstraction, required just in a concrete solution at the given time.

An interval, in its turn, even very minimal is always characterized by a certain gap, generated vacuum, emptiness. Emptiness which, certainly, is not truly empty and is also penetrated by a network of links, though is thought to be “discharged”. Besides, an interval is obvious, visible, sometime physically tangible. Such a state or substance (a certain semi- or absent matter) is a place of birth of something new, a sign of mystery of creation of meanings and forms [1]. Perhaps, it is worth trying to answer another question: where and why did the gap appear – between what and what did the mentioned interval occur?

III. POTENTIAL OF BOUNDARY STATES OF ARCHITECTURE. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL VIEWS

Before considering experience realized in the article, let us address to the verbal experience demonstrating a change in the professional thinking.

“Ambitions of life building integrity are better realized by the architecture in the artificially limited frameworks of an artistic experiment, i.e. approaching to the norms of original staging of life, playing another life”, – wrote A.V. Ikonnikov in his work “Space and form in architecture and town-planning” [2].

“This exactly is “architectural”. This vague meaning defines for me a poetic constituent of the architecture. There is neither definite style nor concrete formal language behind it”, – determines E. As in the essay “Traces” [3].

“In order to be significant, architecture must be forgotten, or must present only an image for reverence which subsequently becomes confounded with memories...” – speculates A. Rossi in his work “A Scientific autobiography” [4]. In another citation from the same work one may find even freer metaphoric comparison: “Yet the architecture, having gone beyond function and history, dream and feeling, flesh and weariness. had approached a light that was rose-green, but filtered through so many things that it turned back into whiteness, or into the lake, or into the remoteness of the lake. This remoteness was almost like the forgetting of architecture...” [5].

The mentioned utterances show a certain fatal aspiration of the architect for breaking from the load of material, desire to liberate his view, including liberation from professional fetters. Certainly, this is also a game, the results of which are

architectural works. Perhaps, there is certain logic in how the art, burdened with so heavy load of purely utilitarian tasks, tries “not to notice” them, even for a while, becoming an image, sensation, anticipation.

“This smeared kingdom of blur... ..forming a seamless patch-work quilt of constant separate parts”, – foretold R. Koolhaas in the utopian essay “Junkspace” [6]. In another place the author linked directly an unsteady state of the architectural function and ways of its realization with the form: “...or a tissue jacket acquiring any form depending on volumes confined in it” [7].

In his ironic utopias which scare rather by recognizability of evident trends and today’s realities but not the degree of exaggeration, R. Koolhaas speaks about the “liquid state” of the space able to contain any fillings. One may also recall “Transparency” by Colin Rowe, “Blur, Blots and Dissolution of a Surface” by American theorist V. di Palma or, finally, a famous statement of the architectural bureau of Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio in the “Blur Building”. All this made it possible to speak about an obvious tendency to “flickerness” – a term that characterizes well the whole direction of illusive architecture by Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, Jean Nouvel and their associates [8]. One should also agree with the K. Vytuleva’s statement about the increasing role of works interpreting these qualities by: P. Eizenmam, G. Lynn, J. Kipnis, S. Kwinter, S. Allen, L. Spuybroek, M. Novak, S. Perella, S. Hall, E. Zengelis, J. Nouvel, E. Diller, R. Scofidio.

Next let us draw our attention to contemporary architectural examples directly or allegorically existing at the border of space, time and sense.

Integration of different languages – different epochs, civilizations, kinds of art (Ill. 1) may be observed in the example of The Neues Museum (“New Museum”) in Berlin (D. Chipperfield, J. Harrap, 2009) “Fig. 1”, and primarily, the restored architecture of the XIX century, a specific handwriting of a recognized master, neighbouring with motives of the ancient Egyptian art. In this case, amazing synthesis of characteristic author’s methods being recognized in other buildings by the addressed monumentality of the image occurred. It looks like a certain kind of “reciprocal projection” of the author’s style who, as if in advance, has received an impulse of the Egyptian art. Another important interaction is on the level of ties between architectural space and exhibits, as well as fragments of the conserved monumental-decorative painting of the original interior. This particular beyond-time “museum” meeting is paradoxical in content, but theatrically harmonious in form. Other passing side of synthesis – in the choreographic “Dialogue – 09” by Sasha Waltz (a performance at the opening ceremony) who gives rather autonomous reading “Fig. 2”, showing life by means of his plastic language, but not interpretation –is development of space and its boundary potential.



