



Ewa Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich*

The deconstructivist trend in Polish architecture of the 21st century – selected examples

Introduction

The academic aim of this article is to highlight an avant-garde trend in contemporary architecture – Deconstruction – and its characteristic features. The research methods used by the author include a literature search and the use of the results of long-term in situ studies of architecture in Western Europe: in Germany, France, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, as well as in the Czech Republic and Poland. The author's research makes it possible to present selected Deconstructivist realisations in our country (a completed building by Jakub Potoczek from the vicinity of Nowy Sącz, the Fire Museum in Żory, the Jordanki Cultural and Congress Centre in Toruń, the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk) against a background of the creative achievements of prominent European architects. In the publication, the author also discusses the reasons for the different process of evolution of this trend in our country.

Principles of the Deconstruction trend in architecture

Deconstruction in architecture emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Referring to catastrophe and chaos theory, the architecture of the late 20th century had to be based on the individual philosophy of each of the representatives of this trend. Many theorists of recent architecture believe that Deconstruction grew out of opposition to Postmodernism. In none of these very rare completed buildings will one encounter any allusions to or quotations from the historical, regional or indigenous forms that Postmodernism clearly favoured [1, pp. 99–122, 171–192]. In many European universities, most notably the AA (Architectural Association School) in London in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were meetings and discussions between academics and students criticising postmodernism as being of little value and not conducive to the development of architecture. The turn was towards Constructivism, which had appeared in Soviet Russia immediately after the revolution, but was quickly extinguished by Socialist Realism. And indeed the first two high-profile international competitions of 1982–1983 for a residence in Hong Kong (Zaha Hadid) and the Park de la Villette in Paris (Bernard Tschumi) were won by architects originating from the AA in London. Both award-winning projects bear clear features of Constructivism.

This trend, denying the previous metaphysical conception of aesthetics, formulated a new definition of a work of art, drawing it into the whole of “reality” [2, pp. 238–259]. It was not a question of mass scale and a large number of completed buildings, but rather of their impact. The direction called Deconstruction opposed all the shapes that had been present in architecture before. In many cases, it proposed an arrangement of solids derived from Euclidean geometry, but they were juxtaposed and arranged in a completely new, unprecedented way. Very often, the final forms challenged the familiar principles of construction, such as vertical and horizontal directions and right angles. The surprising, articulated solids many times became close to sculpture. It was mainly pointed out by Frank Gehry [3, pp. 256, 257]. In addition to the commonly used Vitruvian triad, which defines the most important features of architecture: beauty, utility, durability – the introduction of another element, namely emotions and moods, which architecture of this trend should evoke in a viewer, became an important factor. The late French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who was primarily concerned with the philosophy of linguistics, became the leading theorist of this trend in architecture. Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi talked

* ORCID: 0000-0003-3920-445X. Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology, Poland, e-mail: ewaannagyur@o2.pl

to him and based on Derrida's philosophy, they laid the theoretical foundations of deconstruction in architecture.

In the Polish literature, Cezary Waś [4], Tomasz Koźłowski [5] and Anna Krajewska have commented on this issue: *We can therefore say that Deconstruction (whatever it is – a method, an attitude, a worldview) refers to the notion of movement. The beauty of Deconstruction certainly does not lie in stability and normality, but in changeability, momentariness, unsteadiness of connections* [6, pp. 20, 21]. Very often, the final forms challenged commonly known principles. In completed architecture, the solids lose their stability, sometimes giving the impression as if they were detaching from the ground and flying into space. An important common element is fragmentation and the introduction of movement, represented by kinetic art, but also the introduction of the element of time, which occurs in Futurism – it proclaimed the “beauty of speed”. Curvature, dislocation, collapse, fracture or squashing, breaking into parts, explosions, collisions, separations, cutting through matter and areas evoke shock and amazement. The separation of function and form became important. This is what Eisenman wrote in *Representations of The Limit; Writing a “non-architecture”*¹, about the theoretical works and visual installations of the late 1970s by Daniel Libeskind: *This was the beginning of an attempt to free elements from their function in both their tectonic and formal sense – from the causal relationship of function and form* (after: [7, pp. 66, 67]). The provocative confusion and interpenetration of forms, which are very often rotated, transformed, juxtaposed with each other as part of a pre-planned jumble, do not repeat the familiar compositions of the past. They are fresh, dramatic, surprising, never seen before. The individual buildings are different, as they result from each artist's different vision and perception of the world around us.

