

Gallery of contemporary art and publication - Promoting recent art and young artists, Creating a space appealing to all the senses

Cristina-Mihaela Ifrim¹

Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Politehnica University of Timisoara, Romania¹
ciatna@yahoo.com¹

ABSTRACT

Art has always been associated with the idea of beauty, perfection, from the use of perspectives to the inclusion of the golden section. The themes, events and characters that seem to be from another world and the artists were looking for perfection. As the time went by, however, the vision of the artist has changed with the world, and now in contemporary art perfection is no longer the aspiration of the artist, but from the artist's point of view it often shows the world as it is, far from perfect. Contemporary art is much more experimental and deals with topics that the public can relate to, having an impact on today's society. Visiting the contemporary art galleries and museums becomes an experience that involves the public at much higher level than a traditional one and the limit between art and the public almost does not exist.

Keywords: contrast new-old, recent art, versatility, reversibility, contemporary, color, fusion of styles.

I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary art is generally considered to have been produced after the mid-20th and 21st centuries. Contemporary art has new means by which artists can convey their vision using new technologies or materials. In addition, to other eras in art, this is defined by diversity and does not necessarily take into account a certain tendency or style being a much more personal art. Contemporary art contains various topics involving different cultures. The art represents a cultural dialogue approaching topics which people can relate to. Contemporary art can be defined as a breakthrough of art, of the world and which provokes public reactions being much more experimental and in which the line between art and viewers almost no longer exists, the interaction with the art is encouraged actually.

II. CONTEMPORARY ART

II.1. History of contemporary art

Even though from the international point of view the 60s seem to be the beginning of the contemporary art, the term “contemporary” appears from the end of the 50’s when the need for delimitation between modern and contemporary begins to be needed. Of course the need to create a contemporary art museum arises because many artists did not find their place in traditional museums. The New Museum in New York, which was established in 1977 as an alternative to the museums of the time like the MoMA, began with the creation of semi-permanent collections that included works of art that could not be found in a traditional museum such as dematerialized art, conceptual art, performance art or process based art. This museum focused on contemporary art and the collections were completely changed after a decade, the works being sold and thus removed from the collection. However, this model of collection was also found in 1818 at the “Musée de Luxembourg” in Paris which became the Museum of the living artists and came into opposition with the Louvre which included historical artists. These museums had fluid collections that did not follow a correct history of contemporary art. The first director of the New Museum acknowl-

edged that this way of collecting refused access to the past and there was no dialogue between past and present [1].

Something very common in museums and art galleries, both past and present, are solo collections, personalized representing the artist’s individuality and vision. Although these collections offer an interesting and dynamic status, a permanent collection should not be lacking. Such a collection relates to the past and this allows good communication with the new acquisitions that direct the perception towards the future, but the museum / gallery has a commitment to the past. Most contemporary art museums initially represented local heritage, and then introduced current or individual collections with a particular theme.

If we look at things on a global scale, defining the beginning of contemporary art is impossible to find being a moving target. With the evolution of time this point in time which would suppose the moment when the contemporary period began has changed.

Until the end of the 1990s the contemporary was synonymous with the post-war period (after 1945) the 60s were and are still considered the years in which the contemporary began but some historians consider the 60/70 to be a late modernism. Others argue that after the fall of communism in 1989, the contemporary actually began. The definition of the moment from which the contemporary began tends to differ from country to country, as an example for China is the late 1970s while in India it is the 1990s [1].

Even though the subject is highly debated, many historians consider the 1960’s to be the end of modernism and thus the beginning of the contemporary.

II.2 Major movements of contemporary art

The major movements approached by contemporary artists are Pop Art, Photorealism, conceptual art which started in its turn and minimalism and performing art. Other movements are installation art and street art. Pop Art is considered one of the first movements of the contemporary. Leading artists of the movement are Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, and this

movement is defined by the interest of portraying mass culture and re-imagining commercial products as accessible art. The movement lasted from the 50's to the early 70's, but it came back to be Neo-Pop Art in the 80's.

Conceptualism appeared formally as a movement in the 1960s, but it developed in the 21st century and is a very valid form of artistic expression even today. Minimalism materialized in the 1960s and is relevant today both in contemporary art, but also in architecture and interior design.

Performance art combines theater with visual art, transmitting a social message with a strong expression. This movement appeared in the 60's. Installation art is an immersive art environment being very experimental. Street art begins in the 80s with graffiti art as a social activism movement [2].

