

Прегледни научни рад *Review paper* doi 10.7251/STP1813525M

ISSN 2566-4484



УМЈЕТНОСТ ЏЕКСОНА ПОЛОКА У УРБАНИСТИЧКОМ ПЛАНИРАЊУ И ДИЗАЈНУ - ПОЈАМ "ЖИВОТА" У ГРАДСКОМ ПРОСТОРУ

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Резиме:

Постоје различите дефиниције онога што означава појам "живот", које као такве иза себе имају одговарајуће теорије: почевши од тога да је све што постоји материја, а живот само њен комплексан облик, па све до витализма, који принцип живота сматра искључиво нематеријалним. Формирање генералне дефиниције живота је одувијек био велики изазов за многе стручњаке, а како је ситуација и даље непромијењена, намеће се питање како у широком спектру различитих идеја и ставова, доказа и експеримената, заузети одређени став када је у питању наведена тема и како исту третирати у контексту урбане структуре данашњице? Да ли је могуће узети мисаону и експресивну структуру сликарства, као специфичне дјелатности која се истовремено заснива на претходно успостављеним принципима и техникама, те на слободи онога ко ствара, као добар примјер за превођење у урбанистички домен? Овај текст истражује везу између "живота", урбане структуре данашњице и сликарства Џексона Полока.

Кључне ријечи: живот, Џексон Полок, градски простор, урбано, процес, догађај, покрет

ART OF JACKSON POLLOCK IN URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN - NOTION OF "LIFE" IN CITY SPACE

Abstract:

There are different definitions of what constitutes the term "life". The background of most of these definitions is appropriate theories: starting with the notion that everything that exists is matter, and life is only its complex form, up to vitalism which considers the principle of life as purely intangible. Forming the general definition of life has always been a major challenge for many experts. The situation is still unchanged. The question is, how in a wide range of different ideas and attitudes, evidence and experiments, to take a stand when it comes to the phenomenon of life in the context of the urban structure of today? Is it possible to use an expressive structure of the painting as a specific activity that is simultaneously based on previously established principles and techniques, but also on a freedom of the artist, as a good example for translating into the urbanistic domain? The paper explores wide connection between "life", urban structure of today's city and painting of Jackson Pollock.

Keywords: life, Jaskson Pollock, city space, urban, process, event, movement

1. Introduction

In order to better understand art of Jackson Pollock and link it with urban planning and design, it is necessary to know all the opportunities and events within the spatial and time context in which this artist lived and worked. Pollock was born in 1912 in Wyoming, as the youngest of five sons of a farmer and housewife. He died in New York in 1956, as one of the most influential American painters - a representative of the abstract expressionism and originator of action painting. Even from a young age, he had a problem with authority, his mother's ambition, constant moving from town to town and impossibility of making friends, which was manifested in frequent excesses for which he was expelled from the School of Applied Arts in Los Angeles. All off that, as well as the later-adopted lifestyle, were the main cause of his alcohol problems that ultimately led him to death. After Los Angeles, Pollock went to New York to be with his brother within the Art Students League, where he attended classes of a painter named Tomas Hart Benton. Apart from Benton, who introduced Pollock into the theme of rural America (the study of primitive art with an emphasis on American Indians - decorative patterns, totems, etc.), surrealists and symbolists also had a great impression on him (through which he came to essential insights about Mexican painters). Furthermore, the great influence on him had a so-called philosophy of existence (significance of an individual, dramatic nature of the human existence, depression, ecstasy), as well as the Freud's psychoanalysis, the collective unconscious and symbols defined by Carl Gustav Jung. So, abstract expresionism arises after the Second World War in the United States and Europe, as art movement whose representatives wanted to express the feelings of not belonging and inconvenience of artists in society and dominant developmental tendencies. It is no longer important to have a particular style of painting, since the greatest importance lies in the way of thinking and acting that must be spontaneous (to reflect life itself). In an atmosphere that arised from war and post-war events, the artists primarily relied on their personal abilities and capabilities, which actually symbolize the moment when Pollock "get into" the painting. In that way, his actions and gestures gestures were permanently recorded through art. The significance of the very act of creating an artwork (action) becomes more important than the final product itself, which arises as a unique combination of the imagination of the one who creates and expression affected by the surrealist automatism.

