Cumulus Working Papers

Warsaw

Yrjö Sotamaa
Sasha J. Mächtig
Zygmunt Bauman
David Crowley
Stephen Hitchins
Józef A. Mrozek
Vladimir Sanzharov
Michal Stefanowski
Judit Várhelyi
Andrzej Jan Wroblewski

Cumulus Working Papers

Warsaw

17/06

UNIVERSITY OF ART AND
DESIGN HELSINKI

Contents

FOREWORD Yrjö Sotamaa

Design and the Lisbon Agenda – design boosting innovation

The theme of the Warsaw conference was built to discuss what are the values and energy brought by the new member state countries of European Union. It was seen that there are new possibilities of collaboration within Europe, in exchanging ideas, knowledge and developing the culture in Europe. Design was seen as an important tool in facilitating economic and cultural development in the New Member States, but also in general. Design is a powerful tool, which can help the EU in achieving the ambitious aims of the Lisbon Agenda, making Europe the most innovative and competitive region in the World.

Design is in fact becoming strategic for companies, regions and countries. Design has become the core of their efforts to differentiate what they make and do. Many countries are boosting up design through major investments to education, research and to the design system and through adopting successful National Design Strategies. These countries include Finland, Sweden, Denmark, UK, Korea, China and many others. The reason for doing so is based on the evidence of the significant economic benefits of design demonstrated by studies made by different research organizations such as British Design Council, SVID (Sweden) and ETLA (Finland).

But as design becomes a commodity, what we consider now *good will become the standard. Therefore we need to develop a much higher level of execution.* This is a challenge for companies, but to education and research, too. The second challenge is the move to *open innovation systems*. Companies are forced to open innovation systems to expand their capability to innovate. It is also essential that the innovation process is based on *co-creation, on capability to organize creative multidisciplinary innovation process*. The problems are far too complex to be solved by any single profession. Successful innovations are based on companies capability to *combine cutting edge design, with advanced technology and new business models*. Through this

companies are able to increase their capability to create breakthrough products and services.

These changes mean also changes in education and need to invest to research in design to create skills and competencies, which meet the new demands. This is a big challenge to education and universities, of which still train designers for a very different world.

But there are other, much bigger and real challenges, too. They are related to solving the major global problems of the environment, of sustainable development, of the ageing population and also to meeting the challenges posed by the developing countries in Asia, Africa and in Latin America to Europe. These are major challenges for Europe and a good reason to increase collaboration between universities of art, design and media, not only in Europe, but even more on the global scale. The problems and challenges are common. This is a good mission for Cumulus and an ethically sound mission for design, too.

My agenda for research and collaboration is illustrated in the chart below showing on other hand the core competencies and skills (left) we should build through *research based education* and *the problems we should concentrate on*. This is also my map for the collaboration.

Yrjö Sotamaa Rector, Professor
President of Cumulus

Addressing New Challenges

User Centered Innovation Processes & Methods

Design of the User Experience & Usability

Strategic Design Management

Applied Material Research

Interactive Processes & Storytelling

Ageing Wellness

Transportation and Vehicles

Mobile Life and Services

Sustainable Solutions
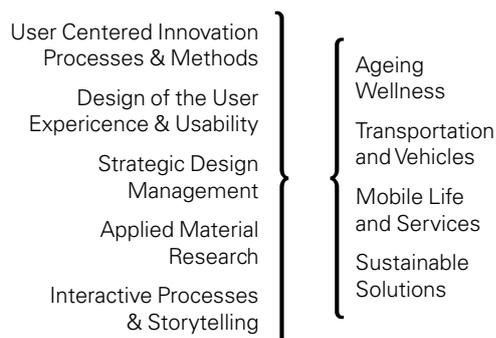
Sasha J. Mächtig

New situation, new reality, new approach – integration

Ladies and gentlemen, friends of Cumulus, my dear fellow teachers and students,

On behalf of our president Yrjö Sotamaa, I have the privilege of saying a few words for the opening of the CUMULUS conference, framed by the meaningful slogan: *New situation, New reality, New approach – Integration.* We are pleased to be here in Poland, the biggest country among the ten nations that enlarged the European Union to 25 just over two years ago. These ten new nations helped make the Union a better balanced, harmonized and peaceful patchwork of interactive cultures. This is a model for relatively good and responsible social, democratic and socio-economic management to many in today's turbulent world outside Europe's continental boundaries. Our Polish friends put forward an interesting debate about the "New Europe" and its identity, because they are aware of a situation with the potential to create new and different perspectives.

When we talk about our European cultural patchwork we are really saying that the Europe of today is truly **multicultural.** It embraces millions of people who became European citizens in the so-called "Old Europe" long ago – people who, in fact, came from outside Europe. They also benefit from and enjoy democratic life, human rights and a whole set of *European freedoms* of the free flow of people, ideas, goods, capital and so forth. With responsibility and freedom, they follow their lifestyles, religions and philosophies practically with no limits. We claim the same rights as Europeans when we go overseas – we consider life a two-way street.

Our Polish friends drew our attention to ***New Reality*** but it makes me think not only about a new reality in Europe but also beyond, as part of our connected, interdependent world. Who would ever have imagined the growth of CUMULUS from its very beginning to the 2001 CUMULUS meeting in Rotterdam, when new statutes were established, and up to the present when **CUMULUS is inevitably "going global".** We need to rethink our situation in terms of well-balanced "good governance", not cancer-like growth but a striving for **the quality of its design and educational activities** in the foreseeable future. Although the changes we are facing are sometimes

not easy to cope with, we have to **see the big picture and lead**, instead of being left in "splendid isolation".

Last Saturday I visited the Venice Biennale of architecture, where a very serious analysis of fast-growing cities is going on. Sophisticated cities like London, Berlin, Barcelona, New York and Tokyo are compared to rapidly and explosively growing cities like Mumbai, Johannesburg, Sao Paulo, Caracas, Mexico City and Shanghai, to name a few. I don't mean to say that London, New York and Los Angeles have no problems. On the contrary. But they ARE models for solving problems in complex situations with responsible and controlled awareness of people and city governance.

Our short-sighted view has to change when we observe things on a big scale. Let's take the example of *China of tomorrow,* where all of a sudden 1.3 billion people want to have access to modern residences with modern bathrooms, heating in winter and air-conditioning in summer, electric lighting and good transport facilities. This is another case where a new model of solving problems is on the way. Whether design will be a part of new *innovative thinking* or not is up to us!

We should prepare our minds well in advance to avoid falling into a terribly chaotic situation. It is about a synthetic process, which tends to be iterative and holistic instead of reductive and linear. It is about how to develop better methods of design thinking and innovation which are common to the nature of design. This ONLY works if we forget about design as a textbook problem with just one solution. We need many experiments and prototypes, with bold and radical interdisciplinary collaboration, involving industry and business as **partners**, not as **clients**. In such a process we can generate solutions together and better understand the questions, as well as produce better solutions. We have to be well aware of our role as a **hybrid profession** embracing engineering, the social sciences and the humanities. We have to be sure that our students are well trained, with specific skills in design and also in understanding and managing generic knowledge which we give them.

It is a challenge to know how to incorporate the knowledge, hopes, dreams and energy of all people on the globe, and to move from manufacturing to innovation, to go from products that say "Made in" to "Made by".

Can CUMULUS reach this level, this recognition "Made by"? Yes, it can – if we generously and honestly take care of the future generations, and if we question ourselves first. What is our life about? Why are we involved in design? Why are we sitting in the universities?

And here I can quote my friend Steve Diskin, since I could not say it better than he did: "…I want more and better education, I want the wonderful scenario of inspired designers and people **who really care,** of researchers who have invented a little part of the future, of educators who have truly inspired their students, and best of all, of students who can barely contain their enthusiasm and who testify to their ability to take on bigger challenges…"

So that's all I wanted to say to remind us of our common future. As we have all come to realize:

The future?
The future is now!

Sasha J. Mächtig
Vice president of CUMULUS

Zygmunt Bauman

Out of the frying pan into the fire

Or the arts between administration and the markets

The idea of 'culture' was coined and named, in the third quarter of the 18ᵗʰ Century, as a shorthand term for the management of human thought and behaviour. The concept of 'culture' was born as a a declaration of *intent*. Its present usage as a *descriptive* term, a summary name for the already achieved, observed and recorded regularities of the population-wide conduct, arrived about a century later – when the culture managers looked back on what they already came to view as their creation, and as if following the eaxample set by God in His six days of creation, declared it 'to be good'. Since then, the term 'culture' came to mean in its most common use the way in which one type of 'normatively regulated' human conduct differed from another type, under different management…

Let me repeat however: the term 'culture' entered vocabulary as a name of *purposeful* activity. At the threshold of the modern era men and women, viewed heretofore as tough 'brute facts', the non-negotiable and not-to-be-meddled-with links in the chain of Divine creation, indispensable even when mean, paltry and leaving much to be desired – came to be seen as pliable: amenable to, and in need of, repair and improvement.

The term 'culture' was conceived inside the semantic family of concepts which included terms like 'cultivation', 'husbandry', 'breeding', 'grooming' – all meaning improvement, prevention of impairment, or arresting deterioration. What the farmer did to the seed, all the way from a seedling to the crop, through constant attentive care - could and ought to be done to the incipient human beings by education and training. 'Being human' was no longer 'the fact of the matter', a gift of God or Nature, but a human task: and a task that needed to be supervised and monitored to be fulfilled. Humans were not *born*, but *made*. The newborn had yet to *become* human – and in the course of becoming human they had to be guided by the already accomplished humans – humans who had been duly educated and trained in the art of educating and training humans.

'Culture' appeared in vocabulary less than a hundred years *after* another crucial modern concept – of 'managing', which according to OED meant 'to

cause (persons, animals etc.) to submit to one's control', 'to operate upon', 'to succeed in accomplishing' – and more that hundred years *earlier* than another, synthesizing sense of 'management': 'to contrive to get along or pull through'. To manage, in the nutshell, meant to get things done in a way onto which they would not move on their own; to *re*-direct events according to one's design and will. To put it in a yet another way: to manage (to get control over flow of events) came to mean *manipulation of probabilities* – making certain conduct (openings or responses) of 'persons, animals etc.' more likely to take place than they would otherwise be, while making some other moves less likely or utterly unlikely to happen. In the last account, to manage means to *limit freedom of the managed*.

Just like the idea of '*agri*culture' posits the field as seen from the perspective of the farmer – as an object of farming activity, 'culture' metaphorically applied to humans was the vision of the *social* world as viewed through the eyes of the 'farmers of humans' – the managers, and an object of management. The postulate or a tacit (but axiomatic) presumption of management was not a later addition: it was from the beginning and throughout its history endemic to the concept of 'culture'. Deep in the heart of that concept lies the premonition or/ and acceptance of an unequal, *a-symmetrical social relation* – the split between acting and bearing the impact of action, between the managers and the managed, the powerful and the submissive, the knowing and the ignorant, the refined and the crude.

Theodore Wiesegrund Adorno[1] points out that the 'inclusion of the objective spirit of an age in the single word "culture" betrays from the onset the administrative view, the task of which, looking down from on high, is to assemble, distribute, evaluate and organize'. And he goes on to unpack the defining traits of that spirit: 'The demand made by administration upon culture is essentially heteronomous: culture – no matter what form it takes – is to be measured by norms not inherent to it and which have nothing to do with the quality of the object, but rather with some type of abstract standards imposed from without…'[2]

But as one could only expect in a case of an a-symmetrical social relation, a quite different sight opens to the eyes scanning the relationship from the opposite, receiving end: (in other words, to the eyes of the 'managed') and quite different evaluation is voiced (or rather would be voiced, if people

assigned to that end acquired a voice): the sight of an unwarranted and uncalled-for repression, and the verdict of illegitimacy and injustice. In that other version of the relationship's story, culture appears to be 'opposed to administration', since, as Oscar Wilde put it (provocatively, in Adorno's opinion) – culture is useless, or such at least it appears to be as long as the managers hold the monopoly on drawing the line separating use from waste. In that rendition, 'culture' represents the claims of the *particular* against the homogenizing pressure of the *general*, and it 'involves an irrevocably critical impulse towards the status quo and all institutions thereof.'[3]

The clash, simmering antagonism and occasionally an open conflict between the two perspectives and narratives is inevitable. It can be neither prevented from coming into the open nor pacified once it does. The managers-managed relationship is intrinsically agonistic; the two sides pursue two opposite purposes and are able to cohabit solely in a conflict-ridden, battle-ready mode.

The conflict is particularly pronounced, most ferociously acted out and pregnant with particularly morbid consequences in the case of arts. After all, the arts are the advanced units of culture – engaged in reconnaissance battles whose purpose is to explore, pave and chart the roads which human culture may (or may not) follow ('Art is not a better, but an alternative existence' – said Joseph Brodsky[4]; 'It is not an attempt to escape reality but the opposite, an attempt to animate it'. And so the artists are either adversaries or competitors in the job which the managers wish to monopolize).

The more they distance themselves from the realities of the day and so resist to be accomodated by them – the less fit they are to be deployed in the service of the status quo; and that means that from the managerial point of view they may well be viewed as useless, if not downright harmful. Managers and artists are at cross-purposes: the managerial spirit is at war with contingency which is the natural habitat of arts. Besides, busy as they are in designing imagined alternatives to the status quo, the arts are willy-nilly in competition with the managers, whose control over human conduct and manipulation of probabilities is in the last account a bid to control the future. There is more than one reason for no love to be lost between managements and arts…

Speaking of culture but having arts in mind, Adorno recognizes inevitability of the culture-

management conflict. But he also points out that the antagonists *need each other*; more importantly, the arts need management as their mission can't be fulfilled without it… However inconvenient and unpleasant the state of overt or clandestine enmity may be, the greatest misfortune that might befall culture (more precisely, the arts) is a complete and finite victory over its antagonist: 'culture suffers damage when it is planned and administrated; if it is left to itself, however, everything cultural threatens not only to lose possibility of effect, but its very existence as well.'[5] In these words, Adorno restates the sad conclusion to which he arrived when working (with Max Horkheimer) on *Dialectics of Enlightment*: that 'the history of the old religions and schools like that of the modern parties and revolutions' teaches that the price of survival is 'the transformation of ideas into domination.'[6] This lesson of history ought to be particularly diligently studied, absorbed and put into practice by the artists, the professional 'culture creators' who carry the main burden of the transgressive propensity of culture, making it their consciously embraced vocation and practicing critique and transgression as their own mode of being:

> *The appeal to the creators of culture to withdraw from the process of administration and keep distant from it has a hollow ring. Not only would this deprive them of the possibility of earning a living, but also of every effect, every contact between work of art and society, something which the work of greatest integrity cannot do without, if it is not to perish.*[7]

The paradox, indeed. Or a vicious circle… Culture cannot live in peace with the management, particularly with an obtrusive and insidious management, and most particularly with a management aimed at twisting the culture's exploring/experimenting urge so that it fits into the frame of rationality the managers have drawn – the selfsame rationality that the artistic exploration of the 'not yet' and the 'mere possible' needs to transgress and can not but transgress. On the other hand, being bent as they are professionally bound to be on defending the cause of that rationality tooth and nail, the managers must view the arts as adversaries – and all the more so the better the arts perform their own tasks. The management's plot against the endemic freedom of arts is for the artists a perpetual *casus belli*. On the other hand, however, culture creators need managers if

they wish (as most of them, bent on 'improving the world', do) to be seen, heard, listened to – and so to stand a chance of seeing their task/project through to the completion. Otherwise they risk marginality, impotence and oblivion.

Culture creators have no choice but to live with that paradox. However loudly they protest the managers' pretensions and interference, the alternative to seeking a *modus co-vivendi* with administration is to sink into irrelevance. They may choose between alternative managements pursuing different purposes and trimming liberty of cultural creation using different means and deploying different strategies – but certainly not between *acceptance* and *rejection* of management as such. Not realistically, at any rate.

This is the case because the paradox in question stems from the fact that despite all the conflicts of interests and mutual mud-slinging, culture creators and managers are bound to share the same household and partake of the same endeavour. Theirs is a *sibling rivalry*. They are after the same target, sharing the same goal: to make the world different from what it would be likely to be or to turn into if left alone. Both of them are critical towards the ability of the *status quo* to self-sustain, self-direct and self-assert. They don't quarrel about whether the world should be an object of constant intervention or left to its own inner tendencies – but about the direction which the intervention should take. Ultimately, the stake of their strife is the right to be in charge and the capacity of making that 'being in charge' effective. Each of the antagonists claims the right to decide the direction and to select the tools with which its pursuit is monitored, as well as the measures by which the progress towards the goal is assessed.

* * *

Hannah Arendt spotted flawlessly and spelled out the gist of the conflict:

> *An object is cultural depending on the duration of its permanence: its durable character is opposed to its functional aspect, that aspect which would make it disappear from phenomenal world through use and wear and tear. …*
>
> *Culture finds itself under threat when all objects of the world, produced currently or in the past, are treated solely as functions of the vital social processes – as if they had no other reason but satisfaction of some need – and it does not matter whether the needs in question are elevated or base.*[8]

Culture aims above the head of the realities of the day. It is not concerned with whatever has been put on the daily agenda and defined as the imperative of the moment – at least it strives to transcend the limiting impact of 'topicality', however and by whomever defined, and struggles to free itself of its demands.

Being used/consumed on the spot, let alone dissolving in the process of instantaneous consumption, is neither the cultural products' destination nor the criterion of their value. Arendt would say: culture is after *beauty* – and I suggest that she chose that name for culture's concerns because the idea of 'beauty' is the very epitome of an elusive target which stubbornly and steadfastly defies rational/causal explanation, which has no purpose nor an obvious use, serves nothing and cannot legitimate itself by reference to any need already felt, defined and scheduled for gratification; whatever needs it may in the end gratify, are yet to be enticed into being by the act of artistic creation. An object is 'cultural' in as far as it outlives any use that might have attended to its creation.