II.3. Contemporary art in Romania

Contemporary art in an art gallery creates a unique experience for the public that engages them to react and interact with it.

In Romania, the beginning moment of the contemporary is the fall of communism in 1989. After communism, the freedom of artists to convey their vision of the world and of life became something normal again. Over time, contemporary art has developed, and in recent years it has become quite visible in the Western space. Due to the events organized by the commercial galleries in the cities of Cluj, Timișoara and Bucharest, the Romanian art has become much more visible. The Romanian artistic landscape seems very dynamic and vibrant, and among the important events are "Mapping Bucharest" from the Vienna Biennale, Art Encounters from Timisoara and Romania's participation in many international art fairs and the Venice Biennale [3].

In Romania the movements approached are varied, but one can meet conceptualism, minimalism, performance art, installations and street art, and artists use different techniques on topics such as the communist period, world view and social topics. Of course, even as local contemporary art progresses, there are unfortunately shortcomings such as research and publications, lack of art in the

public space, lack of funds and also the disappearance of art galleries in the Romanian space without a stable art market. Two galleries chosen from the Romanian space are examples to follow, both showing excellent strategies and a portfolio with which they can be proud of, contributing to the local contemporary art course, but not only.

III. ART GALLERIERS, MUSEUMS, STRATEGIES AND CONCEPTS

III.1. Mobius gallery

The Mobius Gallery is one of the most important art galleries in Bucharest and was founded in 2015 by Mira Burke and Roxana Gamart becoming a platform for the representation of contemporary art artists in Eastern Europe.

Their mission is to promote artists with names that do not have a certain fame on the market, but which present a vibrant art.

In addition to exhibitions, the gallery has events with artists who talk about their art and hold a publication. The artists they collaborate with are: Adi Tudose, AES+F, Andrei Gamart, Bianca Mann, Codruța Cernea, CrocodilePOWER, Lea Rasovszky, Roman Țolici, Sándor Szász, Sasha Bandi. The gallery has an opening for both Romanian and non-Romanian artists [4]. The exhibition space is a modern one like in figure 1, 2, being an open space with a certain dynamic.

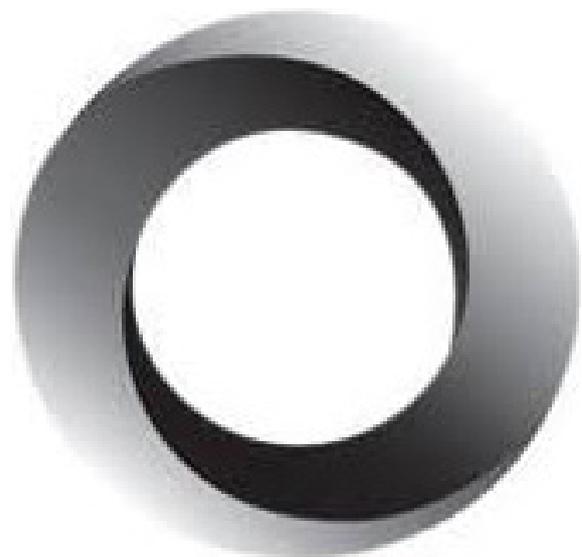


Fig. 1. Mobius Gallery interior space [5]



Fig. 2. Mobius Gallery interior space [6]

III.2. H'art Gallery

The H'ART Gallery, like in figure 3, is one of the first contemporary art galleries in Romania (the second private gallery). The gallery was opened at the end of 2002. The mission of the gallery is to promote young artists, so exhibitions and paintings, like in figure 4, include works by artists after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The artists with whom the H'ART gallery collaborated have become quite important for contemporary art in Romania. among which: Alexandru Paul, Florin Ciulache, Ion Bârlădeanu, Michele Bressan, Ștefan Triffa, Anca Mureșan, Adrian Preda, Nicolae Comanescu, Tets Ohnari, Gili Mocanu, Suzana Dan. Ion Bârlădeanu being an artist whose story was represented in the documentary "The World According To Ion B" which won an Emmy award. The artist was a street man who made collages from newspapers and magazines and was discovered by the gallery owner, Dan Popescu [7].



Fig. 3. H'ART Gallery logo [8]



Fig. 4. H'ART Gallery – interior view [9]

III.3. Strategy

In addition to the way art pieces are exposed to the public, it is very important that the gallery has a strategy to approach and manipulate depending on the context.