In today's cities (with special accent on the open public spaces representing the inevitable segment of life in urban areas), it is easy to notice the lack of a factor that is not physically represented, but is primarily related to what is meant by the term "experiential". That way, we come to what is represented by "life" in any space within a city. Although the main participants in the process of forming "life" of urban areas are space and its users, as well as the urban planners and designers who previously participated in their creation, it is certainly not a problem with only two or three variables. Namely, it is about the existence of organized complexity that appeared due to the existence of numerous and various factors, which are connected to all the aforementioned participants. These factors are interconnected in layers and their mutual relationship is more important than each of them separately. Previously mentioned way of mutual functioning is what creates the events and "life" in a city, which can be compared with Jackson Pollock's paintings. Speaking of lyrical abstraction as a movement focused on direct gestural expression, Suvaković names Pollock as one of the most important representatives, whose specialty is to transform the abstract form into a 526

note or a sign which denotes the existential drama of a human being. Therefore, his works themselves express the dramatic survival. They esentially refer to the existence of life and humans all through the tools of action, movement and happening [1, pp. 61].

The very common classification of urban design and urban planning into "mechanical" production domain that often exclude creative force of the unconscious, leads to the certain problems that mostly reflect on a human being as a primary user of the urban environment. Therefore, physical city structures often represent the product of a too rigid or inadequate thought, as well as of the interpretation of urban code, which is resulted in absence of "events". All of that, further conditions the level of "life" of a public city spaces. By thaking into account that one of the main characteristics of Pollock's work was gestuality and giving priority to action, emotions and everything that is natural for a human being, this paper will try to suggest a set of aspects that are common to his approach to art and above-mentioned issues from a urban domain. Therefore, through the study of Jackson Pollock's "action painting" and the comparative analysis of questions concerning the "mechanical" (as lack of originality or automatic) open public spaces in cities, this paper will try to reach the certain guidelines for potential solving of the identified problem and form the unique structured mindset. That creative process is based on the principles of logical and intuitive determination of certain aspects and establishing the parametres mutual for Pollock's way of working and urbanistic creative procedure. This is not for the sake of revolutionary ideas, but for purpose of denoting the problems and eventual pointing to possibilities of improving the open public city spaces in the given context.

2. "Life"

Analysing the various literature, it is possible to come across the opposing attitudes concerning the "life" of today's urban sites. Wanting to start a discussion about what the given term actually represents, the further text will analyze the views of different reference authors who have, in their own way, dealt with the cities, open public urban spaces, their users and life - as what they have in common. Christopher Alexander claims that life is neither a limited "mechanical" concept by default nor a reproductive biological machine. It is the quality inseparable from space itself and is related to every brick, stone, person and every physical structure that appears in the space regardless of its kind. Every thing has its own life [2]. If every thing has its own life which at the same time represents the quality inseparable from space, and if that quality is present in every physical structure regardless of its kind, the question is how the physical structures in the cities express their "life" independently? Is it possible for the open public urban spaces, as crucial segments of every urban area, to acquire any level of "life" without involving their users?

Every urban space without people represents nothing but the series of exhibits which eventually decay and fall into oblivion. An example of that is Pripyat, the "ghost town" in Ukraine which was evacuated after the Chernobyl catastrophe. Another good example is the Gunkanjima – the "forbidden island" in Japan, which became uninhabited after the coal mines were closed. Though these locations are still rich in various structures as remnants of formerly active urban areas, it cannot be said that they own or express "life".