Such image of culture differs sharply from the common opinion, until recently prevalent also in academic literature; an opinion which, on the contrary, cast culture among the homeostatic appliances meant to preserve the monotonous reproduction of social reality, its *mêmeté* , and thereby help to assure the continuation of its sameness over time. The notion of culture common to the writings classified under the rubric of social science (and by and large unquestioned until recently) has been one of the stabilizing, routine-and-repetition begetting mechanism, an instrument of inertia –and not at all of the ferment that prevents social reality from standing still and forces it into perpetual self-transcendence, as Adorno and Arendt would insist it must, willingly or not, do. The classic notion of 'culture', whose domination coincided with the 'solid' phase of modernity guided by the managerial reason, cast 'culture' as an element of self-renewing order, rather than of its eternal disruption and overhaul. In the orthodox anthropological descriptions (one society=one culture) 'culture' appears as an efficient tool of 'pattern maintenance', a handmaiden of 'social structure' – of a permanent distribution of behavioural probabilities retaining its shape over time and successfully fighting back all occasional breaches of norm, disruptions and deviations threatening to

throw the 'system' out of its 'equilibrium'. This conception of 'culture' was, to be sure, simultaneously an extrapolation and the utopian horizon of a properly managed (or, to recall Talcott Parsons' once widely used phrase, 'principally coordinated') social totality, marked by a stable distribution of probabilities and tightly controlled by a number of homeostatic contraptions among which 'culture' was assigned the pride of place; a kind of totality inside which wrong manners or deviant actions of individual human units are promptly spotted, isolated before irreparable harm is done, and swiftly defused or eliminated. Inside that vision of the society as a self-equilibrating system (that is, remaining obstinately the same despite all the pressures of counter-veiling forces) *'culture' stands for the managers' dream come true: for an effective resistance to change* – but above all the resistance to, and preferrably the preclusion of an unplanned, un-designed change, a haphazard change, a change caused by anything else than the will of the manager and the manager's definition of the useful, sensible and proper.

That dream, if fulfilled, would usher into the world of described by Joseph Brodsky under the name of 'tyranny'[9], referring to such an arrangement of human togetherness as 'structures your world for you. It does this as meticulously as possible, certainly much better than democracy does… the dream is to make every man its own bureaucrat'. As Milan Kundera insists, calling that tyranny by the name of 'totalitarianism', in such a 'world of repetitions' that 'excludes relativity, doubt and questioning', there is no room for the arts.[10] 'The history of novel (painting, musics) was born of human freedom, of human personal achievement, of human choice' – and developed through improvisation and creation of its own rules as it went.[11]

It was however in the spirit of managerialism that the role of culture used to be most commonly perceived still a two-three decades ago; at a time when culture was annexed, or intended to be annexed, by the managerial project that mastered (or struggled to master) the perception of the human world.

Much has happened in the last two-three decades, though. To start with, the 'managerial revolution mark two' happened, conducted surreptitiously under the banner of 'neo–liberalism': managers switching from 'normative regulation' to 'seduction', from day-to-day surveillance and policing to PR, and from the stolid, over-regulated,

routine-based, panoptical, surveilling-all and moni-toring-all model of power, to domination through casting the dominated in a state of diffuse uncertainty, *precarité* and a continuous though haphazard disruption of routine. And then, a gradual dismantling of the state-serviced frame in which the paramount parts of individual life-politics used to be held happened as well, and the shifting/drifting of life politics onto the domain operated by consumer markets – that in a stark opposition to state bureaucracy thrive on the frailty of routines and their rapid supercession, rapid enough to prevent their hardening into habits or norms.

In this new setting, there is little demand for bridling and taming the transgressive urge and compulsive experimentation dubbed 'culture' so that it could be deployed in the service of self-equilibration and continuity. Or at least the traditional and the most stalwart carriers of that demand at a time, the would-be managers of the nation-building states, lost their interest in such deployment – whereas the new script-writers and directors of cultural drama, who joined or replaced them, would wish from the humans, now transformed into consumers first and last, everything else but a tamed, regular, routine-bound, inflexible conduct.

With the principal characters of the 'solid modernity' drama leaving the stage or downgraded to the half-mute role of supernumeraries, and with their replacements failing and possibly also reluctant to emerge from the wings, our contemporaries found themselves acting in what can be properly called, following Hannah Arendt taking her inspiration from Bertold Brecht, 'dark times'. This is how Arendt unpacked the nature and the origins of that darkness[12]:

If it is the function of the public realm to throw light on the affairs of men by providing a space of appearances in which they can show in deed and word, for better and worse, who they are and what they can do, then darkness has come when this light is extinguished by "credibility gap" and "invisible government", by speech that does not disclose what is but sweeps it under the carpet, by exhortations, moral or otherwise, that, under the pretext of upholding old truths, degrade all truth to meaningless triviality'

And this is how Arendt described its consequences[13]:

(T)he public realm has lost the power of illumination which was originally part of its nature. More and more people in the countries of the Western world, which since the decline of the ancient world has regarded freedom from politics as one of the basic freedoms, make use of this freedom and have retreated from the world and their obligations within it… But with each such retreat an almost demonstrable loss to the world takes place: what is lost is the specific and usually irreplaceable in-between which should have formed between the individual and his fellow men'.

Withdrawal from politics and public realm will turn therefore, wrote Hannah Arendt prophetically, into the 'basic attitude of the modern individual, who in his alienation from the world can truly reveal himself only in privacy and in the intimacy of face-to face encounters'[14].

It is that newly gained/enforced privacy and the 'intimacy of face-to-face encounters', the inseparable companion, simultaneously outcome and cause, of 'dark times', that is serviced by the consumer markets – which in turn promote the universal contingency of consumer's life while capitalizing on the fluidity of social placements and the growing frailty of human bonds, on contentious and so unstable and unpredictable status of individual rights, obligations and commitments, and on the present eluding the grasp of its denizens and on a future obstinately uncontrollable and uncertain. Under pressure and out of impotence, yet with little resistance if not willingly, the state managers abandon the ambitions of normative regulation for which they once stood accused by Adorno and other critics fearing the all-too-realistic prospect of a 'fully administered mass society'. The state managers put themselves instead in the 'agentic state' and assume the role of the 'honest brokers' of market's needs (read: demands). In other words, they 'subsidiarise' or 'out-contract' the risks, chores and responsibilities of 'running the show' to the market forces, signing off to the play of demand and offer the once jealously guarded right to set the tune together with the duty to pay the pipers. They now declare their neutrality in the hotly contested issue of cultural, including the artistic, choices. With culture no longer needed as a tool of order design, build and maintenance, things cultural have been decommissioned and put on sale in the updated versions of the Army and Navy Stores.

* * *

Culture creators may be nevertheless now as they were before up in arms against the obtrusive intervention of the managers, who all – political and commercial alike – tend to insist on measuring cultural performance by *extrinsic* criteria, alien to the irrationality, spontaneity and inherent freedom of cultural creativity, and who use their power and the resources they command to secure obedience to the rules they set and to the standards of usefulness they define, both cutting the wings of artistic imagination and jarring with the principles that guide the artists' creativity. It needs to be repeated that the arts' principal objection to managerial interference is not however, as it has been argued before, a novel departure - but just another chapter in a long story of 'sibling rivalry' with no end in sight: for better or worse, for better *and* worse, cultural creations at all times need managers – lest they should die in the same ivory tower in which they had been conceived…

What is truly novel are the *kind* of criteria which the present-day managers, in their new role of agents of the market forces rather than of the nation-building state powers, deploy to assess, 'audit', 'monitor', judge, censure, reward and punish their wards. Naturally, they are the *consumer-market criteria*, such as set preference for *instant* consumption, *instant* gratification and *instant* profit. A consumer market catering for long-term needs, not to mention eternity, would be a contradiction in terms. Consumer market propagates rapid circulation, shorter distance from use to waste and from consignment to waste to the waste disposal, and all that for the sake of an immediate replacement of the no longer profitable goods. All that stands in a jarring opposition to the nature of artistic creation and the message of arts, which in Kundera's words 'is silenced in the hubbub of easy and speedy answers that preempt and annihilate the questions'[15]. And so the novelty, one may conclude, is the parting of ways followed by the siblings still engaged in rivalry.

The stake of the new chapter of the age-long tug-of-war is not only the kind of answer to be proffered to the question 'who is in charge', but the sheer meaning of 'being in charge' - its purpose and its consequences. We may go a step (a small step, as it were) further, and say that the present stake is the survival of arts as we came to know them since Altamira caves had been painted. Can culture survive the devaluation of duration, the demise of infinity – that first 'collateral casualty' of the consumer mar-

ket's victory? The answer to that question is that we don't really know - though one could be excused for suspecting a 'no' answer, and though one might, following Hans Jonas's advise to the denizens of the 'era of uncertainty', put more trust in the dark premonitions of the 'prophets of doom' than in the reassurances of the brave-new-consuming-life's promoters.

To subordinate cultural creativity to the standards and criteria of consumer markets means to demand of cultural creations that they accept the prerequisite of all would-be consumer products: that they legitimise themselves in terms of market value (the *current* market value, to be sure) - or perish.

The first query addressed to artistic offers bidding for recognition of their (market) value is that of the market demand (already sufficient or likely to be speedily and expediently boosted), supported with an adequate capacity to pay. Let us note that consumer demand being notoriously capricious, freak and volatile, the records of consumer-market's rule over artistic products are full of mistaken prognoses, wide-of-the-mark evaluations and grossly incorrect decisions. In practice, that rule boils down to compensating the absent *quality* analysis with the *quantitative* overshooting of potential targets and a lot of bets-hedging, both resulting in a wasteful excess and excessive waste (G.B.Shaw, a dedicated and skillful amateur-photographer in addition to his consummate playwriting, advised photographers to follow example of codfish that must spawn a thousand eggs in order to hatch one mature offspring; it seems that the whole consumer industry, and the marketing managers keeping it alive, follow Shaw's advise). Such strategy may sometimes insure against the exorbitant losses caused by mistaken cost-effects analysis; it would however do little or nothing to assure that artistic creations stand a chance of revealing their true quality in case no market demand for them is in sight (this being an eminently *short* sight, given the endemic 'short-termism' of market calculations).

It is now the prospective clients, their numbers and the volume of cash on their bank accounts that decide (though unknowingly) the fate of artistic creation. The line dividing the 'successful' (and therefore commanding public attention) products from failed ones (that is, unable to break through into notoriety - galleries) is drawn by sales, ratings and box-office returns. According to Daniel J.Boorstin witty definitions, 'celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness', while 'a best seller' is a

book which somehow sold well 'simply because it was selling well' – and the same can be said about best-selling *objets d'art*. Let me add that the check-book journalism would take care of the close link between the two rules). But there is no more than such one-directional correlation suggested by Boorstin's tongue-in-cheek definitions that the theorists and critics of contemporary arts managed to establish between the intrinsic artistic virtues of creations and the celebrity status of its authors. If the effective cause of the celebrity status of the artist is sought, it is most likely to be found in celebrity status of the brand (gallery, periodical) that through the promotion of his/her work has lifted the incipient *objet d'art* from obscurity into the limelight. The contemporary equivalent of good fortune or stroke of luck, which was an indipensable factor in the artist's wordly success at all times, is a Charles Saatchi stopping his car in front of an obscure side-street shop selling bric-a-brac patched together by an obscure side-street person who craved in vain to convince the accidental and rare visitors of its artistic valours. That bric-a-brac will promptly turn into works of art once it is transferred to a gallery whose walls and entry gates separate the good art from bad (and for the *conescenti*, art from non-art). The name of the gallery would rub off its glory on the names of the artists on exhibition. In the vexingly confusing liquid-modern world of flexible norms and floating values, this is – not unexpectedly - a universal trend, rather than a specifically artistic oddity. As Naomi Klein succinctly put it – 'many of today's best-known manufacturers no longer produce products and advertise them, but rather buy products and "brand" them.'[16] Brand and the logo attached (it is the shopping bag with the name of the gallery that gives meaning to the purchases carried inside) do not *add* value – they *are* value, the *market* value, and thus value *as such*.

It is not just the companies that lend value to artistic products through branding (or devalue the products by withdrawing their logo); and in their case as well the act of branding is as a rule supplemented by an *event* – a short-lived, but all-stops-pulled multi-media 'hype'. Events seem to be the most potent sources of value: of course the 'promotional' events, 'hyped' events, massively attended thanks to being known to be massively attended and selling masses of tickets because of tickets being known to command long queues.

Such events steer clear of the risks involved in the mere display in even the most celebrated galleries. Unlike the latter, they don't need to reckon on dubious loyalty of the faithful in a world attuned to the notoriously short span of public memory and the cut-throat competition between countless attractions vying for the consumers attention. Events, like all *bona fide* consumer products, bear a 'use-by' date; their designers and supervisors may leave long-term concerns out of their calculation (with a double benefit of huge savings and of the confidence-inspiring resonance with the spirit of the age), planning and catering (to recall George Steiner's apt phrase) for a 'maximal impact and instant obsolescence'.

The spectacular, mind-boggling career of fix-time events (that is, of the events with a time span not exceeding the life-expectation of public interest), as the most prolific sources of market value, chimes well with the universal tendency of liquid-modern setting. Culture products – whether inanimate objects or educated humans - tend these days to be enlisted in the service of 'projects', admittedly one-off and short lived undertakings. And, as the research team quoted by Naomi Klein[17] found out – 'you can indeed brand not only sand, but also wheat, beef, brick, metals, concrete, chemicals, corn grits and an endless variety of commodities, traditionally considered immune to the process' – that is such objects as are believed (wrongly, as it transpires) to be able to stand on their own feet and prove their point just by unfolding and demonstrating their own excellence.

* * *

The 'consumerist syndrome' which guides human conduct in the society of consumers focuses on an emphatic denial of the virtue of procrastination and precept of the 'delay of satisfaction' – the principles considered foundational in the 'society of producers' or 'productivist society'.

In the inherited hierarchy of recognized values, 'consumerist syndrome' *has dethroned duration and elevated transience*. It put the value of novelty above that of the lasting. It has radically shortened the time-distance separating not just the want from its fulfilment (as many observers, inspired or mislead by credit agencies, suggested), but also the usefulness and desirability of possessions from their uselessness and rejection; the life-expectation of the 'fulfilling capacity' of acquisitions has fallen dramatically. Among the objects of human desire, 'consumerist syndrome' put *appropriation* (quickly

followed by *waste-disposal*) in place of *possessions*. Among human preoccupations, it put the precautions against things (animate as much as inanimate) 'outstaying their welcome' well in front of the technique of 'holding fast', of 'staying put', and of the long-term (not to mention interminable) loyalty and commitment. It also shortened drastically the life-expectation of desire, the time–distance from desire to its gratification, and from gratification to the waste-disposal tip. In the nutshell, the 'consumerist syndrome' is all about speed, excess and waste; about precepts diametrically opposed to those guiding all cultural, including the artistic, creativity.

Of course, it would be as unjust as it is unwise to accuse the consumer industry, and consumer industry alone, of the plight in which cultural creation finds itself today. That industry is well geared to the form of life which I use to call 'liquid modernity'. That industry and that form of life are attuned to each other and reinforce each other's grip on the choices men and women of our times may realistically make.

As the great Italian sociologist, Alberto Melucci, used to say[18] – 'we are plagued by the fragility of the presentness which calls for a firm foundation where none exists'. And so, 'when contemplating change, we are always torn between desire and fear, between anticipation and uncertainty'. This is it: *uncertainty*. Or, as Ulrich Beck prefers to call it, the *risk:* that unwanted, awkward and vexing, but perpetual and un-detachable fellow-traveller (or a stalker rather?!) of all anticipation – a sinister spectre haunting the decision-makers that we all, whether we like it or not, are. For us, as Melucci pithily put it, 'choice became a destiny'.

Indeed, everything around in the 'really existing world' seems to be but 'until further notice'. The allegedly rock- solid companies are unmasked as figments of accountants' imagination. Whatever is commended as 'meat for you' today may be reclassified tomorrow as poison. Apparently firm commitments and solemnly signed agreements may be overturned overnight. And promises, or most of them, seem to be made in order to be un-kept and betrayed. There seem to be no stable, secure island among the tides. To quote Melucci once more – 'we no longer possess a home; we are repeatedly called upon to build and then rebuild one, like the three little pigs of the fairy tale, or we have to carry it along with us on our backs like snails'. To sum it all up: at no other times has Robert Louis Stevenson's memorable verdict

'to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive' sounded truer than it does in our floating and flowing, fluid modern world.

When destinations move or lose their charm faster than legs can walk, cars ride or planes fly, keeping on the move matters more than the destination. The question '*how* to do it' looks more important and urgent than the query '*what* to do'. Not to make a habit of anything practiced at the moment, not to be tied up by the legacy of one's own past, wearing current identity as one wears shirts that can be replaced when falling out of use or out of fashion, rejecting past lessons and abandoning past skills with no inhibition or regret – are all becoming the hallmarks of the present-day, liquid-modern life politics and attributes of liquid-modern rationality. Liquid-modern culture feels no longer a culture of learning and accumulating like those cultures recorded in the historians' and ethnographers' reports. It looks instead a *culture of disengagement, discontinuity, and forgetting.*

That last phrase – is it not a contradiction in terms? At least it seems to be – for the generations that having lived through and memorized a thoroughly different life conditions, are shocked by the novelty of the emergent one. For centuries culture lived in an uneasy symbiosis or hate-love with management, tussling uncomfortably, sometimes suffocating, in the managers' embrace – but also running to the managers for shelter and emerging reinvigorated and strengthened from the encounter. Would culture survive the change of management? Won't it be allowed anything but a butterfly-like, ephemeral existence? Won't the new management, true to the new management style, limit its wardenship to asset-stripping? Won't the cemetery of deceased or aborted 'cultural events' replace the rising slope as a fitful metaphor of culture?

William de Kooning suggest that in this world of ours 'content is a glimpse', a fugitive vision, a look in passing.[19] While a most incisive analyst of the twists and turns of postmodern and post-postmodern culture, Yves Michaud, suggests that aesthetics, culture's forever elusive and stubbornly pursued target, is these days consumed and celebrated in a world emptied, and void, of the works of art[20]…

* * *

 Beauty, aside happiness, was one of the most exciting modern promises and guiding ideals of the restless modern spirit. The convoluted history and semantic adventures of the dream of happiness

I briefly described elsewhere[21]. Now is the turn of beauty; its history may be seen as paradigmatic for the birth and development of liquid-modern culture of waste.