The lack of a strategy can be one of the reasons why many contemporary art galleries in Romania fail to last very long. Architecture should not overwhelm the exposed art or suffocate it, instead it should become an experimental space. All the three museums that are the basis of the analysis, represent three different strategies but they have one thing in common: they all try to represent the interests and history of those citizens who are marginalized, disregarded and do not follow a recognized mainstream trend, but appeal to an expanded one. Range of artifacts that include contemporary art in generally valid or locally valid historical themes. Since many states avoid funding this area of culture, many museums or galleries depend on funding. Since the beginnings of contemporary art, there is an attempt to delineate what we consider modern and what we consider historical. Many museums / galleries also repeat at the present time art that addresses historical themes and tries to frame contemporary art in the past. An example of such a theme would be communism, a theme often addressed in contemporary art. As we mentioned the fall of the communist regime in Romania restored the freedom of the artists and without these limitations we could consider this the point where contemporary art began in the country, considering that each country / state has developed according to these political milestones. From a cultural point

of view, contemporary art is important, and galleries or museums must create a direction for it. Timeliness is an important factor and it must be remembered that the current art will have a future and will be admired with the nostalgia with which the world today regards the historical art.

III.4. Van Abbemuseum

This museum was founded in 1936 and occupies two buildings, one of them from 1936, and the second one is post-war opened in 2003. Under the leadership of Charles Esche, the museum is very experimental using the resources of the museum, these being collections, archives and library. He chose to represent the heritage through small collections called "Connections" with different topics having discrete installations without a historical narrative. He used his own resources in an innovative way that makes connections between works. He restored the works acquired by the previous director and all this brought in a new way. Part of this path was the desire for the museum to become a "museum museum" or a "collection collection". One of the collections was around Cubism, bringing for the first time to Palestine a work signed by Picasso, which is the center of the collection. The museum emphasizes communism and the possibility that this regime will return [1].

III.5. Reina Sofia

Founded in 1992, it occupies two huge buildings in central Madrid. Due to the position there is no problem that this museum would not have visitors and this fact allowed the focus on the way of exhibiting the works. This museum has a more classical approach. The museum presents temporary collections, but the permanent collection has undergone changes in the last decades, the approach being the representation of the country's colonialist past, framing its history in a wider international context. Although the galleries present art considered modern rather than contemporary, the way they chose to exhibit it is certainly contemporary. Part of the strategy is to use art works as documentation. Out of solidarity for the intellectual culture, this museum introduced an educational program for the young population [1].

III.6. Mueem Ljubana

Opened in 2011 in a former military base in Yugoslavia. It is worth mentioning that this museum cannot be compared to the other two museums from a financial point of view, but it becomes an example for a museum with a smaller budget in a city where contemporary art is not developed. This museum recovers the history of the country even though it is considered controversial because it brings with it emotionally sensitive topics of citizens, addressing moments that have devastated the region. The exhibition of works is organized into categories with themes of time in chronological order highlighting key periods. The present is played out since the fall of communism. Since the state cut funding for culture, the museum has introduced the rehearsal, bringing back previous collections starting with the first collection [1].

III.7. Study conclusions and concept

By analyzing the history of contemporary art as well as the strategies adopted by museums and galleries, a strategy for the proposed gallery can be defined.

A gallery is a powerful pillar in today's art world. In this space, artists can make their debut in art, being brought to the world as Ion Bârlădeanu exemplified, managing to change their lives because their talent was recognized. The characteristics of the galleries as well as the problems that may arise during the course influence the progress of the art or the public's interest in the recent art, thus identifying them can be taken into account in the proposed strategy, but all the given examples have shown flexibility in being able to modify the strategy depending on the context.

Y (young art) being the main objective of the gallery promoting young artists (bringing them to the attention of the local public but not only), the new art, while following the course of local contemporary art and helping to identify a direction in this era of art.

Dialogue with the public is important in creating a cultural conversation, the gallery also includes events with artists. Taking into account that art publications are missing in the Romanian space, the proposal also includes a gallery publication.

The role of a publication is important, bearing in mind that where it exists, that for example the Mobius Gallery can monitor both the process of art and artists, as well as archive previous themes and exhibitions. The connection with the past being important it is desired that at the beginning of the gallery's activity it should include events with local artists who have well-known public names. The past in contemporary art in Romania is not so far away, but it includes topics and topics addressed by artists that were relevant and represents the process of contemporary art. An important aspect is the contribution of placing contemporary art and Romanian artists on the world map.