Fig. 1. The Neues Museum (“New Museum”) in Berlin. D. Chipperfield, J. Harrap, 2009.

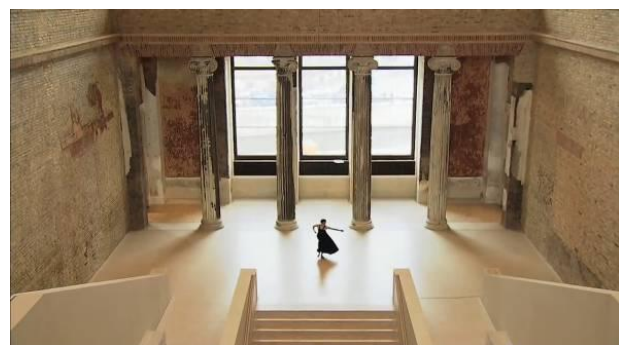


Fig. 2. Dialogue – 09. Sasha Waltz, 2009.

The Museum of Cultures MUDEC (Milan, 1999– 2007, 2008 – 2014) opened in the result of renovation of a former industrial area on D. Chipperfield’ design represents an

example of the emotionally activated space at the verge of artistic intervention in to a utilitarian object “Fig. 3”. The complex comprises the New Archeological Museum, the Centre of Non-European Cultures, the Centre for Advanced Studies of Visual Art, a laboratory of traditional puppet maker of Colla Brothers, bookshops, boutiques and studios, a passage, a café. Without doubt, the architecture here creates more than just the effect of contract which is increased by a monumental front staircase going up from the entrance hall. Entering unexpectedly a pulsating curvilinear space, a visitor finds oneself in a new world – another “artistic” dimension. It is worth noting that the curvilinear casing itself is designed as a boundary having thickness about 1 meter. From the atrium it is non-transparent, and from the halls it serves an information window of a current exposition. Opal glass reacts keenly to light: the dimmed grey-turquoise tint changes depending on illumination.

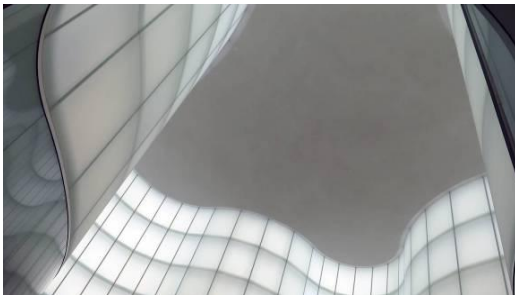


Fig. 3. The Museum of Cultures MUDEC in Milan. D. Chipperfield, 1999 – 2007, 2008 – 2014.

The Prada Foundation’s New Arts Complex in Milan designed by R. Koolhaas (2008 – 2015) stands out for the ambiguous interpretation of the place’s spirit and medium’s value, being also an example of reconstruction “Fig. 4”. The architect tactfully, but steadily creates playing space with numerous question marks, the next version of a “liquid state” in the author’s terms [9]. A culmination of this performance is the Golden Tower. Attention to the material of finish and details is admiring, and it shows adherence to the quite traditional criteria of professional mastership: solution of coatings, stained glass, lights, barriers.