The idea of beauty, I suggest, used to be since the Renaissance made to the measure of the managerial ambitions… The concepts most often cropping up in the early stages of the modern debate about the meaning of 'beauty' were harmony, proportion, symmetry, order and such like (John Keats, in Endymion, would add health and quiet breathing…) – all converging on the ideal most pithily perhaps formulated by Leone Battista Alberti: the ideal of a state in which any change can be only a change to the worse; a state which Alberti gave the name of *perfection.* Beauty meant perfection; and it was the perfect that had the right to be called beautiful. Many a great modern artist struggled to conjure up such a state of perfection: indeed, to make the search of perfection in Alberti's sense the subject-matter of their work. Think for instance of Mondrian, Matisse, Arp or Rothko… Cut the colourful rectangles out of Mondrian paintings and attempt to rearrange them in an order different from the one Mondrian has selected – and the odds are that you'd find your arrangements, indeed *all and any* alternative arrangements, inferior - less pleasing, 'ugly' by comparison… Or cut out the figures out of Matisse *Dancers* and try to position them and relate to each other in a different way; you will most certainly experience a similar frustration.

But what, in the last account, is the meaning of 'perfection'? Once the object has acquired the 'perfect' form, all further change is un-desirable and un-advisable. Perfection means: change should come to end. No more changes. From now on, everything will be the same – forever. What is perfect, will never lose its value, never become redundant, never rejected and disposed of and so never turn into waste; it is only all further search and experimenting that would be, from now on, redundant. And so, when pining after perfection, we need to stretch imagination to the utmost, to deploy all our creative powers – but only in order to make imagination into wasteful pastime and creativity not just unnecessary, but un-desirable… If beauty means perfection, then once beauty has been reached, nothing is going to happen anymore. There is nothing *after* beauty.

We, the humans, are, and cannot help being, 'transgressive', 'transcending' animals, and the artist (or at least the 'true' artists, whatever that may mean) are more so than other humans. They live ahead of the present. Their representations may be cut loose from the senses and run ahead of them. The world they inhabit is always a step, or a mile, or a stellar year ahead of the world we are experiencing. That part of the world that sticks out of the lived experience we call 'ideals'; ideals are to guide us into the territory as yet unexplored and unmapped. 'Beauty' was one of such ideals that guided the artists beyond the world that already was. Its value was entailed fully in its guiding power. Had they ever reached the point the ideal of beauty marks, it would have lost that power – their journey would have come to an end. There would be nothing left to transgress and transcend, and so also no room for exploration and experiment.

We call many things 'beautiful', but of no thing that we call by that name we would be able to honestly say that it cannot be improved. 'Perfection' *is forever 'not-yet'*. Of a state of affairs in which no further improvement will be desirable, only such people may dream as have a lot to improve. The vision of perfection may be a eulogy of stillness, but the job of that vision is to pull and push us away from what is, to bar us from standing still… *Stillness* is what graveyards are about – and yet, paradoxically, it is the *dream of stillness* that keeps us alive. As long as the dream remains unfulfilled, we count days and the days count – there is a purpose and there is an unfinished job to do…

Not that such work, which stubbornly, infuriatingly refuses to be finished, is an unmixed blessing and brings unpolluted happiness. The condition of 'unfinished business' has many charms, but like all other conditions, it is short of perfection… For Picasso, artistic creation is divine when rejecting the pursuit of beauty. God was not a perfectionist. According to the testimony of Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, Picasso considered God as 'really only another artist. He invented the giraffe, the elephant, and the cat. He has no real style. He just go on trying other things'… Musing on the state and prospects of contemporary art, Tom Wolfe wondered: we've got rid of representational objects, third dimension, dye stuff, technique, frame and canvas… but what about the wall itself? The image of the work of art as a thing on the wall – is it not pre-modern?[22]

Jacques Villeglé, a practising artist, keen photographer and painter of huge canvasses hanging on the walls of all the most prestigious Parisian salons of art (or at least I found them hanging there two years ago…), thinks of a different kind of wall: a

thoroughly post-modern contraption, a wall facing the street where the action unfolds, a window rather than a part of the cage/shelter that under the modernist rule used to define the difference between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of arts. The walls that gape from Villeglé's canvasses pasted over the *gallery* walls are the *city* walls, those living, constantly unfinished and constantly updated records of the eminently modern art - the art of modern living. Such walls are the very places where the evidence of living can be found - revealed and recorded in order to be later transferred inside the museum walls to reincarnate as the *objets d'art*. Villeglé's objects are the boards customized to carry public notices and announcements, posters and advertisements; or just the stretches of walls that separate and hide private residences and public places. Those plots of blank brickwork or stains of bland concrete are a constant challenge and a temptation for the printers, distributors and hangers of bills, a temptation impossible to resist in a liquid-modern city filled to the brim with sights and sound vying for attention.

Once fixed on Villeglé's canvasses, the purpose-made billboards and the walls invaded and annexed by the advancing troops of the empire of information hardly betray their different pasts. They all look shockingly alike. Whether they have been pasted and pasted over on Boulevard de la Chapelle, or on Haussman, Mallèsherbes, or rue Littré; or on Boulevard Marne, or rue des Ecoles; or on Saint Lazare, on Faubourg St.Martin or at the crossing of Sevre and Montparnasse. Each one of them is a haphazard medley of graveyards and building sites; a meeting point for things about to die and things about to be born in order to die a bit later. Fragrance of fresh glue fights here with the odour of putrefying corpses. *Afiches lacérées,* as Villeglé titles his canvasses… Scraps of paper torn already fly over would-be scraps yet-to-be-torn. Half smiles on salvaged halves of faces; single eyes or solitary ears with no twins, knees and elbows with nothing to connect them and hold together. Cries that fall silent before reaching comprehension, messages that dissolve and vanish in a fraction of sentence, arrested and garrotted well short of the birthplace of meaning; unfinished calls or sentences with nowhere to start.

These scrap-heaps are full of life, though. Nothing rests still here; everything that is, is on a temporary leave from elsewhere, or on a trip to somewhere else. All homes are but half-way inns.

These boards and walls, overcrowded with layer after layer of have-been, would-have-been or would-be meanings, are snapshots of a history-in-the-making, history that proceeds by shredding its traces: history as a *factory of rejects, of waste*. Neither creation nor destruction, neither learning nor genuine forgetting; just a livid evidence of futility, nay utter silliness, of such distinctions. Nothing is born here to live long and nothing dies definitely. Duration? Sorry, what do you mean? Things done to last? What a strange idea…

Manolo Valdes' canvasses are also huge and also remarkably like each other. Whatever message they convey, they repeat, with unctuous yet passionate persistence, over and over again, canvass by canvass. Valdes paints/collates/ composes/sticks together *faces*. Or, rather, a single face – a single woman's face. Each canvass is a material evidence of another beginning, another go, another attempt to finish the portrait – not of them brought to an end, whatever that word 'end' might mean. Or is it rather a testimony to the job a while ago completed, but soon after decried as obsolete and condemned? The canvass has been frozen, for sure, the moment it was pinned to the gallery wall – but on the way up or down? *Aller* or *retour?* You tell me… For your or my money, you won't be able to tell the 'forward' from the 'backward'. Just like the opposition between creation and destruction, this distinction has lost its sense – or perhaps it never had one - though that void, now laid bare where meaning was assumed to reside used to be a secret, closely guarded by all those who insisted that 'forward' is the right name for where they, the forward-looking people, look and averred that 'creation' is the proper name for the destruction they, the creative people, accomplish. At least this is the message which Valdes's canvasses, in unison, intone; perhaps their only message.

Valdes's collages have been laboriously patched together, layer by layer, of bits and pieces of hessian – some of them dyed, some unashamed of the erstwhile blandness of jute or kemp; some primed to be painted over, some already shedding crumbs of the dried-up paint with which they had been overlaid before. Or have they rather been torn apart from a canvass already complete, seamless, whole and wholesome? Patches are poorly glued – loose ends hang in the air - but again it is anything but clear whether they are about to be pressed to the other cuttings beneath, or in the course of getting unstuck

and coming off. Are these collages snapshots caught in-the-process-of-creation, or in a state of advanced decomposition? Are these bits and pieces of hessian yet-not-fixed, or already-un-fixed? Fresh and immature, or used-up and putrescent? The message is: it does not matter, and you would not know what is what even if it did.

Braun-Vega, exhibiting at the 5th edition of Art-Paris Salon inside the Louvre Caroussel, paints, one would say, impossible encounters*:* Velasquez' nude in the company of Picasso's bathers of Avignon, watched by a Paris policeman in full 21st Century gear; Pope Pius IX reading a newspaper with most recent pronouncements of John Paul II; Breughel's jolly peasants cavorting in the state-of-the-art nouveau-cuisine restaurant. *Impossible* encounters? In the world of the moribund life and the undead dead, everything may happen, the improbable has turned inevitable, the extraordinary made into routine. Everything is possible, indeed unavoidable, once life and death have lost their meaning-bestowing distinction, having both become similarly revocable and until-further-notice. It was after all that very distinction which endowed time with linearity, which set apart the transience from duration, and injected sense in the idea of progress, degeneration and points of no return. With that distinction gone, none of these oppositions constitutive of modern order retain any substance.

Villeglè, Valdes and Braun-Vega are *representative* artists of the liquid- modern era. Of an era that lost self-confidence, resigned itself to the whirlwind of consumerist existence, and with it forfeited the boldness of sketching (let alone pursuing) models of perfection – such condition as would put an end to the whirlwind. Unlike the preceding era of 'solid' modernity that lived towards 'eternity' (a shorthand for a state of perpetual, monotonous and irrevocable sameness) - liquid modernity sets itself no objective and draws no finishing line; more precisely, it assigns the quality of permanence solely to the state of transience. Time *flows* – it no longer 'marches on'. There is change, always change, ever new change – but no destination, no finishing point, nor the anticipation of a mission accomplished. Each lived-through moment is pregnant, *simultaneously*, with a new beginning *and* the end – once sworn antagonists, now Siamese twins.

The artists discussed here replicate in their works the defining features of liquid-modern expe-

rience. Cancellation of the oppositions between creative and destructive acts, learning and forgetting, forward and backward steps, as well as cutting the pointer off the time arrow, are all marks of lived reality which Villeglé, Valdes and Braun-Vega recycle into canvasses fit to be hung on the gallery walls. Not they alone; digesting those novel qualities of the *Lebenswelt* and articulating their experience is perhaps the major preoccupation of the arts cast into a world with no 'sitters' – a world no longer trusted to sit still long enough to allow the artist complete its pictorial representation. That preoccupation expresses itself over and over again in the tendency to reduce the life-span of art products to a performance, a happening, the brief timespan between the opening and the dismantling of the exhibition; in the preference for frail and friable, eminently degradable and perishable materials among the stuffs of which art objects are made; in the earth works unlikely to be massively visited and to survive for long the caprices of inclement climate; all in all – in incorporating the imminence of decay and disappearance into the material presence of *objet d'art.*

Imperceptibly, the meaning of 'beauty' undergoes a fateful change. In the current usages of the word, philosophers would hardly recognize the concepts they so earnestly and laboriously constructed over centuries. More than anything else, they would miss the link between beauty and eternity, aesthetic value and durability. However furiously they quarrelled, all philosophers used to agree in now bygone times that beauty rises above the fickle and fragile private whims, and that even if there could be a 'beauty at the first sight', it was the flow of time that'd put it to the trustworthy, ultimate and clinching test ('A thing of beauty is a joy forever', as Keats insisted). Today's philosophers would also miss the 'claim to universal validity' that used to be viewed as indispensable attribute of any properly aesthetic judgment. It is these two points that fell by the board with the advent of te liquid modern 'casino culture' and are conspicuously absent from the current popular usages of the word 'beauty'.

* * *

Not to waste their clients' time or to prejudice their future, yet unpredictable, joys – consumer markets offer products meant for immediate consumption, preferably one-off use, rapid disposal and replace-

ment, so that the living space won't stay cluttered once the objects admired and coveted today fall out of fashion. The clients, confused by the whirlwind of fashion, mind-boggling variety of offers and vertiginous pace of their change, can no longer rely on the facility to learn and memorize - and so they must (and do, gratefully) accept the reassurances that the product currently on offer is *'the* thing', the *'hot* thing', the *'must have'* and the 'must be seen (in or with) thing'.

The ever-lasting or 'objective' aesthetic value of the product is the last thing to worry about. Neither is the beauty 'in the eye of the beholder': it is instead located in today's fashion, and so the beautiful is bound to turn ugly the moment the current fads are replaced by other, as they surely will soon be. If not for the market's wondrous capacity of imposing a regular, even if short-lived, pattern on the ostensibly individual and so potentially random and diffuse customer choices, customers would feel totally dis-oriented and lost. Taste is no more a safe guide, learning and relying on the already acquired knowl-edge is a trap rather than assistance, yesterday *comme il faut* may well turn without warning into *comme il n'est faut pas*.

'Beauty rules' – observes Yves Michaud in his trenchant report of the state of arts in the liquid-modern world.[23] 'In all respects it has become an imperative: be beautiful, or at least spare us your ugliness'. To be ugly means to be condemned to the rubbish tip. Conversely, having been condemned to the rubbish bin is all the proof one needs of ugliness. This was, wasn't it, what the modern artists and the learned philosophers of aesthetics who reflected on their labours dreamed all along. So what do we witness – the final triumph of the beautiful? The fulfilment of at least one of the most ambitious 'modern projects'?

Not so, Michaud would say. In fact, aesthetics has triumphed – but over its own object… Aesthetics won by *trivialization* of beauty – by sapping the status of the 'works of art' ('precious and rare', 'invested with aura and magic qualities', 'unique, refined and sub-lime'). 'The 'aesthetic' is cultivated, diffused and con-sumed in a world emptied of the works of art'. Art has evaporated into a sort of an 'aesthetic ether', which like the ether of the pioneers of modern chemistry permeates all things and condenses in none. 'Beautiful' are jumpers with the currently celebrated designer's label; or bodies reshaped in

gyms and plastic surgeries and make-ups after the latest fashion; or packaged products on supermarket shelves. 'Even the corpses are beautiful – neatly wrapped in plastic covers and aligned in front of the ambulances'. Everything has, or at least may have and should try to have its fifteen minutes, perhaps even fifteen days of beauty on the road to the refuse tip.

We may say that what the graveyards are to the living humans, museums are to the life of arts: sites to dispose of the objects no longer vital and animate. Some human corpses are laid in graves and overlaid with grave-stones to be visited by those who feel orphaned or bereaved by their disappearance, some other vanished forever in unmarked mass burial places or disintegrated without trace in scorched villages, burning ovens and the depths of Rio de la Plata. Some works of art are placed in museums, where their once acclaimed beauty has been san-itized, sterilized and embalmed to be preserved, alongside archaeological excavation sites, for the fans of history or the passengers of tourist coaches. Graveyards and museums alike are set away from the hurly-burly of daily life, separated from life business in their own enclosed space and their own time of visiting. In museums, like at the cemeteries, one does not talk loud, does not eat, drink, run, or touch the objects of the visit.

The scene of daily life is different. It is the site of aesthetics, not *objets d'art*. It is the stage of ephem-eral performances and happenings, of installations scrambled together of the manifestly and self-con-sciously perishable materials or sown together out of the yarn of immaterial thoughts – of all those things/events that would swear not to overstay their wel-come and would keep their oath. Nothing put and seen on that stage is meant to last or conserved when its time is over – frailty and transience are the names of the game. Whatever happens there, can carry only as much meaning as its own tiny carrying capacity can admit and hold. That meaning will be after all sought and gleaned by people drilled in the art of zapping – and 'zappers' enter 'after (the name of) editor and before 'the end' appears on the screen'.[24] Michaud writes of the 'new regime of attention which privileges scanning over reading and deciphering of meanings. The image is fluid and mobile, less a spectacle or a datum than an element of a chain of action'. Having cut itself loose from the referential sequence of which it was a part, the image is free

to be harnessed at will to any cortège or sequence of phantasms'.

Relocation of images from the focus of attention to the attention's own refuge tip – irrelevance and invisibility – is random. Difference between 'the object' and its indifferent surroundings has been all but obliterated, much as the time separating being in the focus from being cast out of sight. Objects and waste change places easily. In a Copenhagen art gallery I admired an installation put together of a series of TV screens, each with huge captions 'the promised land'. I found the installation thoughtful and thought-provoking – not least because of the broom and a bucket standing in the corner at the end of the series. Before I had time, though, to think through that meaning to the end, a cleaner came to collect her tools she put in the corner for the duration of her coffee break.

Only numbers may offer the perplexed viewers, lost on their search for beauty, a rescue from the chaos conjured up by the free-floating aesthetics with no fixed objects. Salvation is in numbers. As the writers of commercial copies untiringly repeat – all those people who proudly sport the latest tokens of fashion cannot be simultaneously wrong… Magically, the massiveness of choice ennobles its object. That object *must* be beautiful, otherwise it would not have been chosen by so many choosers. Beauty is in high sales figures, box-office records, platinum discs, sky-high television ratings (Andy Warhol once mused: imagine a bunch banknotes hanging on a string – one hundred sixty thousand dollars… What a beautiful picture!) Perhaps beauty is also somewhere else, as some philosophers stubbornly insist – but how would you know? And who would approve of your findings, if you searched for them in bizarre places *à qui on ne parle plus*? Even the Old Masters, whose reputation, as one would think, is sure-proof thanks to their venerable age and the number of tests they have triumphantly passed over centuries, cannot ignore the new rules of the beauty game. It is Vermeer today, Matisse the other day, and Picasso the day after, that 'you *must see* and *be seen* to be seeing' – depending on the latest hype of a successive 'everybody who is anybody is talking about' exhibition. Like in all other cases, beauty is not a quality of their canvasses, but the (quantitatively evaluated) quality of the *event*.

In our liquid-modern society, beauty met the fate suffered by all the other ideals that used to motivate human restlessness and rebellion. The search for ultimate harmony and eternal duration has been re-cast as, purely and simply, an ill-advised concern. Values are values in as far as they are fit for instantaneous, on the spot consumption. Values are attributes of *momentary experiences*. And so is beauty. And life? Life is a succession of momentary experiences…

'Beauty has no obvious use; nor is there any clear cultural necessity for it. Yet civilization could not do without it' – Freud mused. 'This useless thing which we expect civilization to value is beauty. We require civilized man to reverence beauty whenever he sees it in nature and to create it in the objects of his handiwork so far as he is able'. Beauty, alongside cleanliness and order, 'obviously occupy a special position among the requirements of civilization'[25].

