

Hundertwasser: Mould Manifesto against rationalism in architecture

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I fought with my teachers in studios in 3rd and 4th year to draw the lines free hand throughout the semesters. I never let my soul slaughtered under the rulers. It's the intuition where art lives not the parallel-bar and set-squares. Forms generate from ideas and intuitions, they generate from the air. I believe the so called cube is NOT the platonic. Platonic is that which evolves out of the heavenly intuition of mind, it can be anything & absolutely anything which holds the spirit of the dwellers of architecture. After one year in (so called!) professional architecture being totally frustrated last night I took the book Programs and manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture and went through the article by Hundertwasser. It reverberated the issues what I was thinking and going through when I was a student 3 years ago. However Hundertwasser said this in 1958! Here is the article:

Painting and sculpture are now free, for today anyone can produce any kind of work and afterwards exhibit it. In architecture, however, this fundamental freedom, which must be regarded as the precondition for any art, still does not exist, because in order to build one first has to have a diploma, why?

Everyone should be able to build, and so long as this freedom to build does not exist, the planned architecture of today cannot be considered an art at all. Architecture with us is subject to the same censorship as painting in the Soviet Union. What are put into execution are merely wretched compromises standing in isolation and created by people with a bad conscience whose minds are dominated by the foot-rule!

No inhibitions should be placed upon the individual's desire to build! Everyone ought to be able and compelled to build, so that he bears real responsibility for the four walls within which he lives. We must face the risk that a crazy structure of this kind may later collapse, and we should not and must not shrink from the loss of life which this new way of building will, or at least may, exact. A stop must finally be put to the situation in which people move into their living quarters like hens and rabbits into their coops.

If one of these ramshackle structures built by its occupants is going to collapse, it generally starts cracking first so that they can run away. Thereafter the tenant will be more critical and creative in his attitude towards the dwellings he occupies and will strengthen the walls with his own hands if they seem to him too fragile.

The material uninhabitability of the slums is preferable to the moral uninhabitability of functional, utilitarian architecture. In the so-called slums only man's body can perish, but in the architecture ostensibly planned for man his soul perishes. Hence the principle of the slums, i.e. wildly proliferating architecture, must be improved and taken as point of departure, not functional architecture.

Functional architecture has proved to be a wrong road, just like painting with a ruler. With giant strides we are approaching impractical, unusable, and finally uninhabitable architecture.

The great turning point for painting, absolute tachist automatism is for architecture absolute uninhabitability, which still lies ahead of us, because architecture limps thirty years

behind.

Just as today, having gone beyond total tachist automatism, we are experiencing the miracle of transautomatism, so it is only after having overcome total uninhabitability and creative mouldering that we shall experience the miracle of a new, true, and free architecture. Since, however, we have not yet left total uninhabitability behind us, since we are unfortunately not yet in the midst of the transautomatism of architecture, we must first strive as rapidly as possible for total uninhabitability and creative mouldering in architecture.

A man in an apartment house must have the possibility of leaning out of his window and scraping off the masonry for as far as his hands reach. And he must be allowed to paint everything around pink as far as he can reach with a long brush, so that people can see from far away, from the street: a man lives there who differs from his neighbours, the little people who accept what is given to them! And he must be able to saw up the walls and carry out all sorts of alternations, even if the architectonically harmonious picture of a so-called masterpiece of architecture is thereby destroyed, and he must be able to fill his room with mud or plasticine.

But this is forbidden in the tenancy agreement!

It is time people themselves rebelled against being confined in box-constructions, in the same way as hens and rabbits are confined in cage-constructions that are equally foreign to their nature.

A cage-construction or utilitarian construction is a building that remains alien to all three categories of people that have to do with it!

1. The architect has no relationship to the building.

Even if he is the greatest architectural genius he cannot foresee what kind of person is going to live in it. The so-called human measurement in architecture is a criminal deception. Particularly when this measurement has emerged as an average value from a public opinion poll.

2. The bricklayer has no relationship to the building.

If, for example, he wants to build a wall just a little differently in accordance with his personal ideas, if he has any, he loses his job. And anyhow he really doesn't care, because he isn't going to live in the building.