American architect Mark Wigley's doctoral thesis *Jacques Derrida and Architecture: the Deconstructive Possibilities of Architectural Discourse* [8], which was presented at the University of Auckland in 1986, became a challenge to organise an exhibition of designs and completed buildings by seven representatives of this trend at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1988. This exhibition was organised by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley. It showcased the designs and buildings of Zaha Hadid [9, pp. 101–119], Frank Gehry, Bernard Tschumi, Rem Koolhaas, the Coop Himmelb(l)au team, Peter Eisenman, Daniel Libeskind. The event reverberated throughout the world and was followed by numerous magazine articles. Meanwhile, the book summarising the exhibition portrayed architecture as a philosophical concept [10]. Waś, analysing Wigley's philosophy, points out that *Deconstruction in architecture is mainly about breaking down and destroying the structure of forms from within. This results in the breaking down of the composition, a series of dislocations, deviations or disruptions [...] there is a discovery of the imperfection consuming the work*

and bringing the composition to the limits of stability, but without finally crossing them [4, p. 23].

Published in 1984, Eisenman's essay *The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End* criticises the paradigms of value and time in the perception of architecture. This author writes: [...] *Architecture in the present is seen as a process of inventing an artificial past and a present without a future. It remembers a future that no longer exists* (after: [11]). Deconstruction has also become a language emphasising symbolism and preparing the viewer to read meanings, even more strongly than postmodernism. It seems to be more important to influence the viewer with shape and extravagant massing than to fit into an existing context. The deliberate introduction of provocation, the creation and search for difference and, above all, the freedom to shape forms, emotions and courage against the hitherto existing boredom and schematism – these are the basic features of the trend.

Deconstruction in Poland

In our country, the architecture of Deconstructivism emerged with a long delay. This was related to the political and economic isolation of Central European countries in the 1970s and 1980s. Economic considerations also played a major role in delaying the completion of architecture of this trend here. The influence of the public level of preparation for the perception of avant-garde art should also be emphasised, including the degree of aesthetic education of Polish society, for which the aesthetics of the late 19th century was a model in many cases. Thus, Deconstructivist architecture initially appeared in Poland at the turn of the 1980s in the form of small-scale structures. It was not until the second decade of the 21st century that important buildings for culture were created in this style.

Poland in the 1980s was experiencing a social, economic and political crisis. It seems that during these difficult years, the inhabitants of our country were preoccupied with satisfying their subsistence needs rather than introducing avant-garde aesthetics. This delay was mainly due to the economic situation of the country and the investors, as well as the lack of access to the latest technologies and building materials that the Deconstructivist realisations required. It is a very elitist movement, with very few buildings completed in Europe and around the world. In Poland, experimental examples of this trend began to appear in the late 1980s and early 1990s in interiors, mainly of public buildings. At that time, it did not require large financial outlays. Today, many of these interiors no longer exist. In 2001, a multi-family, four-storey residential building was completed in Krakow at 32 Wybickiego Street [12, p. 179]. In this case only a twisting of the front wall on the side of Józefa Wybickiego Street was applied. In the architect's opinion, this building cannot be qualified in its entirety as a realisation in the Deconstructivist trend². Such delicate

¹ Eisenman P., *Representations of The Limit; Writing a “non-architecture”*, [in:] D. Libeskind, *Chamber Works. Architectural Meditations on themes from Heraclitus*, Architectural Association, London 1983.

² The building was designed by Elżbieta Kierska-Lukaszewska, and in researching Krakow's late 20th and early 21st-century architecture, Maciej Motak classified the building as deconstruction [12, p. 179].