Of course, life there exists in the form of flora and fauna, but not in the context referring to the life of urban area dominated by people as intellectual and intuitive beings. The lack of this intellectual and intuitive action of people opposes the work system of Jackson Pollock, as well as the character of his artwork. Pollock's paintings were created gradually, as the product of the idea that every next step should be dictated by the emotional cognition and the potential in the given moment. While explaining the "drops" on his canvas, Pollock defines them as visible energy and movement – memories in space [3]. Beside the intuitive aspect, his artwork implies the results of academic research and intellectual development. The paintings which Pollock exhibited in the Guggenheim gallery during the war continue to show the influence of Picasso, Miró and other surrealists. They also confirm his American roots through the use of Native American or simply American imagery within the European compositional frame [4, pp. 31].

As users of open public urban spaces, people will have a weaker possibility of finding the way to express their own being and emotion through action, in case there are no adequate physical contents in those same areas. It is very common that some city sites are only used when it is inevitable or in the case of emergency, with no longer stay. Though the users of these localities are present, it is brought into question whether that is enough in order to classify a given city space as one which has gained its "life". In relation to that, Jan Gehl says that besides importing the information about the external social world, the opportunity to also see and hear other people can provide the ideas and inspiration for action. We are inspired when we see other people in action. [...] Experiencing other people represents the special and attractive opportunity for stimulation. In comparison to the feelings we have because of buildings and other nonliving objects, the feelings that we have for people offer richness of sensual variations. No moment is like the previous or the following one when people circulate among each other. The number of new simulations and stimulations is unlimited. Besides that, all the things mentioned are related to the most important subject of life – people [5]. Therefore, when we talk about achieving the adequate level of "life" in urban areas, it is not enough to have people there only being physically present or passively doing a certain action. They must be animated and actively involved in forming the general picture of a place (stimulation). Just like Gehl claims, in order to get a user of a certain public city space inspired for action, that space must not be monotonous.



Figure 1. Life - open public space vs. Jackson Pollock's untitled painting

Noting down the main characteristics which a certain city site should possess in order to be classified as a space with the satisfactory level of "life", we come to the following conclusion: in order to enable an individual to experience the city space, it is mandatory to get the rest of the users animated and activated. In order for that atmosphere to be realized, it is necessary to provide the adequate space structures and contents, which 528

leads to the role experts from urban planning and urban design domains. They must have in mind that this need for establishing the "happening", and maintaining its continuity, is conditioned by the successful interaction between a space and its users. The explained issue can be identified with what Pollock managed to overcome in the context of his own work. In his paintings the force was present, a tremendous energy, which often made the paintings look raw and incomplete. But Pollock wanted to achieve that exactly, to go on the other side of beauty, on the other side of usual ambition about what should be illustrated. "Well made" painting and the understanding of the painting as some sort of a great recipe, was exactly what the members of the abstract expressionism wanted to annihilate in the end. There is no doubt that in all that there was a lot of freedom and true stimulus [6, pp. 101]. In the context of including hitherto neglected or completely ignored parameters, denying the "mechanical" principles and forming "non-mechanical" ideas and approaches, the reform of the traditional way of thinking and acting in the context of urbanism represent the potential. This is especially important when it comes to forming the urban spaces that supposed to be adequate for human nature.

3. Event

Tchumi claims the following: "Architecture is certainly not a discipline incapable of reviewing its own structures and foundations. It is a domain which will welcome the greatest discoveries of the 21st century. The event is a factor in which the review and redefinition of various elements of a structure, many of which have resulted in or contributed to contemporary social injustice, can lead to their removal" [7]. Even though considering an event as a very important aspect (which conditions the level of "life" in city space and its quality) has been ignored through a long time, the works of numerous authors show the significant changes in the very approach and indicate that the dissatisfaction with the existing creativity itself should be the motivation to form the new opinions and matrices. With all that given, it is necessary to emphasize that the term "event" must not be taken literally in any case. It represents a complex relationship between the space and the user, which is defined by the line of a various interconnected elements. In other words, it exemplify the state or behavior which is induced by the "communication" between the mentioned factors. Speaking of the "computational complexity theory", as a mathematical method for measuring the degree of biological structure of one organism in relation to the other - the quality of their organization, Charles Jencks points out that the same methodology, applied to art and literature, would signify the measuring of their quality through comparisons with the values necessary for the computer program to reproduce a copy. In case of Jackson Pollock's canvas, the length of a computer description is pretty short [8]. However, although Jencks states that it is all about random Pollock's "scrapings", the importance of Pollock's work is not connected to the final product as much as to the very procedure of its creation.