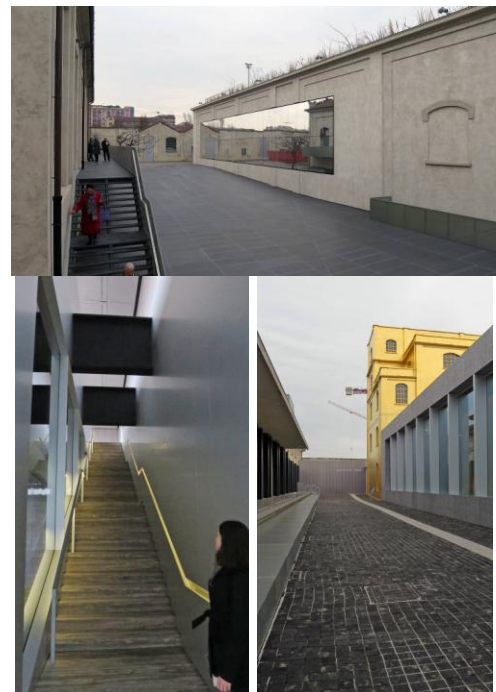


Fig. 4. The Prada Foundation’s New Arts Complex in Milan. R. Koolhaas, 2008 – 2015.

The “New Stage of the Alexandrinsky Theatre” complex in Saint-Petersburg (Yu. Zemtsov, M. Kondiayn, 2013) represents an object-link spatially connecting the well-known masterpiece by K.I. Rossi and the Fontanka embankment “Fig. 5”. The former storage buildings of brick style became the starting point for forming a complex of new modern halls, including for rehearsals, and an experimental scene. In other words, they became a base of a new conception of the theatre – a space of search and a space of social action, co-authorship. The format of new building functioning is as “transparent” as the material of new walls.

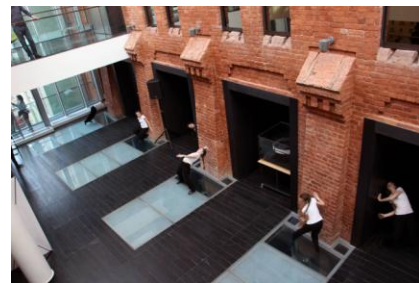


Fig. 5. The New Stage of the Alexandrinsky Theatre complex in Saint-Petersburg. Yu. Zemtsov, M. Kondiayn, 2013.

Public spaces serve centers, junctions, pauses in the life of the city that differently understood by architects, artists, designers, regular users and casual passers-by. Business areas change their style integrating actively into social life of the city. Leveling borders of an object and the environment, the city and a building as a potential of relationship has become an actual motto [10]. The building of civil forum and consortium of Media-TIK in “district 22@” in Barcelona (2010) designed by architect Enric Ruiz-Geli (design bureau “Cloud 9”) offers a transparent “boundary” of internal processes opened for any interested person “Fig. 6”. The consortium scheme supposes temporal corporation of companies to work on a certain project, and the internal space in fact continues freely the street space for the purpose of advertising and increasing citizens’ interest to business initiatives. All that demanded revision of the structural layout – floors are suspended on the frames, and the wall is converted into a membrane. The multiple meaning manifests not only in the functional flexibility and “reverse” tectonics, but also in the esthetic code: the provocative solution of “patch” fronts refers to the creations by A. Gaudí, and the authors called their work symbolically “La Pedrera Digital”.

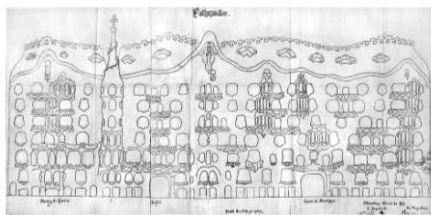
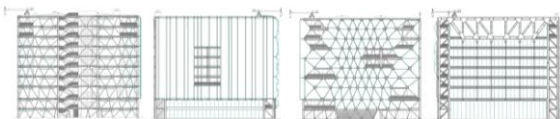


Fig. 6. Media-TIK in “district 22@” in Barcelona. Enric Ruiz-Geli (“Cloud 9”), 2010.