Let us note that all three objectives named by Freud as 'the requirements of civilization' are *imaginary horizons* of the civilizing process. It would be perhaps better, less misleading and controversial, to speak of *beautification, purification* and *ordering*, rather than of beauty, purity and order. We see now more clearly than our ancestors could possibly see seventy years ago, that the 'civilizing process' is not a time-limited, transitory period leading to civilization - but the very substance of 'civilization'. The idea of a civilization that has completed the effort to civilize (brought to an end the cleaning job, the ordering bustle, and the search of beauty) is as incongruous as that of a wind that does not blow and river that does not flow. It is out of the *hunger* for beauty that civilizations (i.e. the efforts to 'civilize', the 'civilizing processes') have been born. But far from placating that hunger, they seem to have made it insatiable.

* * *

Reactions to the gradual yet resolute dismantling of the administrative wardenship over arts was greeted by the denizens of the arts-worlds with mixed feelings. Some were pushed to the edge of despair – just like Voltaire felt two hundred years before when the Louis XIV court, which supplied everything needed to set creative effort on a firm track (that is, the purpose of creation and the relative values of creations), had fallen apart and the creators moved to the Parisian salons with their endless *querelles,* interminable game of musical chairs, and proclivity to melt all and any solid convictions. Some others were elated: now, finally, we are free. If freedom can't

be gained without uncertainty – let it be. At least now 'creating' will be tantamount to self-creation, and this is a gain that justifies all losses.

    A word of warning is however in order – and for that purpose I'd quote one more time Joseph Brodsky's reflections on exile from the land of administrative tyranny or tyrannical administration; that, one would say, the extreme and most radical case of liberation conceivable. Brodsky warns: 'a freed man is not a free man'. '(L)iberation is just the means of attaining freedom and is not synonymous with it'. And he concludes: 'A free man, when he fails, blames nobody'.[26]

Zygmunt Bauman Emeritus Professor of Sociology Leeds University, UK

1. Theodore W.Adorno, 'Culture and Administration', trans. By Wes Blomster, in J.M.Bernstein, *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on Mass Culture by Theodore W.Adorno,* Routledge 1991, p.93. Let me point that the word 'management' better than 'administration' conveys the gist of the German term *Verwaltung* used in the original.
2. *Ibid.*, p.98.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.93, 98, 100.
4. Joseph Brodsky, 'The Child of Civilization', in *Less than one: Selected Esays,* Farrar Strauss Giroux 1987, p.123.
5. *Ibid.*, p.94.
6. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectics of Enlightenment,* transl. by John Cumming, Verso 1979, pp.216–7.
7. 'Culture and Administration', p.103.
8. Hannah Arendt, *La crise de la culture*, Gallimard 1968, pp.266–7.
9. Joseph Brodsky, 'On tyranny', in *Less than One,* p.121.
10. Milan Kundera, *Sztuka powieści,* Czytelnik 1998, pp.21–2.
11. Milan Kundera, *Les testaments trahis,* here quoted after Polish translation by Marek Bieńczyk, *Zdradzone testamenty,* PIW 1993, pp. 20–3.
12. Hannah Arendt, *Man in Dark Times,* Harcourt Brace & Company 1983, p.VIII.
13. *Ibid.,* pp.4–5.
14. *Ibid.,* p.24.
15. Milan Kundera, *Sztuka powieści,* p.25.
16. Naomi Klein, *No Logo.* Flamingo 2001, p.5.
17. *No Logo,* p.25.
18. See Alberto Melucci, *The Playing Self: Person and Meaning in the Planetary Society*, Cambridge UP 1996, pp.43ff. This is an extended version of the Italian original published in 1991 under the title *Il gioco dell'io.*
19. W. De Kooning, *Écrits et propos,* Éditions de l'Ensb-a 1992, pp.90 ff.
20. Yves Michaud, *L'art à l'état gazeux,* Stock 2003, p.9.
21. See my *Society under Siege,* Polity Press 2002, chap.4.
22. Quoted after Patrick Barrer, *(Tout) l'art contemporain est-il mal?,* Lausanne, Fauvre 2000, p.67.
23. Yves Michaud, *L'art à l'état gazeux: Essai sur la triophe de l'esthétique,* Paris, Stock, 2003, pp.7, 9,77, 120-1.
24. S.Daney, *La salaire du zappeur*, Paris. P.O.L. 1993, p.12.
25. *Civilization, Society and Religion,* pp.271, 281, 282.
26. Joseph Brodsky, 'The Condition We Call Exile', in *On Grief and Reason,* Farra, Strauss and Giroux 1995, p.34.

David Crowley

Cityscape after a battle: the faces of Warsaw

Abstract

This essay explores the changing face of Warsaw since 1944. Focusing on landmark buildings, it compares the effects of popular will on the Polish capital with the power of the state and, in recent years, commerce.

Essay

Imagine Warsaw. What are its faces? Unlike Prague or even Budapest, the city is hardly a 'naturally' photogenic or picturesque capital. Tourists bypass it on their tours of the 'pearls' of central Europe. Despite this, Warsaw has tremendous emotional force for the people that live there. The strength of sentiment has frequently been invoked to contest the other, often more powerful pressures exercised by the state or capital. The strength of popular feeling and the power of money are hardly equal or commensurate forces and they are channeled in very different ways. But, as I'll show in this short essay, they do interact.

One fact above all others dominates the architectural consciousness of this city; its destruction during the Second World War. This occurred in three explosive assaults: in 1939 at the outset of the war; in 1943 in retribution for the Ghetto Uprising; and in 1944 in retribution for the Warsaw Uprising. Warsaw at the end of the Second World War was an awful sea of ruins. 85% of the buildings in the centre were beyond repair. [FIG. 1] Traces of this cataclysm are strongly felt today, not least in the numerous memorials to the victims of war which punctuate the streets. [FIG. 2] There are still voids in the cityscape where building lines seem interrupted or squares appear incomplete. Today these absences are marked out in ghostly, transparent street signs. An active lob-

Figure 1 The ruins of Sw Jana Cathedral in the Old Town in early 1945 (with the Dekert side of the Market Square in the background) Source: Warszawa Stolica Polski, 1949
Figure 2 Memorial recording the death of Poles killed in Warsaw on Al. Solidarności, Warsaw. Source: author's photograph – taken in 2006

by – professional and amateur – protects the few re-
maining prewar buildings from threat. Attempts by
property developers to bypass planning regulations
and clear sites of ordinary relics of the past invari-
ably produce swift response in the form of articles in
the press and, sometimes, court orders. This desire to
restore and protect what has disappeared is the city's
'reconstruction reflex', a powerful instinct at work
in the city today.

Reconstructing the Old City

In the second half of the 1940s some voices argued
for a new steel and glass utopia on the Vistula, whilst
others claimed that Warsaw was beyond repair and
that the capital should be moved elsewhere. Some, of
course, argued for reconstruction of the city as a kind
of facsimile of what had been in 1939. Their views
previlaed and reconstruction of this kind is precisely
what Warsaw is most famous for. The Rynek (Market
Square) and two adjacent streets (ul. Piwna and pl.
Zapiecek) in the Old Town reopened in 1953. They
had been painstakingly and brilliantly restored from
ruins to create a near facsimile of seventeenth and
eighteenth century facades that had stood on the
site before the war. Two facts, more than any other,
served the case for this particularly exact mode of
reconstruction: firstly, this section of the city had
seen some of the bloodiest fighting during the War-
saw Uprising. It had tremendous emotional appeal to
those who survived. And secondly, the Nazi attack on
the city was not just interpreted as an assault on the
nation and its property, it was an attempt to efface
Polish culture. Reconstruction was a kind of reasser-
tion of the nation. The obvious question today is *what
benefit was brought by reconstruction to the commu-
nist authorities?* After all, these were the Stalin years;
a new epoch which claimed to witness the construc-
tion of a new society not recreate the past. [FIG. 3] The
answer to this question lies in the authorities' regu-
lar attempts to play the patriotic card. Unpopular and
illegitimate, the communists tried to secure support
by tapping popular will. It ran genuinely popular
voluntary labour schemes in the Old Town and, what
is more, the Party-controlled media captured every
aspect of the scheme on film.

    Looking back at the early years of reconstruc-
tion, the city architect claimed in the early 1960s,
'the Old Town now looks as it used to look long ago'.
But he knew better than that. Completed, the Old
Town in 1953 was not the Old Town as it had been in
1939. Conservators and architects to stripped away

Figure 3 The reopening of the Old Town in July 1953
Source Jankowski, MDM 1750–1954, 1955
Figure 4 Façade of the Strubicz house in the Old Town Market
Square reconstructed to a design by Stanisław Kamiński with
graffito by Krystyna Kozłowska and Grzegorz Wdowicki.
Source: Trakt Starey Warszawy, 1953

the awkward mongrel details and shabby outhouses which had filled courtyards and occupied the defensive walls around the district on the eve of the War. And historic ornaments which had long disappeared from the facades of these buildings were restored. In short, the Old Town was improved This quarter could have been given many uses, but its primary function was didactic. It was to demonstrate the force of History. Popular guides were written and tours were organised which accentuated the quarter's class history by reminding visitors that it had been inhabited by the poor and artisanal classes during the long period of the Russian partition in the nineteenth century. Feliks Dzierzyński, the founder of the Soviet Secret Police, had stayed in the square in 1899. This minor fact lent the quarter socialist credentials.

The buildings of the Old Town were also given a kind of representational function in a literal sense. They were dressed with new relief and graffito work by artists. These features were almost invariably historicising decoration or vignettes which were designed to explain the history of the market square to the visitor and gave the place a didactic function. The decoration above the doorway on Świętojańska Street, for instance, depicts a cobbler rather than the more likely inhabitant of the building, a merchant. [FIG 4] This was an emblematic figure who could be connected to the official conception of history in the form of Jan Kiliński, the much lionised cobbler-turned-colonel who had led the revolt against imperial Russia in Warsaw in 1794. Others depicted the reconstruction itself, albeit sometimes in bizarrely antique forms; most notably proletarian *putti* laying bricks on the facade of one house. [FIG. 5] Many of the Old Town facades were treated as surfaces onto which an inflected narrative of the city's history was quite literally etched. The Old Town was a very early example of a kind of heritage sensibility which has taken hold in the world since.

A Palace for the Workers

At the same time as the Party-state was making the Old Town the centrepiece of its reconstruction programme, it was also involved in the destruction of pre-war housing stock. The construction of the Palace of Culture and Science entailed razing one hundred houses and the displacement of 4,000 people at a time of tremendous housing shortage. Designed by a team of Soviet architects and builders according to the same blueprint as Moscow's 'wedding-cake' skyscrapers, this building was a clear

demonstration of the harsh reality of the post-war division of Europe. [FIG. 6] Completed in 1955 two years after Stalin's death, the Palace of Culture was irrevocably connected to the Soviet leader. Not only named in his honour, the vast scale of building stood like a colossus over the city just like Stalin's long shadow over the entire Eastern Bloc. It has now been generally recognised that even the Polish communists did not want this 'gift'. It was clearly an alien feature in the Warsaw cityscape. Great efforts were made to naturalise it. Sometimes this took bizarre forms, including displays of models of the building in confectioner's windows and parading architectural

Figure 5 Bricklaying putti on the façade of a house on Ulica Swietojańska, Warsaw. Source: author's photograph – taken in 2002.
Figure 6 Construction of the Palace of Culture and Science in May 1953 (designed by Lev Vladimirovich Rudnev). Source: Stolica, 24 May 1953.

details from the building on the city's trams. [FIG. 7] Despite these attempts to naturalise the building, the Palace was often described as a strange menacing presence. In the 1980s – the period of Solidarity's rise and suppression - novelist Tadeusz Konwicki was particularly taken with the 'magical horror' that this ever-visible building provoked amongst his compatriots. Its mysterious form lent itself to what one might call occult interpretations: mysterious rooms lit night and day hinted at dark activities inside. Some described nightmares in which they were trapped in its maze of corridors and staircases. After the end of communist rule Konwicki's view was proven to be prescient. Journalists revealed hitherto shrouded episodes from the days of its construction, including the pitiless entombment of the bodies of Russian workers who had fallen to their death in the building's foundations. It was and is a tomb. There was at the end of the communist period even some discussion of exorcising its ghosts by demolishing the building. This iconoclastic act was willed in film. In final scene of the popular movie *Rozmowy kontrolowane* (Controlled Conversations), the main character – a kind of fool caught up in the events of Martial Law in 1981 – pulls the chain to flush of a toilet in the Palace. This simple act triggers the explosion of a bomb hidden in the towering building. In the final shot, this character stumbles out of the ruins and delivers the funniest line in the film, 'it'll be reconstructed'. This had become, it seems, an involuntary reflex in Polish culture.

The Palace still stands today, now dressed with the symbol of order and civic control, a clock. [FIG. 8] Pragmatism has prevailed alongside a growing, though often-begrudging, recognition that the Palace lend a particular and almost unique identity to the city. Poland has not been gripped by the waves of *ostalgie* which has held Germany and parts of Yugoslavia. But this building has, nevertheless, become wrapped in a kind of nostalgia: a concert by the Rolling Stones there in 1967 has, for instance, become part of a pop culture mythology of the city. And the Palace's visual effect has been diminished by the growth of a high-rise downtown in the the 1990s. Recently architectural debate seems to be interested in containing the building and filling the voids around it by the monumental street plan. The key stone of this new urban vision is – presently – to be a new gallery for modern art.


Figure 7 Cover of Film magazine depicting a scene from 'One Day in Warsaw', December 1952. Source: private collection
Figure 8 The Palace of Culture and Science photographed in 2005. Source: author's photograph
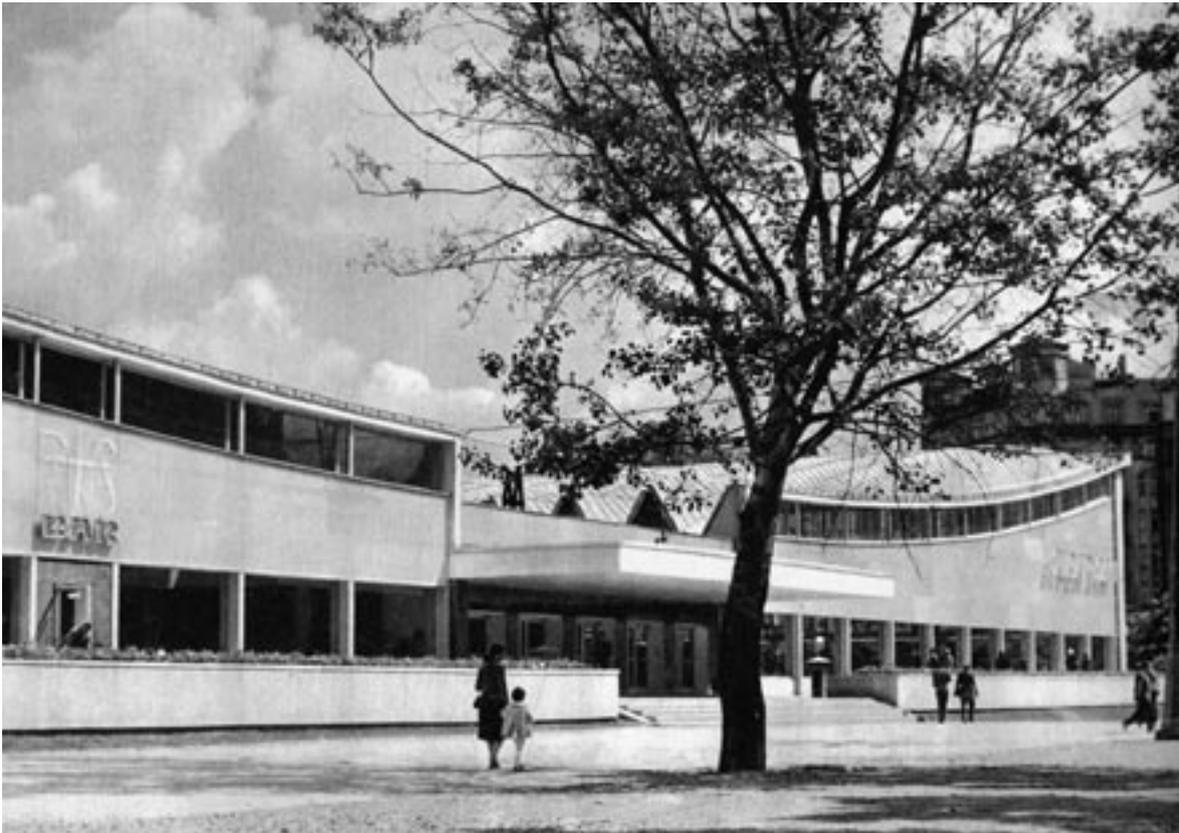
Figure 9 'Supersam' on Ulica Puławska designed by Jerzy Hryniewiecki, Maciej Krasiński and Ewa Krasińska and structural engineer Wacław Zalewski, 1959–62. Source: Ciborowski, Warsaw. A City Destroyed and Rebuilt (1964).

Shopping in Warsaw

Warsaw is famous, even notorious for Palace of Culture and Science, but perhaps another building is a better index of Polish attitudes to architecture in the communist period. Supersam, a supermarket which opened to the public in 1962, is noteworthy in at least two regards. [FIG. 9] First, its striking architectural design was based on ostentatious structural forms including the cantilevered concrete canopy over the entrance and the funicular roof system of tensile cables and compressive arches. Looking at these structural experiments today, one has to bear in mind that this building emerged a couple of months after the banal, monumental style which dominated in the Stalin years had been abandoned. Supersam was dramatic expression of faith on the part of architects, and the authorities which commissioned it, in a technologically-led vision of modernity. But secondly and more remarkably – it was a supermarket. As a style of retailing, Supersam was evidently not modeled on Soviet precedents but on American ones. It was the first such supermarket in the Eastern Bloc. This was controversial achievement in a socialist country. During the Thaw years, such shops were conceived as part of an urban spectacle offering diversity and surprise in a cityscape which had been rendered grey by Socialist Realism. Architects and planners after 1956 imagined lively streets filled with bright shops and flanked with billboards. A popular theme was the city at night illuminated with neon advertisements. Supersam testifies to a moment of hope; that of a kind of modernized socialism after Stalin's death could make good on its promises. But supermarkets, neon, better consumer goods, cars, scooters and other symbols of modernity encouraged the Poles to think of themselves as consumers. Consumerism was one promise, amongst many, on which the system failed to deliver.