IV. EXAMPLES

IV.1 Hongkun Art Gallery

This gallery is located in Beijing, China. The interior has a sculptural character being made up of several arches that can be found throughout the space. The concept of the gallery is the spatial rendering of a ribbon that travels throughout the space. The style approached is minimalist, like in figure 5, 6, allowing the art to unfold without distraction. Architects: Penda. Surface: 2000 square meters. Year: 2013 [10].



Fig. 5. Hongkung art gallery [11]

Although the space is minimalist, the sculptural character gives it complexity without distracting from the exposed works of art. The textures are uniform and the color when used is very unsaturated creating very clearly defined lines almost graphic. The ventilation system is visible but the space is high enough that it is not so present for the users of the space, the installation being also white. The floor plan is very present due to the color used. The space is open and airy. De-

posits are made in such a way that they are not detectable and artificial lighting is aided by the presence of natural light. Lighting is focused on the exposed works.



Fig. 6. Hongkung art gallery [11]

This gallery is considered a good example because of its concept: the gallery has a unique architectural identity regardless of the collection on display.

IV.2. "CASA NEAGRA DIN PRIMAVERII"

The Black House is located in Bucharest and is the Museum of Recent Art (MARE). It is located on the Boulevard Primăverii, figure 7, in the luxury area of Bucharest, replacing a villa from the interwar period. On the plot of the museum there was a villa in the strange, but the nice neo-Florentine / Neo-Venetian / neomauro style that, in the 1930s, coexisted with modernism, Art Deco or the last neo-Romanian style Mohicans. The house with shaken history was also inhabited by the feared Ana Pauker, a character from the highest leadership of the Communist Party. Although it was demolished, the building that replaces it respects the aesthetics of the former house. Architect: Youssef Tohme Architects & Associates Suprafață: 1580 mp Anul: 2015 [12].

"The punctual interior openings help the feeling of cloister, but not the visitor's focus on the works. It seems that, at one point, the idea of friction, of imposed intimacy and of many rooms (reminiscent of the old house?), The architecture and the concept, therefore, begin to be stronger than the works themselves. Which, in fact, blames many museums (some famous

ones) of the last decades [12].”



Fig. 7. The Black House. Exterior view [12]

The arrangement of finishes and approach is minimalist, but the architecture is complex. The compartmentation is inspired by the old house and although it is not an easy path to follow from the visitor’s point of view it is probably a unique experience. The works are positioned so that they can only be observed from a certain perspective or from a certain level, like in figure 8.



Fig. 8. The Black House Interior [12]

Thus, in the case of the house-to-house subdivisions that are proposed for the dissertation subject, the complexity of this system should be as clear and easy to experiment and not distract from the works of art.

V. CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY IN BUILDING NO.13, UNION SQUARE IN TIMISOARA

V.1 History of the building

The building known today as building no. 13 from Union Square housed the Swabian Bank, figure 9, 10, 11. The building was built in 1812 and initially had a basement and a ground floor,

but it was modified according to László Székely’s plans, adding the two levels in 1904 in the style specific to the 1900s in Timisoara.

Due to the location on the eastern side of the Union Square, the construction housed prestigious public institutions for the beginning of the 20th century, such as the Economic Bank of Southern Hungary and after the 1920s it will be known as the Swabian Bank, following as after the Second World War to be nationalized. This period will bring major damage to the building, due to aggressive and unauthorized interventions, which endanger the structural stability.

The style of the building is Secession and presents pilasters with anthropomorphic figures [13]. It also has decorative elements of plant origin at the top of some windows in the main facade. One of the owners of the building mentioned in 1828 is Emmerich Oszlanyi.

The building was restored and it needed major structural interventions that respected the historical value of the building.



Fig. 9. Union Square no. 13 – old photo [14]



Fig. 10. Union Square no. 13 – before restoration [15]



Fig. 11. Union Square number 13 – after restoration [16]

V.2. Other functions of the building

On the ground floor of the building that is the subject of the dissertation project, namely building no. 13 in Union Square, there are two restaurants, namely Pepper steak&shake and In Thyme. Both the existing restaurants presented and the proposed Contemporary Art Gallery are present in the same building and obviously the functions can intersect and communicate.

Both functions have social and cultural interest and have touristic potential, being located in an important market and thus having access to the public.

