

PERCEPTION OF THE SHOP EXHIBITION AS AN ELEMENT STIMULATING THE SENSUAL RECEPTION OF THE PUBLIC SPACE

Looking for a place of contact between art and technology in the areas of architecture and urban planning, you can find underestimated, often neglected element of the public space, which is the shop window. Is a very special point, where technique and art are both in the form of the exhibition of an offered item as well as a shop window, which is the component of architecture. Technology is visible in rules of constructing a shop exhibition, its composition, lighting, shaping decorative elements, but also in the technology of workmanship of the shop window itself, construction, dehydration, etc.¹. This detailed and technically complex issue, which consisted of work of craftsmen, carpenters, glaziers, designers and decorators of exhibition windows. An artistic side can be seen in the form, detail, material treatment of a window and first of all in the exhibition decoration. An exhibition window due to its location, transparency and visual availability, can be perceived as a part of a building, a frontage, a street and even a city. It shows the potential of this place and allows you to assume that a shop window may have an impact on the reception and creation of the public space. The first forms of exhibition windows were appearing in the 17th century and they were limited only to small windows, where individual creations of human hands were exhibited. The only lighting of these spaces were candles. The first shop exhibitions began to appear in European cities at the beginning of the 19th century, after the era of Napoleonic wars and they were holes in walls closed after dark, then they were covered with glass, initially not very clear, along with the technological development glazings were becoming more transparent and bigger. This trend has been continued, despite the evolution of trade form in the 70s - 80s, when department stores became popular. Due to developing a trading offer within one object the time of a customer staying inside has been extended, but a shop window was still the main means of communication and advertising. At that time exhibitions, despite modest technological possibilities, were often achieving a high degree of aesthetic quality. National competitions were organized and some of the projects

Małgorzata Kaus, PhD Eng. Arch., Department of Architecture, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Architecture, UTP University of Science and Technology in Bydgoszcz, e-mail: Malgorzata.Kaus@utp.edu.pl

Łukasz Rosiak, PhD Eng. Arch., Department of Architecture, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Architecture, UTP University of Science and Technology in Bydgoszcz, e-mail: Lukasz.Rosiak@utp.edu.pl

¹ Praca zbiorowa, ed. A. Pietrzak, 2001. Aranżacja wystaw sklepowych. Wydawnictwo Arkady Warsaw.

could be considered as works of art². Decorations in shop windows were undoubtedly places of artistic creations, because they were largely based on a decorator's idea, on hand-made decorative elements, which were designed to create the world of illusion and prosperity, with a minimum quantity of presented goods³ (Fig. 1). Due to the policy of the past period, the exhibitions were also tools of propaganda, but consequently they guaranteed the city an element of variation⁴ (Fig. 2). Interestingly, less important aspect at that time is a commercial task. It was rather the creation of the world of dreams and prosperity, which was unaffordable after entering the store interior.



Fig. 1, 2. The decorations of shops of the company "wphw" of decorator Bartosz Zabłotny, Inowrocław, the 70s of the 20th century (source: photo by author, own collections M. Kaus)

² Historical projects can be seen in collections of the National Digital Archives, available online, inter alia window decoration in the shop of "Szarski" company, Competition of Shop Exhibitions, Cracow, 1941 (source: photo by Wydawnictwo Prasowe Kraków – Warsaw, collections of NDA).

³ Exhibitions created in the 70s and 80s of the 20th century presented aesthetic minimalism, where the composition and the idea were playing the greater role than the presented goods.

⁴ In accordance with binding at that time education program, the exchange of exhibitions was taking place every 14 days and it was obligatory for each holiday, also national. [In:] A. Kowalski, 1982. Reklama. Wydawnictwo Szkolne i Pedagogiczne Warsaw, p. 105.

It was only at the end of the 20th century there has been a general degradation and sometimes liquidation of shop windows. Wooden joinery was replaced with PCV System solutions, and historical, resulting from technical possibilities, window divisions became only a decoration, not always appropriately applied. The exhibitions have gone and their place has been occupied by advertising posters. These changes result not only from the evolution of trade form, but also the change of lifestyle, the way of moving and using the public space. Currently, the inhabitants largely move using an individual transport, most of the day they spend at work or in front of the computer, which affects the intensity of the use of public spaces. Shopping malls are replacing individual trade and they "are attracting" people to go inside the building, therefore there are designed in principle windows of commercial

premises available from internal passageways and the elevation forms monotonous, passive frontages, described by Jan Gehl as hard edges in the city⁵. Degradation of shop windows affects the perception of the whole street and consequently lowering the quality of staying and the loss of social life in a given public space in the long term. These changes can be clearly seen in the comparison of historical photos and those currently taken, on which are presented similar captures of the same streets (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). There were checked in this way the main streets of several cities, i.e. Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Inowrocław, but it is not a problem only on the scale of Poland, because in many places in the world are carried out various activities in the area of communication, aesthetics, culture, organization, etc., which are to improve the situation of public spaces⁶.