Since 1989 the supermarket has become the living embodiment of capitalism in Eastern Europe. Fringed by enormous hypermarkets, the city is now a strikingly disconnected cityscape of impossibly large billboards, petrol stations and car showrooms. Capitalism evidently holds sway and not just in the margins: the restoration of Old Town was funded in the early years of the new century by Western Euro-

Figure 10 Warsaw Old Town, photographed in 2000. Source: author's photograph.
Figure 11 Entrance to Warsaw University New Library, designed by Marek Budzyński and
Zbigniew Badowski, 1994–98. Source: Author's photograph, 2007.

pean and Northern American corporations. In return for beneficence, they were given permission to drape colossal billboards across these buildings. The picturesque facades were entirely obscured by spectacular inducements to buy shampoo and mobile phones. [FIG 10] This kind of visual blight attracts lots of critical comment in the city. On the internet and the pages of newspapers Varsavians regularly protest that Warsaw is being disfigured by commercialism. Opinion has curbed this trend and the kind of urban blight represented by such billboards has been prohibited in recent months.

It is important not to leave you with the impression that Warsaw has become a crass commercial environment and the role of architects diminished to that of designing 'decorated sheds'. Exceptions do exist. A case in point is Warsaw University's library which was built close to the river in the late 1990s. [FIG. 11] Suggesting a sweeping, classical colonnade, the western elevation running alongside Dobra Street is formed by a series of artificially-aged copper panels representing fields of scholarship. Inside, the library itself reflects contemporary architectural thinking in plate glass and cast concrete. Designed by Marek Budzyński and Zbigniew Badowski, the library also expresses their idyllic conception of nature as a healing force in the cityscape. Its roof appears to merge with the ground on its northern side. [FIG 12] It is a park planted with long grasses and tough shrubs. Standing on the grass at the centre of the roof and looking towards

the high-rise city on the horizon, one has the unexpected impression of a verdant Warsaw. This space is a remarkable addition to a city which notorious for its greyness. Moreover, it is public space, open to and used by society. People sit, read and meet there. The green arcadia above the academy is, however, built on compromise. To raise the funds needed for the library, it was constructed above an underground shopping mall, car park, a cavernous bowling alley and a disco called Hula Kula. [FIG 13]

Whilst a library built on top of a disco might well be presented as an illustration of the fate of culture in a city being driven by commerce, the story of Supersam reveals much more about the meaning of buildings to ordinary people in the city. The supermarket was destroyed in autumn 2006. [FIG 14] Its site will be the home to another more profitable commercial development. To make the case for demolition, its owners claimed that it was too dangerous to survive (memories of the market which collapsed in Katowice in the winter were still strong). Counter claims appeared in the press accusing the owners of of profiteering. The workers who lost their jobs allied themselves to the emerging campaign to save the building by marching with banners through the streets of the city. Architects too joined the debate by imagining new futures for the building elsewhere, usually as a kind of cultural centre. It was listed on a catalogue of 120 architectural monuments of the communist period. Art history research student Paweł Giergo sent a petition of 1800 signatures to the

Figure 12 The roof garden of Warsaw University New Library, designed by Marek Budzyński and Zbigniew Badowski, 1994–98. Source: Author's photograph, 2007.
Figure 13 Warsaw's Hula Kula 'bowling alley' website 2005. Source: http://www.hulakula.com.pl/
Figure 14 Supersam closed, awaiting demolition, Warsaw October 2006. Source: Author's photograph.

city conservation office demanding protection for the building. In one sense this is not remarkable: after all, modernist heritage groups like DOCOMOMO have done a good deal to promote the merits of post-war architecture. But what is more extraordinary is the fact that ordinary people visited the building to record its last moments. 'Our last visit to Supersam' became an elegiac caption on a number of pages on the internet in the summer of 2006.

Warsaw is a city which is well used to campaigning to protect is precious heritage, but this activism has rarely included monuments from the communist period. What is being remembered in such actions? Is this a kind of anticapitalist reflex? Or a kind of repressed desire for the restoration of the conditions of socialism? This does not seem likely; a supermarket is hardly a good symbol for such protests. One way of reflecting on these events is that this building has become a landmark in a literal sense, a mnemonic device in a fast changing and disorientating world. It is the ordinariness of this building which lent its particular significance. The fact that it is a supermarket seems key to unlocking this particular form of the 'reconstruction reflex'. In a capitalist economy which is predicated on obsolescence, i.e. on a kind of forgetfulness, it is surely poignant that a supermarket can become one of Warsaw's many symbols of steadfastness.

David Crowley Senior Tutor
Critical and Historical Studies
Humanities
Royal College of Art
London SW7 2EU
david.crowley@rca.ac.uk

This talk, presented at the Cumulus conference at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Art in October 2006, is a summary of themes and ideas which appeared in my book, *Warsaw* (Reaktion, 2003). Full references can be found there. For details of Paweł Giergon's campaign and the history of Supersam see *www.sztuka.net*

Stephen Hitchins

The economic value of design

If the EU is serious about playing to the economic value of design, serious about the jobs it can create, serious about giving Europe an economic edge, then in future, it will have to compete on the creativity of its people. Equally, design organisations have to understand where the politicians want to go, what they want to achieve and then to provide them with an understanding of how design can work for them in order to achieve those aims.

Because it is designers who achieve tangible results from those intangible assets that are the basis of the new economy, they must work to offer a vision on design in Europe: to help shape and influence policy, to contribute to the debate on the value of design, to ensure that design is understood as a cultural and tradeable asset that can both express the diversity of the continent and strengthen the concept of a single European entity.

Europe has the cultural, historical and educational background to lead the world in design. The European Union needs to recognise that economic and cultural value, the way design can support and sustain economic growth, the creation of both jobs and wealth, and overcome the obstacles and threats to that growth. It will only appreciate that if through its international networks, the design world can demonstrate a co-ordinated approach across Europe through a series of joint programmes and common activity. That work has now begun – and it unites the so-called "old and new Europe", western and central Europe, candidate countries and the Balkans.

All industries are creative, not all industries are cultural, nevertheless - the aesthetic importance of these activites is matched by the huge economic value generated - but how big is that value, what are the trends and what are the obstacles to growth? There is now a steady pattern of economic activity in this sector which has sustained growth of, in some cases, up to twice the average growth of business. Design represents a huge slice of the overall creative industry figures in many countries. Yet they remain hidden treasures because their economic value is unknown, no one knows the real numbers of designers or appreciates the real value of the design groups they work for - and anyone who tells they they do,

has never tried to undertake that exercise properly. Many claim to have the numbers and for a very few countries they do exist, but in general they simply are not available. If we cannot quantify the design numbers, how can we expect the European Union to recognise that economic and cultural value, the way design can support and sustain economic growth, the creation of both jobs and wealth, and overcome some of the obstacles and threats to that growth?

Surveys are now being undertaken in many western European countires to demonstrate that there is a clear causal connection between the deployment of design and business performance. That kind of finding will impact on policymakers who, in some cases still, simply not understand why design has gained such prominence. Some governments, particularly regional ones, do appreciate that design can contribute to stimulate their local economies as their industries become more consumer orientated. And nationally, the notion that design has a role in stimulating exports of these revitalised manufacturing industries has been grasped – in some countries.

Talent and its management remains key. Creativity is paramount. That creativity comes from the quality of design education in Europe. But Europe is only ahead as long as it takes the others to catch up. Of the top 20 universities in the world today, only two are now in Europe. Design education is moving in the same direction. Universities are one of the most important engines of the knowledge economy.

Central and eastern Europe is, today, the most exciting part of the continent economically and it therefore behoves everyone to check out what their designers and universities are doing. Such as The Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava in Slovakia, the Bienale Industijskega Oblikovanja held every two years in Ljubliana in Slovenia for over 40 years *and t*he Polish system of design education that has always produced some of the finest poster designers in the world and has more recently developed an expertise in information graphics. You can find similar, design schools, similar exhibitions and events and similar high quality successful design projects across central and eastern Europe. Just as their economic ideas are about to impact western Europe, so their design is ready to challenge us all too. It is one of the reasons that it is right that Cumulus should be meeting here in Warsaw at the heart of central Europe.

We all have to get the message across that European businesses can stay ahead of their global rivals by drawing on the continent's world-leading design capabilities. But it requires raising business awareness of how creativity can boost performance, creating more demand for creativity and design through business support services and, particularly, government incentives. The correlation between competitiveness rankings and design rankings is startling. Among the 20 nations ranking highest in terms of design, 17 are also among the 20 nations ranking highest in terms of competitiveness.

The rise of the so-called new economies, especially those of China and India, but also other parts of Asia, Russia and Brazil, all pose both a threat and a market opportunity for European companies. The only viable response is to encourage greater use of each country's creative capabilities. The challenge is much greater and the need to address it more urgent, than many realise. The competitive threat from some of these economies is not only to the low value-added, labour-intensive industries but increasingly to the high-technology, highly-skilled sectors. It was long assumed that the loss of the former by the industrialised economies would be replaced by the latter. That has turned out to be a totally wrong assumption.

The pace and scale with which many of these fast growing economies are building their high-tech industries, their scientific base, their research capabilities and, most of all, their skills base and their educational facilities, should make all of us aware of the fact that no business sector will remain unaffected, the impact on service industries being as great as on manufacturing. The upside of these rapidly expanding economies is that they stimulate global economic growth and provide new markets for our talents. But there is no window of opportunity while these new economies, so-called, develop the kinds of creative skills to compete across the board. They are knocking on the door of our creative world now.

Various government initiatives have looked at related areas such as technology and enterprise but the connecting thread of creativity has not received the attention it warrants despite the fact that our creative capabilities lie at the heart of our ability to compete. For too long, there has been a failure to recognise the fact that technology that is not carried through into improved systems or successful products is an opportunity wasted and enterprise that fails to be sufficiently creative is simply pouring energy into prolonging yesterday's ideas. Creativity, properly employed, carefully evaluated, skilfully

managed and soundly implemented is the key to future business success - and to national and European prosperity.

Long-term demand for design services requires a business sector that believes design pays. That means improving the issue of awareness and understanding by developing design for business programmes across our countries and broadening the understanding and skills of tomorrow's business leaders, creative specialists, engineers and technologists; by creating centres of excellence in higher education for multi-disciplinary courses that combine management studies, engineering and technology with creative disciplines, setting the skills agenda firmly alongside encouraging enterprise, entrepreneurship and the nurturing of the creative industries themselves.

Such ideas can open the way towards better business, but alone, will not deliver better performance. It will take sustained government support to keep up the pressure for change, business leaders who can demonstrate the value of these ideas continually pushing for action, and design organisations like BEDA and national design organisations, both professional societies and promotional bodies such as design centres, as well as academic institutions, to do everything they can to support and promote the value of design to the economy of a country and the European Union.

The question remains will business rise to the challenge of exploiting the creative possibilities at its disposal, will governments understand the need for them to promote and support creative initiatives and will design organisations do what is required of them to deliver on the promise that their members really do hold the key to both enhance the quality of our lives and a more prosperous future for us all? It will mean defining our business in terms of the value we create rather than merely the services we offer.

Stephen Hitchins
La Horique
Le Grand-Celland
50370 Brécey
France
Tel. +33 681 855 226
stephen@hitchinsdesign.com

Józef A. Mrozek

Design in Poland

In Poland as in many countries, the development of a brand of design that would be conscious of its objectives extended from the late 19ᵗʰ-century advent of the Arts and Crafts Movement to the appearance of industrial design after World War II. Obviously, it did not transpire in a political, cultural, social and economic void. The difficult history of the 20ᵗʰ century also influenced Polish design.

The Poles were a state-less nation a hundred years ago. At that time in Europe, of course, this was hardly exceptional. At the turn of the 19ᵗʰ and 20ᵗʰ centuries, from Scandinavia in the north to the Balkans in the south, it was common for nations not to have state structures, and this influenced the appearance of nationalist stances and the saturation of culture by elements of local tradition. The Poles were no exception; in fact, unlike many other nations, they had a tradition of continuous statehood that had lasted from the 10ᵗʰ century to the late 18ᵗʰ. Though the country's partitioning between Russia, Austria and Prussia became complete in 1795, during the partition period a sense of national community was maintained throughout former Polish lands, primarily through art: literature, poetry, music and painting. Toward the end of the 19ᵗʰ century this canon was expanded to include the applied arts.

The first attempts at elevating the status of the applied arts, and thus at incorporating them into political and social programs, were made within the Austrian partition. The Habsburg Empire's policy toward nationalities was far more liberal than that of Russia or Germany, so it was hardly accidental that Krakow, rather than Warsaw or Poznań, became the most important Polish cultural center at the time.

Interest in 'nationally' inspired applied arts began with the so-called Zakopane style, based on the folk architecture and crafts of the Tatra Mountain region located several dozen kilometers south of Krakow. The highlanders of the region had largely preserved their original ways of building and furnishing interiors, which had changed drastically in other regions as a result of 19ᵗʰ-century industrialization and urbanization. The Zakopane style was devised by painter and critic Stanislaw Witkiewicz, who used folk technologies, motifs and ornamenta-

tion in designing and decorating homes, furniture, fabrics and other items for affluent city-dwellers who vacationed in the mountains. Witkiewicz also realized the Zakopane style could prove much more important as a "national style." The strategic objective became to gain that status throughout the entire area of former Poland.[1] At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Zakopane style was applied in many areas – from architecture through furniture production to the manufacturing of ceramics, fabrics and even fashion items. Yet ultimately it failed to take root as a style expressing the aspirations of the entire nation. It was replaced for a time by the so-called "manor house style," which drew on the tradition of the family seats of the petty nobility. This had certain advantages over folk tradition: it was a supra-regional phenomenon, it was not linked exclusively to wooden construction, and its carried strong patriotic connotations, for as a social group the petty nobility most heavily participated in 19th-century insurrections against the partitioning powers. The nobleman's manor house and its furnishings also had more in common with the British 'cottage' idea promoted by the Arts & Crafts Movement. The *Exhibition of Architecture and Interiors in Garden Surroundings*, held in 1912 in Cracow, included many such "manor house" designs for use in single- and multi-unit housing construction for various social classes. Also displayed were a number of designed interiors referencing traditions of the petty nobility.

This show was organized on the initiative of the "Polish Applied Arts" Society, which was founded in Krakow in 1902 and had the objective, among others, of promoting the Arts and Crafts Movement in Poland. Society members included artists, architects and social activists, one of whom was the most exceptional artist of this period – the painter, playwright and designer Stanislaw Wyspianski. Unlike Witkiewicz, Wyspianski did not promote one uniform style. His designs sometimes approached French art nouveau (furnishings of the Franciscan Church, 1902), sometimes the Viennese Secession (meeting room at the Medical Society, 1904), yet they were always individual in character. Wyspianski's works also seem to be influenced by Hippolyte Taine's and Gottfried Semper's theories about art being influenced by such factors as race, climate, historical moment, as well as tools and materials. Based on these theories Wyspianski developed his own concept of a national style, exemplified by the furniture he designed as scenery for a production of his own

play titled *Boleslaw Smialy* [King Boleslaus the Bold] (1904). These pieces were supposed to demonstrate the possible forms of objects and decorations in 10th to 11th-century Poland and to point out to viewers the sources of domestic art.

The search for a national style within the circle of the "Cracow Workshops," founded in 1913, followed a similar path. Artists and designers affiliated with the Workshops consciously drew from creative sources embedded in primitive art. Their experiments in the years 1913–1925 remained within a current that encompassed the contemporaneous activities of artists representing German Expressionism, Italian Futurism or Czech Cubism. Defining different objectives and pursuing them through different means, these Polish artists often arrived at stylistic solutions surprisingly similar to those appearing abroad. What was surely important for artists of the "Cracow Workshops" was their strong need to accent the national character of the applied arts, especially during World War I and immediately after it when Polish independence hung in the balance.

This national character of architecture and the applied arts proved equally important after Poland's independence was restored, although the goals changed. Before 1918 they were oriented against the ruling authorities and cultural policies of the partitioning states; now they served to underline that this society, forcibly divided for over 120 years, shared a tradition and a culture. In their efforts to shape a new "state" consciousness, Polish authorities drew on both the "manor house style," which became part of a broader program of "national historicism," and the "Cracow Workshops," engaged in their search for the roots of Polish tradition. Both concepts were expressed in the Polish pavilion at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1925, perfectly fitting in with the tendencies reigning at the time in European decorative art: the "manor house style" with the current of national romanticism; the "Cracow Workshops" with the geometric stylistics of art deco. The Polish display received the greatest number of awards and distinctions, while also revealing weaknesses related to the excessively artistic stance of designers: most of the objects shown were unique pieces unsuited for serial production. Consequently, the "Cracow Workshops" disbanded a year later and were replaced by the "Lad" [Order] Artists' Cooperative, which continued to pursue its decorative arts program to the 1990s. "Lad" products were both one-off items and produced in series. They included furniture, fabrics,

ceramic objects, toys and haberdashery, and thus failed to venture beyond the traditional boundaries of the Arts & Crafts Movement.

Shaped within the "Cracow Workshops" and subsequently by "Lad," this artistic model and stance was marked by traditionalism, decorativeness and a search for "national forms." Dubbed the "Cracow school," in the late 1920s this model began to be compared to the "Warsaw school," which was oriented toward modernity, the avant-garde and internationalism. The Warsaw community placed less emphasis on craft, the artist's role and the shaping of a national style, and instead referenced the activities of Le Corbusier, Jacobus Oud and the Bauhaus. This blended with an effort to resolve certain social issues, above all the problem of working class housing. As in other European countries, architects primarily assumed design tasks in this community.

"Blok," a group founded in 1924, was a precursor of the architect-dominated "Warsaw school." It was created by a group of painters and sculptors influenced by Soviet Constructivism and Dutch Neoplasticism. Alongside painting and sculpture, "Blok's" program assigned importance to so-called utilitarianism, that is, artistic activities directed toward industrial aesthetics. The term was intended as a way of underlining avant-garde art's shift toward everyday life and manufacturing,[2] yet it remained a mere slogan because "Blok" artists had limited information about the essence of modern industrial production. The machine was an object of admiration as well as a fetish for them as it was for many avant-garde artists of the early 20th century.[3] They disseminated their ideas through the periodical "Blok," which was published by the organization and included presentations of architectural and interior designs in the context of existing industrial products like machines, cranes and aircraft. The designs, however, were never practically implemented. The only realized project was the periodical "Blok," the layout and typesetting of which are among Europe's best examples of avant-garde applied graphics.