One more layer of considerations is related to the power of architecture as a boundary in the world of the man’s sensations, the retuning of his thoughts and behaviour. Even a small object can become a certain border line behind which space is not controlled by the environment. The architecture of the Kamppi “Chapel of Silence” in Helsinki (K2S Architects. 2012) prescribes a visitor a certain format of

behaviour “Fig. 7”. Due to the curvature of the chapel walls, unique acoustics is achieved in the space of a small hall: every accidental rustle or sound is heard. Saving and studying one’s own internal state, contemplation of this tacit submergence – these are scenarios which are permitted by the given space. Everything in it is designed to conform the idea of silence. It manifests in the most laconic interior of one-colour wood, as well as in the character of natural light, which does not come directly, but penetrates “quietly” through the sides of the lamp and softly disseminates on the walls. The exterior of the chapel in many respects contrasts with its spatial content being more in conformity with the surrounding busy transit square.

The monument to respected Italian president Sandro Pertini on the Montenapoleone square in Milan (1988 – 1990) designed by architect A. Rossi – a researcher, romantic, the author of the architectural theatre conception – may be considered a successful realization of the boundary potential of the idea and reality “Fig. 8”. As in his other works, the author used the language of pure geometry – right and acute angles. The monument is initially accessible to public because from one side it designed in the form of a staircase facing the square and leading to an observation platform. From the other side, it is a spring telling that time is passing. The object is simultaneously symbolic and contextual resembling a mausoleum, a tribune, a fragment of lost city walls at the same time...

The scale of the square permits almost to forget the semantic content making the object the square’s possession, which can be easily used for the rest, communication, games. In it there is the philosophy of the theatre of life guessed by the architect: “*Between the house of childhood and the house of death, the house of performance and the house of work there exists the house of everyday life...*” [11].

The boundary potential of architectural and natural space, social activity and artistic action manifests even in a higher degree in formation of festival environment that has become a real trend of the time.

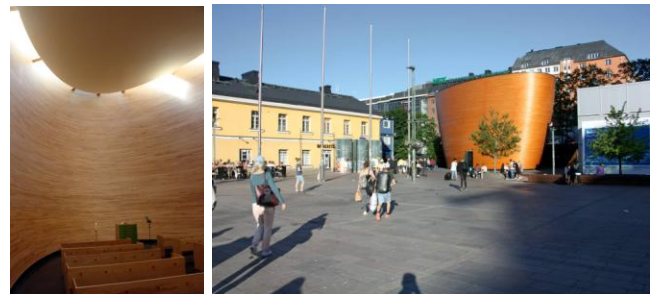


Fig. 7. The Kamppi “Chapel of Silence” in Helsinki. K2S Architects, 2012.



Fig. 8. Sandro Pertini monument in Milan. A. Rossi, 1988 – 1990.

The festival ARCHSTOYANIE, annually held on the Ugra river near Nikolo-Lenivets village of the Kaluga region, has already acquired the status of the main place where contemporary art, representatives of various stakeholders and nature meet. The festival is architectural regardless free interpretation and program dissolution of numerous foundations of architecture. More exactly, these foundations approach their boundaries. First of all, this is the function, which derives from a conceptual idea, from a desired spatial effect. The artistic constituent, perhaps, is also taken into the field of unstable measure, admitted by the conceptual art, and is unchangeable only from the point of view of the value of the author's statement made by an individual artist. Just the constructive truth is beyond any doubt – all the structures are reliable and, as a rule, possess an interactive element of communication with the public (with large quantities of people at peak hours of the festival). Thus, a dynamic boundary of conceptual, artistic and natural is formed, where the latter, one should admit, wins. The best objects are those that find a consistent dialogue with the environment forming synergy with the nature “Fig. 9”.

Contemporary architectural fantasies (G. Eddie Guidry, Minoru Nomata, et al.) continue the line of conceptual utopia and visionary approach becoming all-sufficient objects. These are self-developing structures by E. Guidry or metaphysical towers by Nomata “Fig. 10”. It should be noted, that many artists work in this genre with different degree of success, establishing the futuristic as a graphic tradition. And at the same time architecture most often turns into material of artistic interpretation, becomes a fetish in the collection of spectacular projects of alternative realities of various kinds: the past, future, virtual life, etc.