Figure 2. "Lavander Mist" by Jackson Pollock and physical structure of Rome, Italy similarity and complexity

Šuvaković states that Pollock's field paintings announce and direct the new practice in art: the artist is not only a creator, but an actor who, with his act in the spatio-temporal continuum (by his happening and performance) creates the work. His paintings can therefore be viewed as documents of his painting existence and rituals, and not only as aesthetic art products. According to this, Pollock's work in the history of modern art of the 20th century is first and essentially innovative [1, pp. 151]. Therefore, the painting process itself, which meant the placement of the painter's canvas on the floor, color dispersion and constant movement over it (i.e. the "entry" into the painting), are the main characteristics relevant to the subject matter. In the given context, the final result is less important than the procedure itself, which can easily be transposed into modern domain of urban planning and design. Namely, the current expert researches suggest completely different ways of city studies in comparison to the "mechanical" principles. Darko Radović explains that the field of urbanism often hold the researches which seek to identify and establish the steady facts, to analyze and to prove them. However, those efforts also carry the risk of losing awareness of the city complexity as an urban environment. As Radović concludes, the event is complex because it goes beyond our capacities and possibilities to understand it. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that urban planners and architects primarily rely on their eyesight and all that is visually conceivable, thus using their other senses less or not at all. However, research and the absolute perception of the urban environment take much more than what a single glance can offer. Since life itself is inclusive, it is necessary to get into the crowd, engage the senses, touch and feel as well [9].

In discussions concerning the general impression of an ambient, a very important role is taken by a parameter that cannot be identified exclusively from the observer context. The trend of compressing theoretical research and engagement within the framework of visualization and "mechanical" production explains the frequent ignoring of the events and "life" of open public urban spaces. The event is not physically tangible, but it can be experienced. The intensity of its representation is constantly changing, and sometimes it may not even exist. The notion that it is something not firmly grounded, precisely defined and clearly framed, which exists in a very subtle manner or is being recognized only as a potential, leads to a question: how to experience nothing? In order to answer this question, Radović focuses on the places and practices of everyday life through his experience, emphasizing that exposure and openness to others provide numerous opportunities to learn about personal creativity. The starting point of identity research and quality of urban environments relates to a completely simple and routine activity walking. Sheringham claims that walking plays a key role in exploring everyday life. He considers it a grounded activity that engages the skills of the human body as a practice including rhythm, repetition and non-accumulation. He also sees it as a solid activity, boundless, personal as much as social, limited to here and now, but at the same time able to "embrace" the distant horizons [10]. In accordance to all that, it can be concluded that the recommended tools for researching are compatible with the system that Pollock applied to his painting.

Reflections on possible responses concerning the right way to experience nothing lead to another essential question: how to express that nothing? In today's open public city spaces, the lack of "life" can often be identified as an experiential factor that is not physically tangible even in case of its intense representation. "Life" of the urban sites is conditioned by the "event", as a product of the interaction between space and users. Therefore, it is the absence of factors that unites image and body. In order for communication between the aforementioned participants to be achievable, there is a necessity for certain elements to encourage such a process. For this purpose, as the starting point should be to study, analyze and understand the available sources, as well as the world around us. Before mentioned Darko Radović claims that although philosophers and other experts offer a wide array of inspirational sources, any compression of their thought into concrete and effective tools tends to be dangerous. Therefore, such individuals should be regarded as intellectual provocateurs. Their works should be searched for the new concepts of creativity and indirectly presented phenomena. For this reason and for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of procedure of every scientific and art work, and giving priority to sensuality in relation to the aesthetic, Jackson Pollock's art served as a source inspiration. Therefore, in order to truly comprehend the functioning of a complex urban environment, it is suggested to deviate from all types of "mechanical" research and pay attention to different aspects of the "non-mechanical" approach.