The actual initiator of the "Warsaw school" was another avant-garde group founded in 1926 under the name "Praesens" not by artists, but by architects. This group's program also encompassed the issue of design. All the members were proponents of Le Corbusier and in 1928 "Praesens" announced its accession to the Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne. "Praesens" members treat-

ed the design of interior furnishings as a component of their work, in line with the scope assigned to architects of the age. Bohdan Lachert and Barbara Brukalska designed their first furniture in 1928 for their own homes. Two years later, in the exhibition *The Smallest Apartment*, Barbara Brukalska and Helena and Szymon Syrkus presented a series of interior furnishings designed for working class homes. The Syrkuses' designs reflected Bauhaus (Dessau) influences, while Brukalska's wooden, linoleum-lined furniture was very original. The 'social' program initiated at this time was extended by "Praesens" members in subsequent years and stood in opposition to the "national" tendencies represented by the "Cracow school."

Yet by the early 1930s avant-garde design was addressed not only to disadvantaged classes, but also to the most affluent. Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, Andrzej Pronaszko and Wlodzimierz Padlewski designed a series of interiors in the international style for the residence of Polish president Ignacy Moscicki in the Beskid Mountains. The furniture was made of bent tubular steel, pressed plywood and glass, while antelope hides in two shades of gray constituted the upholstery. At the time the building, completed in 1931, was the only residence of a head of state in the world to be equipped entirely according to functionalist principles.

In the 1930s international style furnishings also appeared in the homes of the intelligentsia, artists and a part of the well-to-do bourgeoisie. High quality metal furniture was produced by the firm Konrad, Jarnuszkiewicz and Co., lighting fixtures by the firm of Adam Marciniak, and modernist table settings by the firms of Henneberg, Fraget and Norblin. In 1937 the Warsaw Power Plant organized an exhibition showcasing modern bathroom and kitchen furnishings designed by Janusz and Jadwiga Ostrowski.

In the mid 1930s extreme functionalism's popularity began declining. New waves of nationalism surfaced in Europe and brought rejuvenated interest in the 'traditional' and 'national.' This did not produce solutions like the German Heimatstil or Soviet Socialist Realism everywhere. In Scandinavia modernism was very skillfully blended with local tradition. And designers in Poland adopted a similar approach. In 1935 previous opponents "Praesens" (modernist) and "¸ad" (traditionalist) joined efforts in designing two transatlantic ships: the m/s *Pilsudski* and the m/s *Batory*. A year later Stefan Sienicki founded the Interiors and Furnishings Design Studio

within the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw Institute of Technology, which produced furniture and furnishing designs that were regional or classicist in character. At the 1937 Paris International Exhibition, Barbara Brukalska and Jan Boguslawski exhibited interiors and furniture in which modern solutions blended with traditional materials. The last important prewar exhibition to include Polish designs was the 1939 New York World's Fair. The pieces shown there included organic furniture by Barbara Brukalska, fabrics by "Lad" and metal objects by Henryk Grunwald. In both Paris and New York, Poland also exhibited a number of purely technical products like the *pm 36* locomotive, the *Sokol* [Hawk] motorcycle, the *Los* [Elk] and *Wicher* [Gale] airplanes and a modern operating table. These items, certainly reflecting the influence of American *styling*, were evaluated not for their design but for the technical innovation they embodied. Awareness of modern design only began to take shape in Poland just before World War II and never had the opportunity to take root.

Poland entered the postwar era as a changed country. Its borders were different, as was its political system. It had lost six million inhabitants and vast parts of its industry. Many cities, including the capital of Warsaw, lay in ruins. The country's postwar restoration (and reconstruction) program encompassed all areas of life, the economy and culture included. Design lay where these two met, and in the centrally planned state it was granted specific tasks and organizational forms. As early as 1945, the Ministry of Culture created a Manufacturing Department, which was replaced two years on by the Bureau for the Supervision of Production Aesthetics (BNEP). In 1950 the BNEP's tasks were assumed by the Institute of Industrial Design, which exists to this day. The formation of these organizations was inspired by Great Britain's creation in 1944 of the Council of Industrial Design, which coordinated design contributions to that country's postwar reconstruction. In Poland, new socialist authorities were striving to take control of all manifestations of cultural and economic life, and the creation of such institutions became normal. Yet until the early 1960s, the design model encouraged by these institutions never went beyond the areas delineated by Morris, and designs primarily focused on furniture, fabrics, ceramics, glass items, toys and the like. In the 1940s these items' styling simply reassumed forms developed before the war. Jan Kurzatkowski's furniture, Eleonora Plutynska's

fabrics and Wanda Manteuffel's glass items were based stylistically on the experiences of late 1930s Polish regionalism, while Wladyslaw Strzeminski's fabric designs were a continuation of modernism.

In 1949–56, when Socialist Realism was the reigning artistic doctrine, authorities tried to force designers to apply patterns derived from folk art. Under a program devised by Wanda Telakowska and implemented at the Institute of Industrial Design (Polish abbreviation: IWP), folk artists worked with designers to process traditional ornamentation used in local crafts and adapt it for use in serial production. The program generated interesting results, especially in fabric design, and remained in place to the 1970s. Yet this current proved incapable of creating a model for designing technical items of everyday use that would meet the needs of the postwar reality.

For several years after 1956, during the so-called post-Stalinist "thaw," designers based their patterns on organic forms and abstractionism, which in the preceding years had been treated in communist Poland as "ideologically alien" to socialist culture. At this stage the IWP, designers affiliated with "Lad" and many other artists were eager to make use of them. Abstractionism and organic forms appeared in ceramic objects by Lubomir Tomaszewski, Wit Plazewski and Zofia Palowa, fabrics by Anna Nikolajczuk and Anna Orzechowska, and furniture designed by Maria Chomentowska and Oskar Hansen. Polish designers' application of modern stylistics in the late 1950s failed to extend the range of design beyond the domains of home furnishings, fabrics, clothing and haberdashery. Until this time, the authorities had maintained that designing technical equipment like radios, televisions, telephones, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, and the like, was the task not of designers but of engineers. The Institute of Industrial Design also held this position for a time, which prompted designers, who were demanding change, to react strongly.

This occurred at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, when authorities sought to boost production of exportable goods and realized this would be impossible without appropriate design. First in Warsaw and Krakow and later in other cities, designers made direct contact with elements of the machine industry. The Council for Industrial Design and Production Aesthetics was created in 1959, and this was followed in 1963 by the establishment of the Association of Industrial Designers in Poland, which shortly be-

came a member of the ICSID. "Scientific operationalism," a design method devised at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, also began to influence design. In Poland it was seen as an alternative to consumerist American styling and viewed as adaptable to the conditions of the socialist economy. HfG president Tomás Maldonado's lectures delivered in Warsaw in 1963 proved important. At the country's art colleges, newly created industrial design faculties adopted educational methods partly modeled after those of Ulm while retaining the fine arts as an important component of design education. These assumptions were the basis upon which Andrzej Pawlowski established Poland's first Faculty of Industrial Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow in 1964. Design departments also existed at this time in Warsaw and Gdansk, but they did not turn into faculties until the 1970s.

Poland saw design develop dynamically in the 1960s and 1970s. This might seem a paradox given that the country faced constant troubles and incessantly endured shortages of goods. Despite the absence of a free market, certain mechanisms appeared that forced the centralized socialist system to inject design into many areas of both light and heavy industry. In the early 1960s, authorities already began to see design as a factor that could stimulate the limping economy. On the one hand, it was thought that well-designed items could be exported to the West in exchange for convertible currency; on the other hand, given limited importation of consumer goods, domestic goods needed to be directed onto the internal market and these, of course, also had to be designed. Designers of furniture, fabrics, ceramics and glass goods adopted Scandinavian, and later Italian design, whereas the school at Ulm was referenced for household appliances and audio-visual equipment. There also appeared a number of entirely new and sometimes very original solutions, like the *Alfa* still camera (1959) by Krzysztof Meisner, the *Osa* [Wasp] scooter (1959) designed by Krzysztof Brun, Jerzy Jankowski, Tadeusz Mathia and Krzysztof Meisner, the *Tonette* audio recorder (1964) by Ryszard Patryna and his team, modular furniture (1962) by Boguslawa and Czeslaw Kowalski or the *Radmor* radio (1977) by Grzegorz Strzelewicz. Modern design was most evident in the electronics industry, where the "scientific operationalism" of Ulm had made the greatest inroads.

It seemed initially that design similar in form to western design could exist in socialist countries with their economies based on state monopolies and lack of competition, and that this design would simultaneously lack negative consumerist features. Instead of generating profit, this model of design was entirely state-subsidized, but this aspect perfectly suited the formula of a protective socialist state. In time, however, the systemic errors contained in socialist economic assumptions affected design, despite designers' efforts to grant their work the mark of modernity.

Modern styling was not supported by high quality, and contrary to authorities' expectations Polish goods were not an export hit, selling only on the internal market, in other social countries, and in Third World countries, none of which generated income in convertible currencies. As a result, authorities' interest in the design of consumer goods declined and emphasis was shifted to heavy industry and the design and production of machines, trucks and cranes. The IWP instituted an ergonomic research program and its findings were applied in the design of this machinery, as well as tools, work uniforms and rehabilitation equipment. Many designs, however, never made it into production. The country's low industrial output and generally weak economy meant continuous market shortages that did not favor the introduction of new solutions. Ultimately, at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, Poland's economy collapsed, engendering social revolt, the creation of "Solidarity," the first independent labor union in Eastern Europe, and finally, in December of 1981, the introduction of Martial Law.

Martial Law, the advent of military management of industry and the rationing of basic goods were the final steps in dismantling relations between the manufacturing sector and the market. In the first half of the 1980s, market goods almost entirely ceased to be designed. Exceptions included bedding designed by Violetta Damiecka, Krystyna Arska-Pereplys and Agnieszka Putowska-Tomaszewska, or the wooden toy blocks of Andrzej Latos – items produced because they were inexpensive and did not require modern technologies.[4] The market retreat of this period coincided with a revival of the concept of social design. The IWP produced ergonomic tables and equipment for the disabled. The "Hajnowka" Creative Group developed a system of "growing" furniture for schools. Yet these activities had more significance as propaganda than as practical solutions. Few of the products made it to stores, but they were shown in 1985 at the Institute of Industrial Design in an exhibition tellingly titled *Design – A Socially Useful Art*.

Reversion to the idea of design as a service to society denoted the end of a process, initiated in the early 1960s, aimed at turning design into an integral

part of the economy. Many designers lost their jobs, others emigrated. The extant design model based on design offices that operated in specific industrial sectors collapsed almost entirely. The state-subsidized Institute of Industrial Design and design faculties at art colleges continued to operate, but they had no impact on the market. State-run industry almost entirely lost interest in design, which came to be seen as an additional cost and an impediment to the rhythm of ongoing production.[5] The situation did not begin changing until the late 1980s. Some designers like Tomasz Rudkiewicz, Michal Stefanowski, Grzegorz Niwinski or Wojciech Malolepszy began to produce the items they designed, mainly toys, simple furniture and lamps. On a national scale, these were marginal activities and had no impact on the hopeless situation of design in a country that was headed for another crisis. The problem was ultimately resolved not by the efforts of designers, but by the opening of negotiations between authorities and the opposition in the fall of 1988, and by the subsequent transition to democracy and a free market economy in 1989. From then on, Polish designers faced a completely new challenge – consumer society.

Józef A. Mrozek Ph.D.
Design historian
Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw

1 Similarly, Axeli Gallen-Kallela initiated the "Karelian style" in Finland, and Karoly Kós created the "Transylvanian style" in Hungary; both were to function as national styles in line with the principle of *pars pro toto*.
2 The Polish "wzornictwo" – i.e. design – was not yet in use and would not to appear until 1947. "Utilitarianism" was more akin to the Soviet "productivism." It also expressed the conviction that all the arts, including the applied arts, should be subordinated to architecture, a belief also represented by Walter Gropius among others.
3 Though certainly not to the same degree as for the Italian Futurists.
4 These projects had certain features that are valued today: production efficiency and environmentally friendly technologies. Yet this was not what was chiefly expected of designers at the time. Throughout the 1980s, the paucity of forms of products available in Poland contrasted very strongly with the post-modernism that was fashionable in the West and that for many Poles became a symbol of abundance they could not access.
5 Given a situation where each produced good found a purchaser immediately, while two-three day queues formed for some goods like washing machines, refrigerators or televisions, the idea of product innovation (which always entailed additional costs) incorporated in design must have seemed absurd to economy decision-makers at the time.

PERSPECTIVE TO THE CONFERENCE THEME

Vladimir Sanzharov

Design in Russia on the turn of the century

or Will Russians come?

*The History of Russian design is very old
and very short at the same time.
It has a very dramatic past
and very optimistic future.
I hope.*

Political and economical changes which happened in the Soviet Union in the end of 1980's and in the beginning of 1990's had basically transformed our country and its citizens' lives. New independent states appeared on the ruins of the former Soviet empire. Their borders have divided the united economical, cultural and human space of the former USSR. The Perestroika brought to the citizens of the new-born Russia the new trials and changes of all sides of society's life. Liberalization of the political system has finally opened the borders of the country, and the people received an opportunity to move relatively freely all over the world and to see with their own eyes the life of different countries. Liberalization of the economy opened the way on the inner market of the country for a large quantity of goods of different quality and purpose – from clothes and furniture to complicated hardware and cars. As a result of this the millions of Russians could feel the fullness and variety of the world of things surrounding a man. Thanks to this fact the millions of Russians could understand what exactly was industrial design.

What about the own Russian industry, the above-mentioned changes made a great harm to it. The new borders divided the former economical partners. The goods produced on the Soviet plants and factories could stand no competition with the variety of goods from Europe and Asia. The crisis of 1998 has practically ruined the rests of industry. There was an alteration of ownership, and the most of industrial objects stopped to exist. The market economy of Russia moved in the direction of development of raw materials' industry, using of big storages of oil, gas and other energetical resources. The political and economical changes resulted in the social changes. In the last decade there was a great division of the society. A big enough class of the new owners appeared. Many of them are present on the lists of the most rich men in Europe and the world. There are a

lot of very poor people in Russia – most of them are elderly people who lost their job and couldn't find the occupation for themselves on the new economical terms. Simultaneously a so called middle class is forming from the people of young and middle age who work actively in the most different fields of business and in the industry, the volume of which is increasing. Namely the middle class determines the level of opportunities and needs of society. In modern Russia it achieves the more and more strong positions.

This situation of the last decade resulted in the increasing interest to design. Some of the most useful words in the near past were "perestroika", "deputat", "bandit", "corruptia", "oligarch". Now the word "design" stands in one of the first places in Russia. First of all, the level of consumption of the import goods which are more or less design things is increasing. Most of all, these are the goods of interior design and home use: furniture, audio and video, complicated software. An active growth of buildings of the most different kinds – from modest economical flats to sumptuous apartments involved a great variety of different decorative materials and inviting of designers, decorators, artists whose creative mind allowed to make projects in the context of the existing fashion tendencies in their fields. One should mention the high enough level of artistic education of Russian designers and their increasing technical intellect. But the intention to create designer objects and incorporate them in the ordinary life requires not only technical merits, but readiness of the society in a whole to receive these innovations and to form the culture of their consumption. This problem has, unfortunately, a long history in Russia.

In the beginning of the 18th century the most known cosmopolite of Russia Peter the Great made a lot to enable the Russian empire to take place in a row of the leading West-European countries. Russia certainly could be one of the leading countries on the European continent, but the traditional Russian mentality of "not wanting the changes" stopped this process. However, from the Peter's time namely one counts the beginning of Russian design. A great inventor and mechanic Andrey Nartov has for the first time combined function and beauty – as understood in his times – in the machine-tools created by him for the tzar. Perhaps, Russian design could made a process of its development together with Europe – from handicraft and workshops based on folk traditions, through industrial revolution to mass-production of

useful and beautiful things. But what in Europe developed quickly, in feudal Russia lingered for an age. Only in the second half of the 19th century – to which time the most significant capitalist changes had already happened in Europe – in Russia started to go the same way. Many of the great inventions in the field of energetic sources, means of communication and transport were made in our country then. Russia became one of the most developed capitalist countries in the world and seemingly moved on the principally new level of culture of production and consumption. But the later events gave birth to the great hopes in the beginning and then pushed our country to the position isolated from the world's development.

Two events of the beginning of the 20th century – the First World War and the revolution – made a big influence on the historical way of development and tragically connected the fates of two great countries – Russia and Germany. In the stream of social changes, practically simultaneously in the both countries appeared two new pedagogical schools which had a great influence on the development of the modern architecture and design which has formed as an independent kind of occupation in the 20th century. One year difference between the founding of BAUHAUS in Weimar (1919) и ВХУТЕМАС in Moscow (1920) means that notwithstanding the political shocks of the beginning of the 20th century the necessity of the new look on the forming of the environment of human being was inevitable. The names of Rodchenko, El-Lissitsky, Malevitch, Tatlin and many other artists of avant-garde of the 1920's belong to the world in a whole, but mostly – to Russia. Their original projects of tools, clothes, environment structures could become a ground for a new Russian design based on social utopias. But the totalitarian state refused to receive new ideas and the possible progressive development of design was postponed for several decades. The native design continued to develope in the 1930's and the 1940's, in the same time with the development of the native industry. It is not well known, because the laws of the planned socialist economy were rather spoiling than helping the designers to take part in the progressive development of the native industry.

In the years after the Second World War in Europe and the world the triumphal move of design began. Councils of design were founded in many countries – state structures for promotion of its development. European and American designers

worked actively for resurrection of economy of their countries. In the same time in the Soviet Union "artistic construction" was slowly but purposefully developed – the term "design" was not used according to ideological grounds. In 1962 the All-union Scientific Institute of Technical Aestetics with branches in many big cities was founded. There were made a lot of practical and theoretical works for systematic use of design in industry and other fields of economy. But only 10 % of these works were realised. Unfortunately, in the conditions of communist dictatorship in the USSR design was unpopular. The last event in the field of Soviet design was the creation of the Union of Designers of the USSR. It happened 7 days before the collapse of the USSR. In the years of perestroika the state structure of artistic construction was finally destroyed.