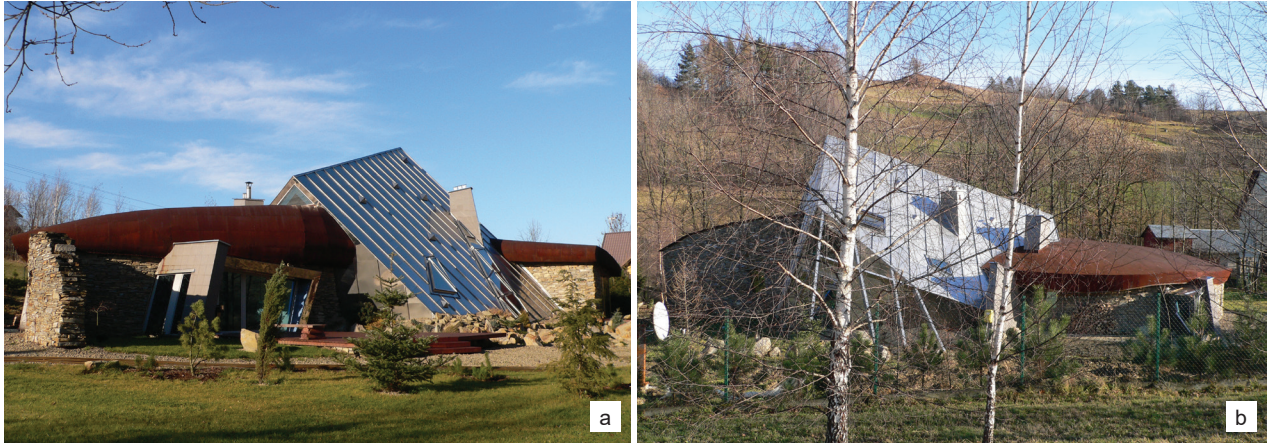


Fig. 1. Architect's house in Nawojowa: a) view from the south, b) view from the west (photo by J. Potoczek)

Il. 1. Dom architekta w Nawojowej: a) widok od południa, b) widok od zachodu (fot. J. Potoczek)

expressive accents seemed sufficient at the time. It was difficult to search for new challenges and trends in a country where prefabricated blocks of flats reigned supreme and housing was in short supply.

Completed small-scale buildings in the vicinity of Nowy Sącz

Only the two buildings discussed below represent, in each of the views of the masses, as well as in the interiors, the characteristic features of Deconstruction. In Nawojowa near Nowy Sącz, in the years 1997–2008, architect Jakub Potoczek's own house was built. A graduate of the Faculty of Architecture at the Cracow University of Technology in 1989, he dared to design objects in the Deconstructivist style while still a student, for which he received very good marks. That is why, years later, when completing his own house, he introduced the “twisted cube” again (Fig. 1). The building, which shows the duality of the interior and exterior, was built using ceramic blocks, aerated concrete, wood and stone. The roof of the building, as well as the wooden beams visible on the outside that extend the rafters, were covered with stainless steel. The architect believes that the sloping roof of his house shows an abstract transformation in architecture of the surrounding mountain landscape and rock masses (Fig. 1). It was important to him to present a contemporary, intellectual inspiration by tradition and the surroundings. There are no right angles in the building, only acute angles, curves and oval forms. The triangular and trapezoidal windows were the most difficult to build. The window cladding was made of stainless steel, including the sealing flange. The non-standard window shapes and lighting from above resulted in good and interesting effects in the interiors. The building has attracted a lot of interest over the years; the initial unfavourable opinions of some neighbours have changed³. The residents have become accustomed to the new form. In 1998, the same architect completed a small production



Fig. 2. AL-PLAST service company in Rytrze – view from the south-west (photo by J. Potoczek)

Il. 2. Zakład usługowy AL-PLAST w Rytrze – widok od południowego zachodu (fot. J. Potoczek)

and commercial building in Rytrze – Zakład Ślusarsko-Aluminiowy AL-PLAST (Fig. 2). What draws attention in this building are the “curled windows”, which probably attract customers by their uniqueness. The stone walls allude to the Poprad River flowing nearby and the ruins of a castle on a hill in close proximity.