Fig. 3. Królowej Jadwigi Street in Inowrocław, circa 1915 (source: <http://www.dawny-inowroclaw.info>)



Fig. 4. Królowej Jadwigi Street in Inowrocław, in 2017 (source: photo by M. Kaus)

⁵ J. Gehl, 2017. *Miasta dla ludzi*. Wydawnictwo RAM Cracow, p. 75-88.

⁶ Jan Gehl sees the main problem in the road transport in the city centre, that is why he offers radical changes and devotion in these types of street areas only profitably for passers-by and cyclists. One of examples of his actions are changes arising in Times Square and Herald Square. [In:] *Ibidem*, p. 22.



Fig. 5. View of the building at the Dworcowa street in Bydgoszcz, current status at August 2017 (source: photo by M. Kaus, 2017)



Fig. 6. Simulation of change of building view at the Dworcowa street in Bydgoszcz by removing advertising elements and introducing product exposures into shopping store spaces (source: photo by Ł. Rosiak, 2017)



Fig. 7. Simulation of change of building view at the Dworcowa street in Bydgoszcz by removing the elements of advertising and the introduction of plastic decoration in the spaces of shop windows (source: photo by Ł. Rosiak, 2017)

The restoration of the rank of the shop window can be one of the elements of the process of reactivation of public space. Currently, in many places in the world the trend using shop windows not only by luxury brands, but also by artists as a space of creation and art exposure becomes visible⁷. However, these actions are individual, fitting into the marketing strategy of the brand or single art projects, not supported by the architectural or urban analysis. Having the composition knowledge and being aware of the potential of the exhibition in the shop window, a decorator can influence the perception of the public space. The adopted architectural solution and then the exposure built on it, may have the potential of creation of a larger area of public space, may become the variety of an edge and it may contribute to change it from hard to soft. Simple computer simulations on the selected object (Fig. 5-7), show how changes in the area of a shop window influence the appearance of the whole object and the adjacent part of the street. Removing elements of identification of brand and advertisement from one of the buildings at Dworcowa Street in Bydgoszcz, restored aesthetic order and harmony in the whole frame of the street presented in the processed photo. The introduction of exposition only into spaces of shop windows focused the visual tension in the visual field of the recipient. The building got back the character of modernist archi-

⁷ An example for using shop windows as places of artistic activities is the project entitled: "Schaurausch – Art in 50 Shop Windows" in Linz in 2007 (<http://www.linz09.at/de>).

ture through uncovering facing plates as well as proportions previously disturbed by an advertisement banner. The third stage of elevation changes assumed the use of artistic activities in the shop windows of the object. For this purpose it was used a geometric plastic decoration⁸, which through its form and "rich" colours changed the image of the whole structure and the neighbouring space.

The window location in the pedestrian's field of view causes that it affects more strongly than the other elements of architecture, which are not in the direct field of view, hence the numerous details, often of the high material and technical quality in historical architectural objects. Referring to the research of neurolinguistics⁹ or following the considerations of Augustyn Bańka, concerning the influence of changes in space on behaviours of its audience¹⁰, it can be assumed that the stimulation of pedestrian's senses at the moment of exhibition perception, may have an impact on his or her perception in wider range, at least the space near the exhibition. The exhibition absorbs his or her attention, it may also change the image of a place, which he or she sees and will remember. It is an element of the urban space variation, particularly important for native residents, who spend time in this part of the city often or even every day. „The essence of the migration of a man living (and not just staying) in space turns out to be (...) his openness to the other unknown and not already adopted contents and qualities of places”¹¹ It reveals the potential in the area of communication as well as aesthetic and architectural education. Details on the convenient height are perceived not only by the sight, but they become an incentive to direct contact through touch. This is very important in the building of character, the identity of the place¹², because as Juhani Pallasmaa claims „The eye is a tool of distance and separation, while the touch is a sense of closeness, intimacy and tenderness”¹³. We expand the spectrum of perceiving the public space by moving the touch from the level of horizontal floor to vertical elevation, where it is possible to contact a pedestrian with noble materials, textures and shapes. Depriving the shop customer of the necessity of opening the door, we have made his entrance as well as his exit from a shop easier, we have also taken him or her the possibility of contact with the elements sophisticated in the form such as handle knobs¹⁴. There have also gone ringtones in

⁸ There were used materials presenting an artistic decoration in the shop of Wako brand, realized in 2010 in Tokyo (source: photo by M. Kaus, 2010).

⁹ M. Spitzer, 2012. Jak uczy się mózg. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN Warsaw.

¹⁰ A. Bańka, 1997. Architektura psychologicznej przestrzeni życia. Behawioralne podstawy projektowania, Stowarzyszenie Psychologia i Architektura Poznań, p. 77.