But in the new conditions the new possibilities of creation and development of Russian design appeared. From the end of the 1980's a lot of new private studios of design were organized. A lot of professionals started to work as free lance designers. Many Russian designers have abandoned our country and work successfully in the West. For those, who stayed in Russia a real opportunity opened – to realize themselves in the most popular fields of design: graphic design, interior design and media design. A big market of orders for making corporative company styles, advertising and printing production, projects of apartment and cottage interior, new banks and large offices, fun and trade centres gave a possibility to many professionals to save their high professional level and reach serious creative and career successes.

Until recently there was no demand for interior design, but now in the state circles the subject of transition from raw material economy to productive one appears more and more often. The state begins to understand that it is not possible without design. It happens a little bit late, but better late, than never. "The Conception of Development of Russian Design" accepted by the Russian Government in autumn of 2006 confirms this. Of course, there is a strong Russian tradition to do important things only after the order from high authorities. But without understanding of design's importance as an instrument of social, economic and cultural development of society by the state, its promotion is impossible. It was confirmed by the experience of post-war Europe.

As profession of designer attracts a great interest and is popular among young people, the big changes appeared in the field of education. Not only such classical art high schools as Art and Industrial Academy named by Stiglitz in St. Petersburg, Stroganovsky Art and Industry University in Moscow, Architecture and Art Academy in Ekaterinburg, but dozens of former technical institutes and universities educate designers now all over Russia. The University of Technology and Design in St. Petersburg also belongs to them. It was the first Russian high school which was included in the CUMULUS association. Every year about one hundred young designers graduate from it.

So, there is a real opportunity for creating the most brave designer projects in Russia now, and also in collaboration with European partners. The important factors of development of Russian design still are technical and technology merits of designer activity. The union of intellectual potential, attention to changes, a large market for realisation of design objects gives possibility to hope that on the condition of saving of cultural traditions are already happening the quality changes in the field of design.

May be, Russians are finally going for design.

Vladimir Sanzharov
Dean of Design Faculty
Saint-Petersburg State University of
Technology and Design
Vice-President of Association of
Designers of Russia
18, Bolshaya Morskaya st.
Saint-Petersburg, 191186, Russia
Tel/Fax +7 (812) 315 1349
E-mail: *sanzharov@sutd.ru*

Michal Stefanowski

Design profession in Poland after 1989

1 Glue dispenser for Wekta / designed by MIMO
2 Wooden toy / designed and produced by Novo
**3** Vacuum cleaner for Zelmer / designed by Triada

One of the awarded films shown during last Polish film festival was about Chinese film makers, who came to Poland to make a movie, because they heard that Poles were the most sad people in the world. They were disappointed because they were not so sad, the Chinese've expected.

It was about stereotypes. And what about the stereotype concerning Polish design? Few people abroad and even in Poland realizes that design in Poland exists. But of course, the role it plays could and should be bigger.

So, what was the situation of design in Poland after 1989?

In the end of communist era the situation of Polish state, Polish economy and of Polish design were very bad, but parallely the situation of Polish designers was not hopeless.

The reason was that even during the time of opression, total control and centralisation, this profession, existing since many years, had quite big independence. So, though in the 80-ties majority of the state owned companies were in total crisis and most of in-house design offices were liquidated, Polish designers were ready for the new type of activity. Some of them helped to create foundations of many new born small enterprises created by the people who lost their previous jobs because of most likely political reasons. Designers were suggesting what to produce, with what kind of (usually simple) technology and of course designed the products, name and logo of the company. Other designers invested earned money into their own production. Such were early days of MASS Studio, which is now known as NC Art, of MIMO, now split to Towarzystwo Projektowe and INNO Design and of Karta, which nowadays split to Studio Program and New Product Design. These were also early days of NOVO. [PICT. 1, PICT. 2] This was not a time of huge enterprises with investments of millions of dollars (Euro even didn't exist yet), but it was a time of big challenge. Designers felt that they were responsible for creation and success or failure of the real people's future. With this kind of experience designers were much better than many others in Poland prepared to meet the change of the political and economical system in the

4 Warsaw City Information System / designed by: G. Niwinski,
J. Porebski, M. Stefanowski & team
5 SLIM armchairs for Noti / designed by Towarzystwo Projektowe
6 Tram for PESA / designed by: A. Danielak-Kujda, J. Kukula,
W. Dolatowski

break of 80-ties and 90-ties. The time after the break
can be roughly devided to two phases. Phase 1 since
1989 till 2000 and phase 2 since 2000 till today. Phase
1 was the time of creation of design groups and of
systematical development of Polish SME's, which
transformed from small to medium size enterprises
and were at that time the main partners for Polish
designers. Many of formerly leading big state owned
enterprises were bought by multinational companies
and design for them was imported from abroad. This
was a time when Triada and ERGO design companies
emerged and when untypical company Wzornik,
offering the service of designers to various producers
was created. [PICT. 3] The concioussness of the city
authorities enabled to implement City Information
System in Warsaw. [PICT. 4]

Phase 2, after 2000 started with the crisis of
economy. But after its revival it appeared, that the
perspectives for design became more promising.
Some of former state owned companies finally found
their way of development, many of Polish SME's be-
came real competitors for foreign companies and
some of the latter started to believe, that the cooper-
ation with Polish designers may be reasonable. Good
examples are designs made by Towarzystwo Projek-
towe, Tomasz Augustyniak and Piotr Kuchciński
for Polish furniture industry, as well as designs of
trains and trams made also for Polish producers.

[PICT. 5, PICT. 6] Various Polish companies decided to co-
operate with designers. Danish company's Danfoss
production is based today on the design made by
Studio Program. [PICT. 7] As usual, there is a group of
young designers trying to organize production of
their own ideas. Some of them are quite successful.
Among them are: Puff-Buff, Moho, Jurkowski. [PICT.
8] The others like to provoke and experiment like
Magda Kiełkiewicz with her lamp made of dispos-
able spoons or Piotr Stolarski with the idea of new
material made of plastic bags. [PICT. 9]

And now some facts. The Faculties of Industrial
Design in Poland are located at seven Academies
of Fine Arts, one Technical University and in three

7 Thermoregulators
for Danfoss / designed
by Studio Program & NPD
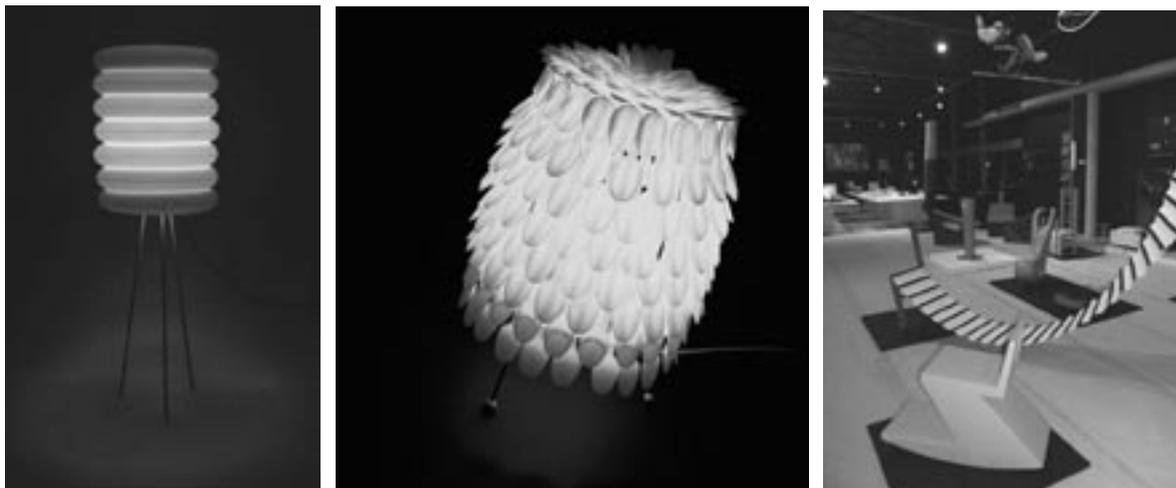
private schools. Every year design schools (in product design) leaves 140 graduates with Masters degree and 320 graduates with Bachelors degree. Number of active product designers in Poland is approximately 350–400, what is just 10% of the potential. Number of all active designers in Poland is approximately 5000–7000. About 10% work as in-house designers. There was no professional research made. All presented figures are estimations of the Association of Industrial Designers in Poland (SPFP) which has existed since 1963 and is a member of ICSID and BEDA.

There was quite a lot of important design related activites after year 2000, which influenced the development of concioussness and knowledge about design in Poland.

These were, among others exhibitions: "DESIGN PL" in Budapest, "Made in Poland" in Frankfurt, "Dealing with Consumption" in St-Etienne and "Meeting" in Warsaw. [PICT.10] Big support design gets from the Institute of Adam Mickiewicz, responsible for the promotion of Polish culture abroad. In 2001 "2+3D" magazine was born. This magazine became a platform of the exchange of ideas for design community. 2005 was the first year of the existence of Silesian Castle of Art and Enterprise in Cieszyn, recently the most active regional design center in Poland. Last January the conference "Design – Culture and Economy" took place in Warsaw. This was a beginning of more sensible dialogue with the representatives of the government. "Strategy of the development of Design in Poland 2007–2020" created by the Association of Industrial Desigers was delivered to the Government and the talks with the Government are going to be continued. The result is unknown, but there is a chance for improvement.

The new Head of the Institute of Design in Warsaw has just been established, so there is a chance for the Institute to become an active partner in the development of design in Poland.

The conclusion of my presentation:

We realize, that there are many others ahead of us and it is not easy to be designer in Poland nowadays, but the "design world" here exists, the quality of design education is quite high, the potential of design community and industrial environment is developing, so, though there is a lot of problems today, the perspectives are promising.

And coming back to the world of films: Though, as shown and said, design in Poland exists, it is not perfect. But as Billy Wilder said in the final scene of "Some like it hot" movie: NOBODY IS PERFECT.

Michal Stefanowski Associate Professor
Head of Department of Design /
Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw
President of SPFP – The Association of
Industrial Designers in Poland
ul. Mysliwiecka 8
00-459 Warszawa, Poland
Fax: +48 22 6281623
michal.stefanowski@asp.waw.pl

Judit Várhelyi

New situation – new reality: new approach, integration and the unifying of Europe

The design profession in Central and East European countries in the period of transition

I.

"Good design is not simply about aesthetics or making a product easier to use. It's a central part of the business process, adding value to products and services and creating new markets."

Well, we all know this. The quotation stands here, because Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom has said that. I do not know whether that meant anything for him and for the design community in the UK – but even if he only mentioned it as a fashion statement on creative industries, it still means that design is talked of. To a certain extent, it is on the agenda. And it shows us how far we still have to reach in Central and Eastern Europe.

It has been more than 15 years since the collapse of the Iron Curtain opened up Central Europe to the World. The map of Europe had to be re-drawn several times, as new countries and borders were defined. East Germany joined West Germany, Czechs and Slovaks parted company peacefully, and Yugoslavia exploded in flames. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, several newly independent countries emerged to form part of the larger region of Central and Eastern Europe. Eight of these countries are now part of the European Union.

For 50 years, following the Second World War, these countries shared a similar fate under Communist regimes –albeit with widely varying degrees of freedom. The post-Communist years were also similar – rapid capitalisation, waves of painful economic reforms, dramatic changes in Government, the bewildering suddenness of change.

Despite the common legacy of the communist era, the region is far from homogeneous. Historical development before the 20th century, languages, religion, size and population – all differ widely from country to country. (At the two extremes, Poland has over 38 million people, while Estonia has 1,4 million. Hungary is middleweight with its 10 million people.)

"Problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

Albert Einstein

Not even a democratic process is clear-cut. As with any kind of upheaval, there were winners and losers – in society as well as in business and design.

A large number of private enterprises started up since the 1990-ies. These start-up businesses and improving living standards created a market for interior design, advertising, graphics and web design. Even name cards were rare prior to 1990, let alone websites, so you can imagine all the work that had to be done. There is a nice story on advertising in Hungary in the 1970-ies. We had an advertisement that said: "Shoes from the shoe shop!" There was only one kind of shop, state owned, so the slogan is totally absurd. Evidently, there was a lot of room for development.

"The most beautiful curve is a rising sales graph."
Raymond Loewy

Contrary to expectations, designers have not all benefited from the free market economy. Product design is an example. During the Communist era, social programs, such as housing development, and large, centralised industrial enterprises provided good employment to designers. Following the political and economic changes, the previous large, centralised industrial conglomerates were chopped up into smaller companies and sold or closed, thus disbanding their in-house design teams. As most large manufacturing operations are now owned by foreign investors, who commission design talent at home, there are practically no in-house jobs for designers. There is a logic to this that is difficult to dispute. Besides manufacturing and services, multinationals (at least in Hungary) commission engineering design and software design locally. Perhaps even marketing materials and advertisements. Product design, however, is a different story. In-house design teams stay close to headquarters in Western Europe and the US, or perhaps to large markets. Free-lance design is commissioned from star designers or from studios located at creative hotspots. While some cities in our region aspire to be creative hothouses, none are quite there yet. However, I have noticed that more and more multinationals collaborate on projects with the design schools in the region. Just a few that I

remember – Ikea and Alessi in Poland, Miele, Braun, Audi and Mercedes Benz in Hungary, Peugeot and VW in Slovakia.

Fashion-sensitive sectors follow a similar logic – even large Hungarian manufacturers buy patterns from trend-setting Italian or Spanish studios that are expected to be in tune with global consumers.

The majority of companies in the Central and Eastern European Region are SMEs (small and medium-size enterprises). Private enterprise was not encouraged during the Communist era, so these are still first-generation SMEs, many of them tiny and family-owned. They often lack capital and are wary of commissioning design. Manufacturers want hard evidence before they commit time and money to something they perhaps feel is irrelevant to their day-to-day working practices.

"Change is fun."
Hartmut Esslinger, frog design

Nonetheless, there are promising signs of improvement. As local manufacturers and service providers start to compete on an international level, they will increasingly realise the benefits of design. On the other hand, designers can also be entrepreneurs – start their own business, engage manufacturers, locate sales channels and hopefully prosper.

"The best way to predict the future is to design it."
Buckminster Fuller

To speed up this process, some countries in the region have established, or are establishing, national design centres as promotional design organisations with the aim to increase public awareness of the importance of design and especially to help SMEs to use design to be more competitive on world markets. For example, over the past five years, the Design Centre of the Czech Republic has been running a Government policy programme called 'Support for Design' to build the design competence of Czech SME's. A new design centre is scheduled to open in Budapest this September, with a similar mandate. Estonia and other Baltic Republics have also started activities for establishing design promotion centres. Estonia has mapped its creative industry and developed the basis for a design policy, in partnership with Danish experts and it is in close cooperation with Finnish design support programmes.

II.

"Change is inevitable. Progress is not."
Bertrand Russell

I think, that all that I said so far is more or less valid throughout the region. In the second part of my presentation, I would like to introduce you to the particular situation in Hungary.

Economic context
Hungary is a country of roughly 10 million people. Almost one fifth of the population lives in Budapest. Just over 50% of the main export is related to the vehicle industry – assembly and parts manufacturing. The main commercial partners are Germany, Austria and Italy. A very large percentage of our companies, 89 % are so called micro companies, employing between 0-9 people.

Designers
There are around 2600 active designers in Hungary. It is only an estimate; precise numbers are hard to produce. The proportions are: 26% graphic design, 25% textile and fashion, 20% interior design. Architects are not included in this number. The oldest school is the Moholy-Nagy Art University that was founded 125 years ago. In the last 10 years, some Technical Universities also established design courses.

Organisations
I see collaboration as the key issue. Despite the relatively small size of the country, the Design profession in Hungary is fragmented and is plagued by the lack of communication and collaboration. We need to build a functional network to strengthen and protect us. All of our organisations are small, so we need to pool knowledge and resources and avoid duplicating projects.

Hungarian Design Council
My organisation, the Hungarian Design Council is a Governmental advisory body with an attached promotional office. Our main task is to influence policy issues, but we also promote the awareness of design as a powerful tool for progress, and the role of designers in society and industry.

The Council is the legal successor to the Industrial Design Council, established in 1975 (known as the Design and Ergonomics Council since 1991). The

Council was re-founded in 2001 by Government Decree.

The list of 15 Council Members reveals the intention to connect design to other areas. Besides design experts, there are representatives from the government, design schools and the business sector, as well as a sociologist and a journalist. The Hungarian Patent Office, the President of which also serves as Chairman of the Council, provides our funding.

The Council oversees the yearly Hungarian Design Awards and the Moholy-Nagy László Design Grant. The Awards were granted for the 27th time this year and are currently exhibited in Budapest, in the Museum of Applied Arts. The Grant is 17 years old. It is open for designers under the age of 35 and provides a monthly stipend for 3 years.

The Design Terminal
The Hungarian Design Council has lobbied the Government for several years to re-establish the Design Center in Budapest. The old Centre belonged to the Chamber of Commerce, which closed in 1990. The Design Terminal, a public benefit company, was established in temporary offices in 2004. They are scheduled to move to the former long-distance bus station at the centre of Budapest in September.

The Centre is expected to become a strong link in the Hungarian design-network both as an event organiser and as a bridge between Designers and Clients, providing business support, running a website, organising events and exhibitions.

Regional Networking
The Hungarian Design Council organised a Regional Meeting in the autumn of 2004 in Budapest, where representatives of regional design-associations and promotional organisations met to take up the lost threads of a previously strong informal network. This summer, the host of the Regional Meeting was the Silesian Castle of Art and Enterprise in the Polish-Czech border town, Cieszyn.

Using this network, the Hungarian Design Council created a database of design-related organisations, associations and schools in Central and Eastern Europe. Available online in English, the database covers twenty countries. The aim of the database is to connect – to facilitate regional interchange, to open up channels of communication to the World.

Icsid (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design) is the world organisation of design. I was elected to the Icsid Executive Board by the

General Assembly last September. I would like to use this chance to raise the profile of design in our region, as well as to engage more fully with global debates and interactions. The wealth of knowledge that Icsid possesses through its member organisations could be also used to engage our national governments at the policy level. We also have to explore the benefits of a stronger regional interaction, perhaps even a common voice.