3. The occupant has no relationship to the building.

Because he hasn't built it but has merely moved in. His human needs, his human spaces are certain to be quite different. And this remains a fact even if the architect and bricklayer try to build exactly according to the instructions of the occupant and employer.

Only when architect, bricklayer and occupant are a unity, i.e. one and the same person, can one speak of architecture. Everything else is not architecture but the physical incarnation of a criminal act.

Architect-bricklayer-occupant are a trinity just like God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Note the similarity, almost the identity of the trinities. If the unity architect-bricklayer-occupant is lost there is no architecture, just as the objects being fabricated today cannot be regarded as architecture.

Man must

regain his critical-creative function, which he has lost and without which he ceases to exist as a human being.

Criminal too is the use in architecture of the ruler, which, as may easily be proved, is to be considered an instrument that leads to the disintegration of the architectonic trinity.

Merely to carry a straight line about with one ought to be, at least morally, forbidden. The ruler is the symbol of the new illiteracy. The ruler is the symptom of the new sickness of decadence.

We live today in a chaos of straight lines, in a jungle of straight lines. Anyone who doesn't believe

this should take the trouble to count the straight lines all around him and he will understand ; for he will never finish counting.

I have counted straight lines on a razor blade. Adding the linear and imaginary connexion with a second razor blade of the same make, which undoubtedly looks absolutely identical, this makes 1090 straight lines, and if we then add the packaging it yields 3000 straight lines per razor blade. Not so very long ago the possession of straight lines was a privilege of kings, landowners, and the clever. Today every fool has millions of straight lines in his trouser pocket.

This jungle of straight lines, which increasingly hems us in like prisoners in a gaol, must be uprooted.

Until now man has always uprooted the jungle in which he found himself and set himself free. But first he has to become aware that he is living in a jungle, for this jungle has grown up surreptitiously, unnoticed by the population. And this time it is a jungle of straight lines.

Every modern architect in whose work the ruler or the compasses have played any part even for a second and even if only in thought must be rejected . Not to speak of the designing, drawing board, and modelmaking work, which has become not merely morbidly sterile but truly senseless. The straight line is ungodly and immoral. The straight line is not a creative, but a reproductive line. In it dwells not so much God and the human spirit as rather the comfort-loving, brainless mass ant.

Thus structures made up of straight lines, no matter how they crook, bend, overhang and actually perforate are untenable. They are the products of attachment born of fear: constructive architects are afraid to turn before it is too late to tachism, i.e. to uninhabitability.

When rust settles on a razor blade, when mould forms on a wall, when moss grows in the corner of a room and rounds off the geometrical angles, we ought to be pleased that with the microbes and fungi life is moving into the house, and more consciously than ever before we become witnesses of architectonic changes from which we have a great deal to learn.

The constructive functional architects' **irresponsible mania** for destruction is well known. They wanted simply to pull down the beautiful stucco-fronted houses of the nineties and Art Nouveau and put their own vacuous buildings in their place. I will cite Le Corbusier, who wanted to raze Paris to the ground

and replace it with rectilinear monster constructions. To be fair, we ought now to pull down the buildings of Mies van der Rohe, Neutra, the Bauhaus, Gropius, Johnson, Le Corbusier, and so on, since in one generation they have become outmoded and morally unendurable.

The transautomatists and all those who have passed beyond uninhabitable architecture treat their predecessors more humanely, however. They no longer want to destroy.

In order to save functional architecture from moral ruin, a disintegrating preparation should be poured on the clean glass walls and smooth concrete surfaces, so that mould can settle on them.

It is time industry recognized its fundamental mission, and that is: the production of creative mould!

It is now industry's task to induce in its specialists, engineers, and doctors a sense of moral responsibility for the production of mould.

This sense of moral responsibility for the production of creative mould and critical weathering

must be anchored in the laws dealing with education.

Only those technologists and scientists who are capable of living in mould and creatively producing mould will be the masters of tomorrow.

And only after things have been creatively covered in mould, from which we have much to learn, will a new and wonderful architecture come into being.