Fig. 9. Festival Archstoyanie on the Ugra river near Nikolo-Lenivets.

White gates. N. Polissky. Archstoyanie-2016. The shadow pavilion. I. Korina and I. Voznesensky. Archstoyanie-2016



Fig. 10. Minoru Nomata. Painting series – towers.

IV. BOUNDARY STATE OF ARCHITECTURE. CRISIS OR POTENTIAL

Let us try to identify the most acute aspects of the present with respect to the addressed theme. What does the boundary space come into:

- fluid (fluctuating), hybrid, “substantive”, “junk”;
- unstable (temporal, flexible, transformable);
- not always real (imaginable, virtual, “added reality”);
- not every time justified (from the triad’s point of view).

In the issue of transformation of original artistic meanings of architecture and identification of new ones in the 21st century it is suggested to be guided by the provisions of the “Concept of art integration in contemporary

architecture” (doctoral dissertation in architecture defended by the author in 2014) [12]. The basic reference mark is integrity as the unity and interdependence of the general containing the whole spectrum of creative manifestations, and individual possessing personal senses.

Contradictory meanings may be compromised with the help of the idea of “field” as a metaphor of complex interactions and interferences, changeability and instability of architectural phenomena, as well as of a system of “fields” of art integration: spatial-temporal, artistic, personal-individual. The art integration is understood as a set of multi-dimensional processes of creation or reconstruction of the architectural-artistic integrity on the basis of esthetic references. The principle of artistic mastering and interpretation at each phase provides for interpenetration of actual demands of architecture and newly occurring impulses of a cultural field: science, philosophy, art, technology. The appearing relationships give rise to new directions uniting various fields of actual and beyond-time influences:

- Artistic-plastic
- Digital
- Socially oriented
- Information
- Conceptual
- Field of natural phenomena
- Field of design.

The main question exciting theorists and practical men is: does such a diverse, multi-dimensional potential give real opportunities for contemporary architecture? Sceptics would say no – it just leads further from the origins and values of architecture. The fact is that the mechanism of influence of these intermediate values on the formation of real architectural spaces and their contribution to the maturing of real architecture is much more complex and far from being unambiguous. More evident today is rather a motive of “running away” of an architect-artist from reality, realization beyond reality. Such a “crisis of reality” is a permanent state of the actual culture of humanity. A possible “benefit” one should look for in another – in forming a field of new integral meanings of creativity, future senses, images, forms...

V. CONCLUSION

In confrontation of mental and materialized boundaries, objects originally integral and infected by the virus of actual artistic “nihilism”, perhaps, look more realistic. This is the role, for example, of the design of architectural environment, where functions of comfort and social justification after all serve the cover of a real “artistic function” (the term by V.T. Shimko), which already today transforms significantly the original vision of the architectural [13].

One of the results of the mentioned processes is the transfer of architecture in the area of other tasks and another language – in another reality, in which philosophy, literature,

in a certain sense fine art, i.e. “free” sciences and arts exist long ago. The new form of “artistic” creativity (perhaps, new just quantitatively) is not widespread, but still aggravate the gap between practice and theory. This is the same imperceptible, impassable, but needed interval, developed boundary, sparse connection, and at the same time – potency of integration.

Professional intuition tells that at that dynamic boundary there is replenished that cultural niche, that gap of society, potential of relationship without which it will be impossible to construct a required connectivity of systems. The first of such connections is a chain *artist – spectator* or *author – addressee*. Such connections, at the present broken or weakened, are numerous. Especially when the dialogue of times, approaches and persons is difficult due to the difference of the native languages, individual criteria and false prejudices. In this respect, expansion of artistic boundaries of architecture lays the foundation for dialogue participants’ mutual understanding and strategically – greater “trust” of a contemporary person to the new architecture as art.

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