4. Movement

In the fifties years of the twentieth century, the United States faced the Cold War repression and consumerism vanity, which began to shape the post-war society. In that odd world, abstract expressionists highlighted their desperate aspiration to spontaneity, freedom, and re-discovery of self and human context. Their romantic, anti-capitalist hope, with all its weaknesses and contradictions, voiced them that the values embedded in their art could overcome the sphere of art and transform society. Behind that impulsive energy of immediacy, there was a rigorous life choice that required absolute dedication, which Jackson Pollock confirmed by stating that art is his life. In an attempt to paint the elusive, the radical art that involved into the unknown regarded risk, passion and adventure as the key elements for achieving that [6, pp. 97]. Therefore, it can be noted that, besides all, abstract expressionism came to existence as a response to the atmosphere of vanity that emerged immediately after the Second World War. Also, the lifelessness of open public urban spaces, i.e. the low level of "life" in them, followed as a product of treating the urbanistic activity as a "mechanical" domain of production. City spaces that were formed as a result of the aforementioned "mechanical" approach of thinking and operating are in absolute contrast with livable cities in which, as Jan Gehl 531

says, people can communicate with each other. Such cities are always stimulating because they are rich in experience. Thus, opposing them are the lifeless cities, in which bad experience and boredom can hardly be avoided, regardless of how much color and variation of the form is implemented into the built structures that compose it [5]. Since every urban ambient with the appropriate degree of "life" contains all the necessary characteristics that condition the achievement of greater liberty of people and their functioning according to their own nature, the main goal of the abstract art representatives was to achieve what is defined as natural and unrestrained. This view is affirmed by Šuvaković, when he claims that the abstract painting of Jackson Pollok (dripping images of Convergence, 1952) or the modernist music of Olivier Messiaen (Sept haïkaï - Japanese sketches for piano and orchestra, 1962) are based on the artist's confrontation (painter, composer) with untouched nature and its driving force for creating art [11].

The presence of parameters that stimulate "life" in the city areas further influences the formation of the overall image of the city and its urban identity. When it comes to strong and significant peculiarities, it must be noted that these are the characteristics that were not missed out in abstract expressionism. Many consider this movement as an art that is existential, since in the entire process of painting, following the idea-process-product path, the constant search for answers concerning questions of human existence, identity and emotions is constantly present. According to Mattick, Pollock's innovation, as he himself often claimed, lies in the use of abstraction in the order of formation of an intense personal emotional content. Abstract expressionists inevitably ruled over the knowledge of past art painting. However, their greatest contribution relates to the unique supplementation of available knowledge through the analysis of their personality and emotion, and the transfer of the aforementioned on canvas [12]. Above mentioned way of thinking and acting is complementary to the principles of the Existentialism, which was originally defined by Friedrich Nietzsche and Søren Kierkegaard in the 19th century. Although these authors had very different ideas when it comes to implementing their own thoughts into actions, the essence is the same - concern about the vulnerable human existence. People seemed to have forgotten their real existence and someone should have warned them. In the context of reflection and action in the fields of urban planning and design, all previously explained can be identified with the need for accentuating personal experiences and sensibilities (real existence of an individual), as well as expressing individual creativity which would contribute to the upgrading of existing methodologies and tools. While we use various tools for varied analysis, we must be aware that all those preferred tools, as well as those we have not decided to use, are likely to be irrelevant. This is why we need approaches and techniques that can supplement (rather than replace) our traditional methods and tools. Although such approaches and techniques may be less useful, efficient, or accurate than the commonly used ones, their ubiquity in the urban planning process is invaluable [9].