¹¹ H. Buczyńska-Garewicz, 2006. Miejsca, strony, okolice. Przyczynek do fenomenologii przestrzeni. Universitas Cracow, p. 39.

¹² The key role of architectural environment "the environment built" in creating the identity is highlighted and popularized by Sarah Williams Goldhagen. [In:] S. Goldhagen, 2017. Welcome to Your World: How the Built Environment Shapes Our Lives. HarperCollins Publisher New York.

¹³ J. Pallasmaa, 2012. Oczy skóry. Wydawnictwo Instytut Architektury Cracow, p. 57.

¹⁴ The rank of handle as an element of perceiving architecture was highlighted by Peter Zumthor, writing „I remember this period in my life, when I was falling into interaction of architecture, not reflecting on it. I still have the feeling that I feel a handle in my hand, that formed as the spoon ridge a piece of metal. I was grabbing it, going into aunt's garden. Even today this handle appears to me as a particular sign of entering the world of various moods and aromas”. [In:] P. Zumthor, 2010. Myślenie architektury. Charakter Cracow, p. 7.

the entrance, once associated with old pharmacies and confectioners. The perception of architecture was dominated by the sense of sight, what makes that the experience of space is not complete¹⁵. Very interesting and enriching the frontage architecture elements were signboards, often hand-made, passing the name or coat of arms of the family owners. Nowadays, there are used signboards in the form of neon lights, which along with the window lighting are included in the structure of the street lighting, which helps to build real and susceptible safety in the city. Very graceful elements of shop windows were sunshades, which were building the elevation architecture and they were introducing three-dimensionality, colour, texture, lightness and dynamism in the urban frontage. Benefits of using sunshades, which were to protect goods from the sunlight, were universal, you can also see them in the area concerning the perception of architecture. Thanks to them the sensual play of light and shadow¹⁶ was possible and it was present in narrow streets of old cities and rarely seen in modern building¹⁷. Currently, the architectural form is more consistent, often minimalist, devoid of the detail understood as stuccowork or decoration. The drawing of the elevation is shaped by technical and construction solutions. The resulting deficiency of visual stimuli in the form of lack of detail in the view space of pedestrian as well as lack of soft forms, may satisfy windows and mainly their contents. The occurrence of soft materials in the architectural building gives it lightness and delicacy in expression, which is naturally provided by plant elements, occurring to a lesser extent in the compact urban space. The exhibition, depending on its constructing schema, can give the elevation three-dimensionality and because of this fact it can take the nature of a figure and become visible in the area of the street, and even the whole frontage, what Rudolf Arnheim writes about on the occasion of considerations of architectural form in his book entitled „Dynamics of the architectural form” calling the facade the primary Visual dimension¹⁸. An example of such design thinking is the Vertu building, in

¹⁵ Architecture should be designed in such a way that could be perceived in the multi-sensual way. Living in the built environment we should care about its quality not only in the aesthetic sphere, but also the material quality. Choices dictated only by economic conditions and durability contribute to deepen the sensory integration disorders. In the area of public space architecture there is visible the particular potential in the creation of the sensory experience, “contact with the material and rather form made of a specific material is particularly visible, as the physical properties of the material change, depending on external conditions. Brick, wood, stone, glass, steel, plastic, and other materials used in building architectural forms have its temperature, plasticity, texture. These properties are perceived by means of touch, but also the sense of smelling”. [In:] M. Kaus, 2017. Odbiór architektury miasta za pomocą zmysłów w nauczaniu projektowania przestrzeni publicznej. [In:] Przedmiot, architektura, miasto, ed. R. Idem, Instytut Wzornictwa Politechniki Koszalińskiej, p. 94.

¹⁶ Multi-sensual Deception of space requires the rotating domination of one sense over the others „Imagination and dreams are stimulated by diffused light and shadow. If the thought is to become clear, visual acuity must be blunt”. [In:] J. Pallasmaa, 2012. Oczy skóry. Wydawnictwo Instytut Architektury Cracow, p. 57.

¹⁷ The sunshade has become an inspiration for contemporary designers, its form has been implied to architectural solutions in buildings with other functions, for example residential and office, where they are also used on upper floors. In commercial spacer the sunshades often replace roller blinds and Glass of better technological properties.