The way in which they can benefit each other is that after visiting the Gallery or after participating in an event within it, visitors can benefit from the presence of the venues to choose depending on the occasion, what they want at that time or the demands personal, the premises offering two different options such as menu and atmosphere. Similarly, an outing to one of the restaurants may arouse an interest in visiting the Gallery.

In any case, both the place and the gallery have in common the fact that they want to bring the world together and create a pleasant environment for conversations enjoying food, drink or art, cultural dialogues being part of the gallery's mission.

V.3. Mission of the gallery

The mission of the gallery is an important part of the concept and includes the representation of the concepts brought in the temporary collections by the artists.

Art has always been the one that appeals to the senses of the public by transferring them

through their imagination to another world. Often there is a message that the artist represents so that it is visible or is to be found.

Although the art is sufficient the attention of the public could be distracted by the architecture and thus the perception of the message could have difficulties. Therefore the proposals for the exhibition space include the idea of modeling the architecture so that the atmosphere or the message is represented inside. The art addresses the visual perception that is always connected with memory and imagination but the visual sense is only part of the experience. Without resorting to other senses, a total connection with the public cannot be made. Only visual perception makes the experience quite distant. The atmosphere can only be experienced if one uses more senses and is not limited to the visual one. The tactile and auditory senses are required to make a strong connection with the public imagination.

“The skin is the oldest and most sensitive organ we possess, the main means of communication and the most effective protector [17].”

All senses, including the visual, are extensions of the tactile sense.

“My body is indeed the vessel of my world, not as an observation point of the central perspective, but as a locus of reference, memory, imagination and integration [17].”

Conscious public awareness of art and architecture allows full involvement in the imagination.

“During the creative process, both the artist and the craftsman are directly involved through their bodies and their existential experience, being less focused on an objectified external problem [17].”

Given this, the experience of the public should be similar so that everything outlines the atmosphere and conceptual of the artist being fully integrated in his world.

Thus, the arrangement of the space should be based on the idea of “reconstructing the experience of an undifferentiated inner world” in which we are no longer just spectators but a world to which everyone is a part.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The concept thus refers to a gallery that has its own identity but which has a large flexible space

that allows its transformation according to the concepts of temporary collections.

The innovative quality proposed for the gallery is the idea of creating an immersive experience for the public, appealing to all the senses and framing any visitor in the desired atmosphere. As it's always going to change to something new, the expositions will be known as something exclusive that should not be missed.

The gallery will focus on promoting new artists by bringing them to the attention of the public. The gallery will collaborate with artists but is going to be open to more artists without being limited to a number. The exhibitions include works and projects from different movements of contemporary art. During an exhibition, opening events will take place with artists who will talk about the exhibited art and their concept. The gallery will be also present on social media, it is desired that many people that live in the city or visit to participate in the gallery's activity.

The interior design project will include offices, archives as well as the gallery's own publishing house. Although the building has a historical architecture, the interior will be designed in a contemporary style with special, vibrant pieces of furniture with an artistic atmosphere and a lot of color.

The interior design will have a reversible character so the "house-in-house" system is going to be applied. The own identity of the gallery will represent a general aspect but the space will contain different pieces of furniture without many repetitions. The art that the gallery will present is very recent, so the space becomes a fusion of conceptual elements, textures and colors or aesthetics in general, all in a historical context (the building and location) with a controlled direction that will make the space unique and interesting.

REFERENCES

- [1] C. Bishop, *Muzeologia Radicală, Idea Design & Print, Cluj 2015*
- [2] K. Richman-Abdou, "What is Contemporary Art? An In-Depth Look at the Modern-Day Movement," *My Modern Met*, 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://mymodernmet.com/what-is-contemporary-art-definition/?fbclid=I->

[wAR2akGqw0ify8O_bKkXzuBQzpHuhFsMI-ziRjpk71CQc6maLikEod65G6d7U](https://www.facebook.com/wAR2akGqw0ify8O_bKkXzuBQzpHuhFsMI-ziRjpk71CQc6maLikEod65G6d7U)[Accessed: 12.02.2020].

- [3] C. Bogdan, „Mapând arta contemporană românească,” *Revista-ARTA*, 2015.[Online] Available:<http://revistaarta.ro/ro/column/mapand-arta-contemporana-romaneasca/?fbclid=IwAR18OcsxFYSMfu5CmpqN-M9IQy-0C5mNgwK6i4qDvsLADkI6Yar-17RL34PqQ> [Accessed: 14.03.2020].