Judit Várhelyi Director
Hungarian Design Council
Board Member of icsid (2005–2007)
po Box 552
1370 Budapest, Hungary
varhelyi@hpo.hu
www.mft.org.hu

Experience

Director of the Hungarian Design Council
Freelance designer and consultant in Budapest
    from 2000 to 2002.
Lecturer at the Szt. István University.
Freelance designer, lecturer and interpreter in Tokyo
    from 1994 to 2000.
Architect at Nikken Sekkei Japan from 1991 to 1994.
National Contact for easa (European Architectural
    Student Assembly) from 1986 to 1988.

References

Study on the Design Sector by the Design Centre
    Kft. 2001
Economic data from the Ministry of Economy and
    Transport, 2005

Andrzej Jan Wroblewski

The crossroads of design

An important aspect of design education, which ought to be considered in planning of educational programs, is a temporal gap between the students undertaking their study and the moment when the outcomes of their learning will be applied and will exert an influence on the market. Today, this temporal gap is more significant than ever, due to the unprecedented pace of the emergence of new technologies and changes in our living environment. Today, it is much more difficult to predict what these challenges will be in five years or so. Only thirty years ago, a cycle of innovation – from the conception of a new design idea to its large-scale implementation – required several years to complete. Today, this period has, in many cases, been reduced to just a few months – with all the good and the bad that comes with it. New products attract clients by their apparent - real or illusionary – innovation. Over time, we become conditioned to accept the innovations as standards that we ought to embrace in our lives, even if we face a challenge trying to adapt to such rapid changes. To be a part of the world today we feel pressured to conform to the requirements of change even if we derive little or no benefit from the proposed "improvements." Capitalist economy driven by the pursuit of profits has manipulated the markets to induce "planned innovation" which results in us being offered products today that tomorrow will intentionally be outdated or even obsolete. A good example are developments in the software industry where new products continue to create the need for more sophisticated hardware. I am sure many of us can remember the moment when we purchased "the last computer that we will ever need," which seemed to have an infinite range of possibilities and which appeared able to satisfy all of our current and future needs - only to require, within a year or two, a replacement because of some additional features that are now necessary in order for us to benefit from the most recent upgrades.

This comes in a collision course with any notion of environmental sustainability and results in a terrible waste of money, energy, and natural resources. It leads to environmental pollution and, most of all; it deprives us of the sense of stability in our environment.

A good example of a manufactured product that has emerged and proliferated without an adequate and responsible consideration of all its cultural, social and environmental consequences is a car.

At the level of an individual, and his or her family, a car has dramatically impacted on daily habits and lifestyle. In terms of a family budget, a car is typically the second highest expenditure next only to a home mortgage. It has caused us to re-place walking with driving. In many North American neighborhoods sidewalks have completely disap-peared, and people routinely drive even to the corner store instead of taking a walk.

Ironically, the same individuals are encouraged to purchase exercise equipment for their homes or enroll in public gyms where they spend hours walking on treadmills and lifting weights to avoid atrophy of their muscles.

On the scale of a city or a country, a car has led to very significant changes in urban and regional planning. Demands of car traffic have altered urban and rural landscapes by construction of new roads and highways, introduction of streetlights, road signs, park meters, gas stations, parkings and parkades and proliferation of streets that have consumed signifi-cant amounts of space in the cities. What used to be mostly pedestrian walkways have been replaced by streets dominated by car traffic where it is often difficult, if not impossible to even cross the street.

On the global scale, the impact of a car on air pol-lution has altered microclimates of major metropolis, such as Los Angeles or Tokyo. In recent years, we have experienced new catastrophic weather anoma-lies, very likely caused by the global warming. Most alarming symptoms of this troubling phenomenon induced, according to many scientific authorities, by our indiscriminate consumption of fossil fuels and its polluting effects on the environment, include more frequent and more powerful hurricanes, trop-ical storms, excessive floods and severe droughts. These concerns are particularly valid in the context of the rapid industrialization and motorization of the two world's largest populations – China and India – which until very recently have predominantly relied on natural or collective means of transportation.

Regretfully, forces that drive market economy are often blind to what Al Gore has called an "inconve-nient truth"- the existing knowledge and evidence of the impact of our civilization on the degradation of natural environment. A shortsighted politics of quick and easy profits discounts the significance of scientific findings that warn us about the disastrous consequences of this impact.

A car is only one example of a product, which, over the course of less than a century, has dramat-ically changed our lifestyles and the world we live in. Over the past fifty years, our lives have also been dramatically changed due to the unprecedented growth in the mass production of all sorts of electron-ic devices, with computers being a prime example.

Who could have predicted, even in the 1990s, that miniaturization of electronic devices and the effi-ciency and power of processors and computer chips will reach their current capacity? Who could have predicted such a quick and far-reaching explosion of the internet, which has so significantly impacted on our lives by changing the ways in which we communicate, shop, bank, organize enterprises or take university courses – and which has had such a powerful effect on businesses and service providers in so many sectors of the economy? World press, media and advertising industries have greatly bene-fited from all these advances in information technol-ogy and over the course of one generation have revolutionized global visual culture. Popularization of the means of creation of pictorial imagery has sat-urated our visual environments with imagery pro-duced with ease but often without much understand-ing of its formal, aesthetic and semiotic impact – and its moral consequences. To put it simply, production of visual imagery that can be easily and widely dis-seminated has moved from a territory reserved for those with special skills, abilities, and understanding to a public realm. A simple training in the use of a digital camera or a software package and basic com-puter literacy have replaced the need for education that historically allowed image makers to understand the intersection between the formal, the aesthetic and the semiotic aspects of images and allowed them to meaningfully reflect on how their creations are related to the environment in which they were destined to function. The ease of creation of visual imagery combined with ignorance of its nature have lead to a visual chaos which marks contemporary societies and to the emergence of environments where we increasingly loose the capacity to grasp the significance of visual forms. New technologies have also contributed to a mini-revolution within the cul-tural sphere in inducing behaviors that facilitate the ease and speed of human exchanges, often at the expense of the quality and subtleties of these com-munications.

This example illustrates how one of the most fundamental devices of a culture – written language – has become impacted by the proliferation of electronic forms of human exchange.

MSN "language"	English translation
J: Hey bro, u got a min?	Hey brother, do you have time to talk?
A: Ay, plz hold a sec	Yes, please hold on a second
J: B4 u do anthng, are u gonna go to see that movie tmr?	Before you do anything are you going see that movie tomorrow?
A: O mg, wait a sec k?	Oh my God, wait a second, OK?
J: kk…..	OK,OK
A: hey ig2g, cya tmr,	I have to go now, see you tomorrow,
J: k, ttyl	OK, I will talk to you later

I have already eluded to some of the impacts of industrialization and the very rapid introduction of innovation on the environment and its sustainability. I would like now to turn to yet another layer of this impact – the one that exercises itself within personal realms and affects our sense of comfort, stability and belonging. As recently as hundred years ago one was born and died in a world known since one's childhood. This created a sense of stability and security and had an impact on a lifestyle that allowed for a gradually increasing understanding of "the rules of the game" over one's lifetime.

Today, we are born in one world, live our childhood in another, our adolescence takes us to yet another world, and our adulthood and old age find us in environments that are distinctly different from what we have earlier experienced and which are often difficult for us to understand. Naturally, world has always been changing, but in a more distant past, the dynamics of this change affected a life of an individual only in modest ways. Today, the changes seem to be happening faster than what we have been genetically programmed to comfortably accommodate.

There are three key factors that contribute to this lack of stability in our environment, two of which I have already discussed: 1) the abundance and speed of innovation facilitated by technological advancement and 2) the nature of market economy which leads to the creation and proliferation of products that are designed to soon become obsolete and thus generate the need for new products.

The third factor is something that the world of design and design education have the power to directly influence: the position of the designer and his or her individual social profile in relation to his or her social responsibilities for the function and life span of the products that they design. I am speaking here specifically of the phenomenon that has its roots in the history of design education in art schools, which has emphasized originality of the form, uniqueness of the object's aesthetic expression and individuality of the designer as manifested in his products. In a way that mimics recognition of achievement in art, designers have been encouraged to develop their own "style" to make a personal signature on their inventions. Yet, the responsibility of designers who generate ideas for products that will be mass-produced is different than that of artists whose creations operate on a much smaller scale.

What is generated in the professional art circles has an impact predominantly restricted to the cultural elites and only in very minimal, if any, ways impacts on the broader society.

The impact of the mass produced objects is, on other hand, much more powerful. They proliferate and create conditions that change people's habits and behaviors; they re-organize the space in which we live; they lead to prioritization and re-prioritization of various daily functions. To a large extent, designers have a great influence over the direction of changes in our lives and lifestyles, over the directions in which civilized societies continue to evolve, and over the ways in which the natural environment, which we have inherited, becomes transformed as a result of our existence.

Design can either support the consumer market "rollercoaster" or to be a means to introduce new products with a foresight and care, leading only to the truly needed changes in the natural, material and cultural environments.

How can design education contribute to this alternative future of design?

Firstly, I believe that design programs ought to become broader in their scope to allow future designers to explore issues of ethics, ecology, and economy so in designing products they will more readily consider the various "side effects" of introducing a new product and will be able to assess the multiple layers of its social, cultural and environmental impact.

Secondly, I would argue that the "art" orientation of design ought to be reconsidered. It seems to me that time has come to seek the basis on which to build reputation and status of designers, other than the "artistic uniqueness" of their products. The design community has the power, and I would say an

obligation, to collectively work towards a rewards system that would shift the value from the "innovation at all cost" to the adaptation of the newest technologies towards creation of designs that are derived from thoughtfulness, social and environmental responsibility and cultural sensitivity. Designs fitting the latter requirements frequently result not from the "original" idea, but rather from the designer's ability to build on earlier inventions and move them to another level of performance excellence.

Let me illustrate the two approaches.

SET 1 These three acclaimed designs strike by their originality, departure from conventions, and an unusual use of forms and materials. They brought recognition and praise for the designers, despite the fact that they have likely caused, I would speculate, a fair share of physical discomfort to those who spent any time sitting on these chairs – and have added much to the landfills, as a consequence of their manufacturing process.

SET 2 The alternative pursuit in design, driven by the notion of improvement rather than change for the sake of change, is well illustrated in this next set of examples.

Set 1   **Set 2**

Allen Jones, 1969

Marcel Brauer, 1931

Joe Colombo, 1970

Alvar Aalto, 1939

Robert Venturi / Barcelona Rattan, 1993

Noboru Nakamura, 1970

The first armchair was designed in the early 1930s by Marcel Brauer and combined the use of elasticity of metal tubes and softness of fabric. A very similar design idea surfaced later in the decade in a bent wood and fabric armchair designed by Alvar Aalto. Some forty years later, benefiting from more advanced techniques in wood processing, Noboru Nakamura designed a new armchair for IKEA, which combined efficiency in the manufacturing process with reduction in the production costs; consideration for the ease and economy of the transport; and the ability for the consumer to "update" the chair over time by providing replacement cushions in a variety of fabrics and colors. Most importantly, this chair is manufactured without any significant waste of materials. Since its introduction on the market, Nakamura's chair has been consistently included in IKEA catalogues and continues to be popular among consumers as one of the most comfortable armchairs. In my view, design community and design education should encourage designers to create products that represent these qualities.
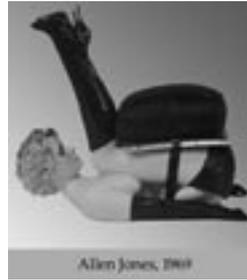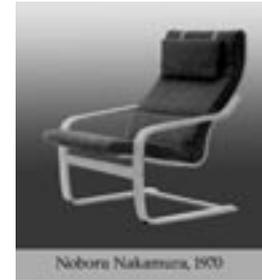
Thirdly, mass manufactured products generally do not emerge as individualistic creations, but rather as the outcomes of collaboration of multidisciplinary teams. They require people with various types of expertise to come together – and with the narrowing of the areas of expertise and the idiosyncrasies of their respective languages and perspectives, it is increasingly challenging for the "outsiders" to meaningfully connect. There is a need to create an interdisciplinary awareness of one's professional activity and to facilitate social networks that support interdisciplinary endeavors.

From birth to death human-designed and manufactured objects that shape our behaviors and lifestyles surround us. Our physical and mental well-being, comfort and sense of security are determined to a large extent by these objects. Will they threaten our existence by destroying biological integrity of nature, by wasting natural resources, polluting water, air and landfills; by seducing us to generate more and more financial resources to acquire them, at the expense of family time, recreation and other human-

istic pursuits; by increasingly blurring the boundaries between the real and the virtual with the accompanying sense of abandonment of ethical and moral responsibilities? Or will they improve the quality of our lives by allowing us to live lives that are healthier and fuller in a world that protects natural and cultural environments and proudly passes them on to the next generation?

In my view, these questions should be of a primary concern to designers, design educators and to the students of industrial design.

Andrzej Jan Wroblewski Professor Emeritus
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. usa
206-5639 Hampton Place
Vancouver, b.c. v6t 2h6, canada
wroblewski03@hotmail.com

Cumulus members 6/2006

AUSTRALIA
► National Institute of Design, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne
► Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Melbourne

AUSTRIA
► The University for Applied Science (JOANNEUM), Graz
► University of Art and Design Linz
► Salzburg University of Applied Science, Salzburg
► Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien

BELGIUM
► Katholieke Hogeschool Limburg, Academy for Media and Design, Genk

CANADA
► Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Vancouver

CHILE
► Instituto Profesional DuocUC, Santiago

CHINA
► School of Design, Central Academy of Fine Arts CAFA, Beijing
► School of Design, Hunan University, Changsha
► Hong Kong Polytechnic School of Design, Hong Kong
► Shandong University of Art and Design (SUAD), Jinan
► Caup Tongji University, Shanghai

CZECH REPUBLIC
► Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design Prague

DENMARK
► Aarhus School of Architecture, Aarhus
► Danmarks Designskole Copenhagen
► Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Copenhagen
► Designskolen Kolding

ESTONIA
► Estonian Academy of Arts Tallinn

FINLAND
► University of Art and Design Helsinki UIAH, coordinator of Cumulus
► Häme Polytechnic, Wetterhoff, Hämeenlinna
► Lahti Polytechnic, Institute of Design, Lahti
► University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design, Rovaniemi
► EWTEK, Vantaa

FRANCE
► Ecole de design Nantes Atlantique, Nantes
► Institut d'Arts Visuels (I.A.V.) d'Orléans
► Ecole Boulle, Paris Institute of Art and Design France
► Ecole Duperré, Paris Institute of Art and Design France
► Ecole Estienne, Paris Institute of Art and Design France
► Ecole de Communication Visuelle, Paris, Bordeaux, Aix-en-Provence and Nantes
► Ecole Supérieure d'Arts Graphiques et d'Architecture Interieure-Design ESAG-Penninghen, Paris
► ENSAAMA – Olivier de Serres, Paris
► ENSCI/Les Ateliers – Ecole Nationale Superieure de Creation Industrielle, Paris
► Strate College Designers, Paris
► Ecole Régionale des Beaux-Arts de Saint-Etienne (ERBASE)
► Ecole Internationale de Design (EID), Toulon

GERMANY
► Köln International School of Design (KISD), Cologne
► Universität Duisburg-Essen, Department of Design, Essen
► Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle
► Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach am Main
► Pforzheim University of Applied Sciences, Pforzheim
► Fachhochschule Schwäbisch Gmünd, Hochschule für Gestaltung, Schwäbish Gmünd

GREAT BRITAIN
► The Arts Institute at Bournemouth
► The Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow
► London Metropolitan University, Sir John Cass, London
► Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication London
► School of Art & Design, University of Salford

GREECE
► Technological Educational Institution (T.E.I) of Athens

HUNGARY
► University of Arts and Design Budapest

ICELAND
► Iceland Academy of the Arts Reykjavik

IRELAND
► National College of Art and Design Dublin
► School of Art, Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin

ITALY
► Free University of Bolzano
► Domus Academy SpA, Milan
► Istituto Europeo di Design Milano, Milan
► Politecnico di Milano, Milan
► The University of Rome, "La Sapienza", Rome

JAPAN
► Kyoto Seika University, Faculty of Art, Kyoto

LATVIA
▸ Art Academy of Latvia, Riga

LEBANON
▸ Lebanese American University, Beirut

LITHUANIA
▸ Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts, Vilnius

MEXICO
▸ Escuela Nacional de Artes Plasticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

THE NETHERLANDS
▸ Design Academy Eindhoven
▸ Royal Academy of Art, The Hague
▸ Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam
▸ Utrecht School of the Arts, Utrecht

NEW ZEALAND
▸ School of Design, Unitec, Auckland
▸ Victoria University of Wellington, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Wellington

NORWAY
▸ Bergen National Academy of the Arts, Bergen
▸ Akershus University College, Blaker
▸ Oslo National Academy of the Arts (ONAA), Oslo
▸ Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO), Oslo
▸ Oslo University College, Oslo

POLAND
▸ Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow
▸ Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw

PORTUGAL
▸ Escola Superior de Design (IADE), Lisbon
▸ ESAD – Escola Superior de Artes e Design, Senhora da Hora

REPUBLIC OF KOREA
▸ Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, KAIST, Daejon
▸ Kookmin University Seoul

RUSSIA
▸ Moscow State University of Design and Technology, Moscow
▸ Saint Petersburg State University of Technology and Design, Saint Petersburg

SINGAPORE
▸ Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore

SLOVAKIA
▸ Academy of Fine Arts and Design Bratislava

SLOVENIA
▸ Academy of Fine Art and Design, University of Ljubljana
▸ Department of Textiles, University of Ljubljana

SPAIN
▸ Escola Superior de Disseny Elisava Barcelona
▸ The School of Design, The University Cardenal Herrera CEU, Valencia

SWEDEN
▸ Högskolan i Borås
▸ Dept. of Product and Production Development, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg
▸ Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts , Gothenburg University, Gothenburg
▸ HDK Stenebyskolan, Gothenburg University, Gothenburg
▸ School of Design, University of Kalmar
▸ The Programme of Industrial Design, Lund Institute of Technology (LTH), Lund
▸ Beckmans College of Design, Stockholm
▸ Konstfack Stockholm
▸ Institute of Design, Umeå University, Umeå

SWITZERLAND
▸ University of Art and Design FHNW, Aarau & Basel

▸ Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne
▸ Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Luzern
▸ Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Zürich

TAIWAN
▸ National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Yunlin

TURKEY
▸ Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul

USA
▸ Maryland Institute, College of Art (MICA), Baltimore
▸ Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design, Denver
▸ Art Center College of Design, Pasadena
▸ Rhode Island School of Design, Providence

Publications in Cumulus Working Papers Series