Museum of Fire in Żory

The museum is situated in a good location, as it is right at the entrance to the city from Katowice. It was designed as a new showcase for the city and was to be the new gateway to it⁴. The building, located at 3 Katowicka Street, was designed by Barbara and Oskar Grąbczewski. It was

³ Interview with the architect on 1st May 2022.

⁴ One may wonder where the idea for a fire museum in Żory came from. The name of the town may already give an explanation – it comes from the word “zar”, “pogorzelsko” [embers, site of fire], which was created on the site of a burnt forest. The city itself has been hit by fires many times over the centuries. The largest of these occurred in 1661, 1702, 1807, 1945, and the tragic fire, in which half the town's population perished, was recorded on 11 May 1702. To commemorate these tragic events, a “Fire Festival” (the only one in Europe) has been held in Żory every May since 1702, i.e., for over three hundred years. Until 1939, this festival was a public holiday for the town's inhabitants [13].



Fig. 3. Fire Museum in Żory – view of the building from the eastern side
(photo: E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich archive)

Il. 3. Muzeum Ognia w Żorach – widok bryły od strony wschodniej
(fot. archiwum E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich)



Fig. 4. Fire Museum in Żory – entrance hall
(photo by T. Zakrzewski, Archifolio)

Il. 4. Muzeum Ognia w Żorach – hol wejściowy
(fot. T. Zakrzewski, Archifolio)



Fig. 5. Fire Museum in Żory – hall of the underground part
(photo by T. Zakrzewski, Archifolio)

Il. 5. Muzeum Ognia w Żorach – hol w części podziemnej
(fot. T. Zakrzewski, Archifolio)

under construction between 2009 and 2014 and opened on 3rd December 2014. Although the museum is small in size, its expressive and unusual shape and unique colour scheme certainly draw attention and are intriguing. A surprise is the material covering all the walls and roofs with narrow, uniformly wide vertical strips of copper sheeting, which, thanks to its coating with transparent HDP varnish, will always retain a reddish colour and will not tarnish. The architects comment on the idea of the museum as follows: [...] *we saw in the complex contours of the buildable area an association with a creeping fire. We used the metaphor of fire to build the entire form of the building* [14].

The museum presents the history of the city from pre-history to the present in an attractive and legible way. The museum's task is to illustrate mankind's relationship with fire, with its terrible power, and to show methods of fighting fires. The architecture of the building is built with solid walls, covered – as already mentioned – on all sides with strips of red-coloured sheet metal, which are interrupted and opened up from time to time by glass walls for the full height of the building. There is little glazing, as daylight is not always necessary in museums. Suddenly breaking straight lines create the mood of this very dynamic and distinctive building block, which is interesting and attracts residents and tourists. The cantilevers, which run upwards and in almost all directions, can be associated with the flames of a fire. The volume shows the architect's individual interpretation of fire. It is a "flame building" (Fig. 3). The copper sheet, shimmering in the sun, can be interpreted as vibrating flames of fire. The essence of fire is movement, which the architects captured by also showing its variability and dynamism. The idea became that the three main walls surrounding the building should express the flames of the fire, while the centre – the floors and interior walls of the installation core should be black (Figs. 4, 5) and symbolise burning [14]. Expressive and dynamic forms were also marked in the plan, where oblique lines, triangles, trapezoids, acute angles, and abrupt wall breaks predominate (Fig. 6). As aforementioned, the museum is not large. The underground area, where the actual interactive exhibition is located, occupies 393.97 m². On the ground floor, there are rooms for lectures and conferences.