¹⁸ R. Arnheim, 2016. Dynamika formy architektonicznej. Oficyna, p. 145.

which the interior of the shop, the window and the elevation are the continuation of the same design idea, based on the issues of: perspective, depth and contrast¹⁹. They form a harmonious whole and that is why their effects on the recipient are stronger rather than if they were visually separate elements. Decorators often use the phenomenon of depth (Fig. 8), perspective and even movement as in the case of exhibition of Hermes brand entitled: "Bloom Skin' elttob tep" by Issey Miyake²⁰. In order to create an interesting aesthetic situation that will blur the boundaries between illusion and reality. Artists extend the spectrum of the impact to the other senses such as hearing and smell, and they even involve the recipient in the creative process of the work. The exhibition "attracts" and even "absorbs", sometimes literally, a pedestrian as in the case of the project by Miguel Gonzales entitled: Hörfenster (Fig. 9), where the author offers the sound experience in the urban space. Changing the perception of space from the passive to active way is a very valuable phenomenon, because the learning system is supported through action²¹ and thus it increases the chance of long-term change of the way of space perception.

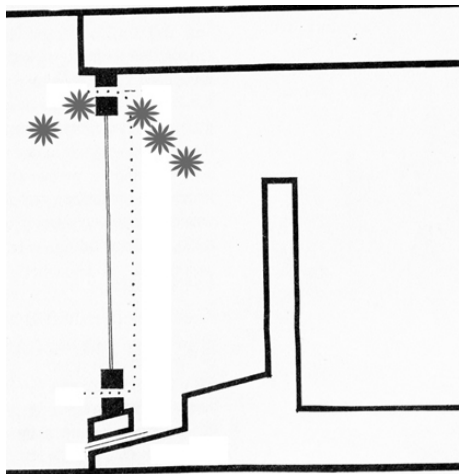


Fig. 8. Scheme of window decoration of the shop of "Otex" company by the decorator Danuta Kwiatkowska, Inowrocław, the 80s of the 20th century (source: fig. M. Kaus, 2017)



Fig. 9. Hörfenster, author: Miguel Gonzales, Linz, 2007 (source: <http://www.linz09.at/de/artikel/programm/1172385.html>)

Well constructed shop window decoration can affect or even correct the urban layout, for example, expand too narrow street in perception or vice versa, it can give too wide space some warmth. The exhibition works as an attractor in space, but properly located it may play the role of motion generator, by what can become a preferred spatial element in the regulation of pedestrian traffic in the city.

¹⁹ Realization of the shop of Vertu brand, Tokyo, designer: Klein Dytham, 2008 (<http://www.klein-dytham.com>).

²⁰ „Bloom Skin' elttob tep", author: Issey Miyake, Hermes, Tokyo, 2012.

²¹ M. Spitzer, 2012, p. 17.

Shop windows, a common element, currently forgotten, sometimes luxurious, can win back their rank. The use of shop windows directed by urban space can bring benefits not only in the range of the quality of architecture space or staying in the city, but also in building social relationships. The place in front of the exhibition, may again become the place of meetings, talks, social information exchange. Current activities in this small, but significant architectural space show that perhaps it is necessary to change the role of a shop window, which first propagandist, then commercial, now it should become the place of inspiration for designers and recipients. In such a trend there was created the project Art Walk²², in which the form of a shop window, slightly modified, forms the new space of the city, the place, where the art may occur. The exhibition in the shop window, may get a multi-layered dimension, as the exhibition can show goods, activities and works of art, but it can also be left as a transparent divider, behind which nothing special shall be placed. However, it is important what the inside of a shop or a restaurant will be seen by passers-by from the street. The aesthetic situation that is created by shop exhibitions can stimulate the sensitive reception of public space, but it should be properly, not coincidentally located, and the work exposed in it should be treated as a component of a fragment of the city.

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²² Art Walk – external art gallery (source <http://www.sztuka-architektury.pl/article/4399/art-walk-8211-mala-architektura-dla-sztuki>).

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Abstract. Contemporary city lost its human dimension. The way of living, working, relaxing, moving in the urban space has changed, but as the research shows, these changes are not consistent with the needs and ideas of a human being about the contemporary city. The problem seems to be global and although in a varying degree, but it concerns most countries in the world. The rapid development of road transport, new forms of advertising and marketing structures have had an effect on the reduction of the quality public space or lack of their development, revealing through the degradation or disappearance of shop windows, elements that previously had a significant role in the formation of public spaces.

The profession of a shop window decorator disappeared from the labour market along with the art of shaping commercial exhibitions, only glazings have been left, which became the place for a poster or illuminated advertising. The window is an important architectural element, shaping the elevation of the building, the point catching the passerby's eye, the component of an active front, the building's frontage, described by Jan Gehl as "a soft edge" in the city. The adopted architectural solution and then built on it exposure may have the potential of creation of a larger area of public space. Integration of the art and technology affects the recipient, whose nourished senses can stimulate to further activity and enable him more complete perception of architecture. Such contact blurs the boundaries between the interior and exterior of the building, the art "is pouring out" in the streets. The beauty of shop exhibitions may influence as the attractor of space, who raises the aesthetic, economic, educational, social and even therapeutic value.

Key words: shop exhibition, window, reception of public space, senses, perception