As already mentioned, walking is defined as the basis for adequate analysis of the identity and quality of urban space, i.e. as a tool for entering the city and parallel engagement of all senses. The importance of embracing each and every sensation, not only ones related to visual observation, is overly important both in art and urbanistic activity. Jung points out that: We all see, hear, smell, or taste many things, without noticing them at that moment, either because our attention is gone or because the sensory

impression is too weak to leave a conscious impression. However, they are noted by the unconscious and such perception plays a significant role in our everyday life. Although we do not understand it, they affect our reactions to events and people [13]. Sigmund Freud first spoke about the notion of the unconscious, when he divided the psychological life of a human into three parts: conscious, subconscious and unconscious. This classification had a direct impact on modern psychology, but also on the further course of the intellectual thought development, especially in Western countries. Pollock's drawings and paintings are nothing but an attempt to express the inner state, with the emphasis of the unconscious (everything that human is not aware of, which motivates him to act instinctively - physically and emotionally). Everything that senses daily perceive in open public spaces is essential. The main reason for that is the fact that even unconsciously leaves an intrinsic impression on the users and forms their everyday life, future attitudes and patterns of behavior. This approach is equivalent to Pollok's work methods, which is evidenced by his paintings with clear signs of movement in real space. He placed a lengthy canvas on floor and walked around it or over it. Then he began to spill, throw or spatter paint directly from the bucket, controlling the tracery with his body movement, fists and hands. He worked fast, rolling around the canvas like a "shaman" performing ritual dance, gaining physical grace not seen before. When he used a brush, he most often used it for drawing. Doing so, he splashed the paint from above on the canvas creating dense, flowing and continuous lines and curves, a complex network of colors [4, pp. 47].



Figure 3. Jackson Pollock's movement during painting in his studio, 1950.

5. Conclusion

Literature fragments that are cited and analyzed through this text represent different attitudes about what the notion of "life" in the cities refers to, and what it depends of. We try to answer whether it is something visible and always present in all physical structures (regardless of whether it is a brick, stone or person), or it is something intangible, such as stimulation and communication mediated by different parameters. By analyzing the reasoned opinions, the main impulses were noted and placed in a certain system. At the same time, the parallel comparison was carried out with terms derived from art - more precisely, the artwork of Jackson Pollock. The concept of this paper proceeded from the 533

opinion that what is signified as the "life" of a space is impossible to be identified and defined in a homogenous way. A detailed observation, analysis and reflection, which should include the integration and/or overlap of knowledge from various scientific fields in a specific manner, open new possibilities for acquiring the adequate conclusions. Thus, it is not a "mechanical" procedure in the sense of exact science which would produce the same precise conclusion, just as it has become absurd to hold onto the relation from the past with today's urban practice. Innovative ideas and processes need to be set in a way that allows diversity depending on the context, as well as flexibility in terms of further use and development.

The emergence of Abstract expressionism was associated with a series of different influences whose final products (artwork) emerged as a result of their complex overlapping: different primitive cultures, inspiring numerous works of writers, philosophers and psychoanalysts, etc. Growing up in Arizona, attending the Art Students League in New York, studying symbolism in the domains of philosophy and art, certainly contributed to Pollock's interest to American Indians, their expression and culture. Without question, this has contributed to his departure from established forms and styles in painting that were popular at the time. In addition, the question of the unconscious in Freud's psychoanalysis (and later in modern psychology) deepened Pollock's tendency to emphasize individuality, impulsiveness, inner state and emotions. Although the "life" of certain painting released from an art studio and presented to the public depends primarily on how the audience receives it, it must be kept in mind that its success also depends on other numerous linked factors and complex interrelations. Pollock's authentic art had numerous supporters even during his active work. However, more important was the influence it had on new concepts, and the orientation towards further flow and development of art (experimental music, "happening", etc.). According to all the above, the main idea of this paper was to refer to different ways of thinking, which imply linking and overlapping the various notions arising from numerous scientific researches and artistic fields. The formation of "non-mechanical" modules of thinking and giving priority (or at least equal importance) to the processes themselves in relation to the final outcome is of crucial importance for further development of urban studies. The reason for that is constantly raising new questions, identifying problems and phenomena, as well as forming new creative concepts as a source of inspiration and intellectual provocation. Previously explained standpoint is in accordance with the statement that if the meanings or primordial impulses which drive artists are different, then any individual integration as part of the creative act is different [14].

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