- [4] G. Gheorghe, "An Art Lover's Guide to Bucharest," *Culture trip*, 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/romania/articles/an-art-lovers-guide-to-bucharest/?fbclid=IwAR29podaD6-f-ax3L3FLitjVVir8YkF-6CmGtFTofVHjAH4J0vfbyqZL6lrk> [Accessed: 01.04.2020]

- [5] Mobius Gallery, [Online]. Available:<https://www.mobius-gallery.com/> [Accessed: 15.03.2020].

- [6] Artsy, [Online] Available: <https://www.artsy.net/show/mobius-gallery-roman-tolici> [Accessed: 28.06.2020].

- [7] Hart Gallery, [Online]. Available: https://www.hartgallery.ro/?fbclid=IwAR19-i3eXpspx-HHcSeheBfmR797CtQtB-2YEOpZO_ZGj-_TfRZP-v6akY72A[Accessed: 25.03.2020].

- [8] Hart Gallery. [Online]. Available:<https://www.hartgallery.ro/>

- [9] Tripadvisor, *H`artGallery*. [Online] Available:https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g294458-d12688070-Reviews-H_art_Gallery-Bucharest.html [Accessed: 20.03.2020].

- [10] Design Chronicle, "Hongkun Fine Art Gallery/ Art Arcadion by Penda," 2014. [Online] Available:http://design-chronicle.com/hongkun-fine-art-gallery-art-arcadion-by-penda/?fbclid=IwAR1g2NI5xlh68S-rQmJ5jQV2Y_s6VQBqDwSqmZZKb2y4Jm-HYPX-Hc8MYZtbA#jp-carousel-2276[Accessed: 21.03.2020].

- [11] Archdaily, "Hongkun Art Gallery/penda," 2014. [Online] Available:<https://www.archdaily.com/467866/hongkung-art-gallery-penda> [Accessed: : 15.03.2020].

- [12] Ș. Ghenciulescu, "Casa neagră din Primăverii. Muzeul de Artă Recentă, București," *Zepelin* [Online] Available:<https://e-zeppelin.ro/casa-neagra-din-primaverii-muzeul-de-ar>

ta-recenta-bucuresti/?fbclid=IwAR09ab4x-tMN-2gtuEEvGOJ0WpnH_5FZExa_AVF50tD-7dcS5OSwZvJZqE1A [Accessed: 25.03.2020].

[13] Centru Teritorial de Competenta, "Vizită șantier #2 - Reabilitarea imobilului din Piața Unirii," Facebook, 2018. [Online] Available: https://www.facebook.com/pg/CTC.OAR/photos/?tab=album&album_id=459558171090899&__tn__=-UC-R [Accessed: 15.03.2020].

[14] H. Tel, "Timisoara - Piata Unirii - 1860," Pinterest [Online] Available: <https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/17451517276724770/> [Accessed: 12.03.2020].

[15] Flickr, [Online]. Available: https://www.flickr.com/photos/adi_84/1314035297/in/photolist-317LUZ-7tsKm1-bGLMhD-317NTi-tkUnHyKYBeG-Ra7j1-5xfqwB-8rjfCE-bdXV78-tXq1gnFpJGu-9UN6uC-8LAhdU-759kiE-Xr43x4-8rgde8-noWeWC-nFe5dU-7pbxXq-TMcqJd-4GB-3Dz-Q1QGW2-eegbq-SrwPyh-NvQ9J6-9mZKok-RMtRLv-9Uxabz-4og95t-3ennEJ-8T2GQK-eyY-Dys-bsq3Ka-RMtPLt-KBdiFM-RYLNYS-a43vro-SdAnh7-2emHXPB-JmMEjz-FX8W3-L8SmWh-4ocL1n-qT494C-5DHGAn-4vyTd6-hG8oDw-4JFHeL-MEeCo2?fbclid=IwAR0Pf6yq7ey-CJ8j1DV6vi9j2DIAEVklMkSu3a_ABGEMAHC-c3DCwftfLg7rs [Accessed: 19.03.2020].

[16] Flickr, [Online]. Available: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/134469298@N03/29176637685> [Accessed: 10.03.2020].

[17] J. Pallasmaa, Privirea care atinge: arhitectura și simțurile, Editura Fundatiei Arhitext design Bucuresti, 2015.