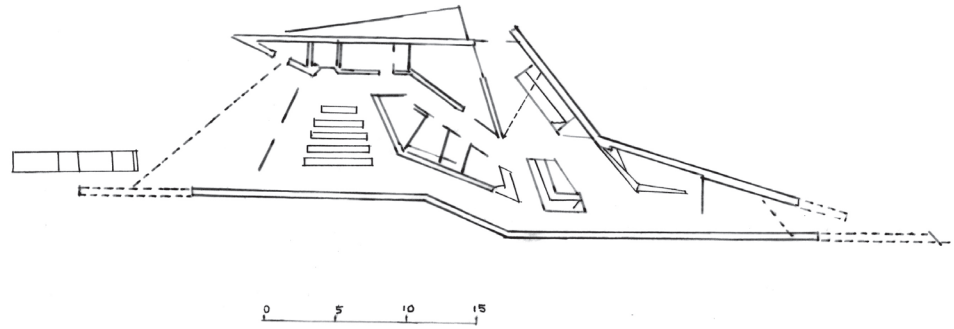
The museum exhibition is located on two levels, i.e. on the ground floor and in the basement of the building.

Jordanki Cultural and Congress Centre in Toruń

Another important example of Deconstructivist architecture completed in our country is the Jordanki Cultural and Congress Centre complex in Toruń at 1–3 Solidarności Avenue, opened in December 2015. The building was the result of an international architectural competition in 2008. The design was selected from 22 entries. The winner was the Spanish architect Fernando Menis – head of the Menis Arquitectos office from Tenerife. The building, housing two concert halls and three conference halls, is located in the former part of the so-called Chełmińskie Suburb. It was situated north of the line of the Old Town walls, where a moat still existed in the 1920s [15]. The building is located in the vicinity of the Gothic centre of Toruń,

Fig. 6. Fire Museum in Żory
– ground floor plan
(elaborated by E. Węclawowicz-
Gyurkovich based on [14])

Il. 6. Muzeum Ognia w Żorach
– rzut parteru
(oprac. E. Węclawowicz-
Gyurkovich na podstawie [14])



which has the second largest number of monuments of Gothic architecture in Poland (after Kraków). The preserved town-houses are classed as the largest and best-preserved complex of urban brick Gothic architecture in Northern Europe. Also important are the city walls, gates, towers and granaries, and above all the Old Town Hall and Gothic churches. Due to the originality and high class of the preserved authentic buildings, Toruń's Old Town complex was entered in the UNESCO World Heritage List on 4th December 1997 [15]. The body of the new development consists of four modular, irregular forms built in reinforced concrete construction, which have been connected by glass connectors. There are incisions and cut-outs of rectangular shapes that have been transformed into rhomboidal and broken structures (Fig. 7a). The inclinations, truncations, twists and curvatures of these elements create a large Deconstructivist sculpture, whose original form attracts organisers of various musical, scientific and fair events. It also houses the headquarters of the Toruń Symphony Orchestra, for which a venue was planned as early as in the period between the two World Wars. The interior of the building is a great surprise to visitors (Fig. 7b). One can find there similarities with grottoes or caves carved in stone. One can see many cracks and shifts, cuts in the hard mass of a rock, sometimes giving the impression of

being unfinished, as if by accident, yet carefully thought out and planned. Almost everywhere there is semi-darkness [16, pp. 95–105], an austerity, a surprise, a sensuality. The museum's plan is also dominated by sharp cuts of geometric solids and the use of acute angles (Fig. 8) [17]. Such creative and unexpected shaping of space cannot fail to evoke emotions and the mood planned by the architect-artist. This is strong, expressive and bold architecture. The building has received numerous awards and mentions. The building hides another important secret. It is the architect's new interpretation of the tradition of the place, a neighbourhood of the historic centre of Toruń. The architect proposed a very original solution for finishing the walls, mainly in the interiors, but also on parts of the external façades. This consisted of introducing small elements of broken red bricks, which were blended into the concrete finish of the walls in a light shade. The result is red walls with a rough texture, with the red of the interior of the concert halls being more intense than in the foyer. The method of covering the walls in this way was called *picado*. This is how the architect explains his design idea: *I am looking for the essence of a place. My role is to expand the cultural aspects of a particular space and produce its history* [18]. Probably not every viewer will find this idea of the architect alluding to Gothic architecture

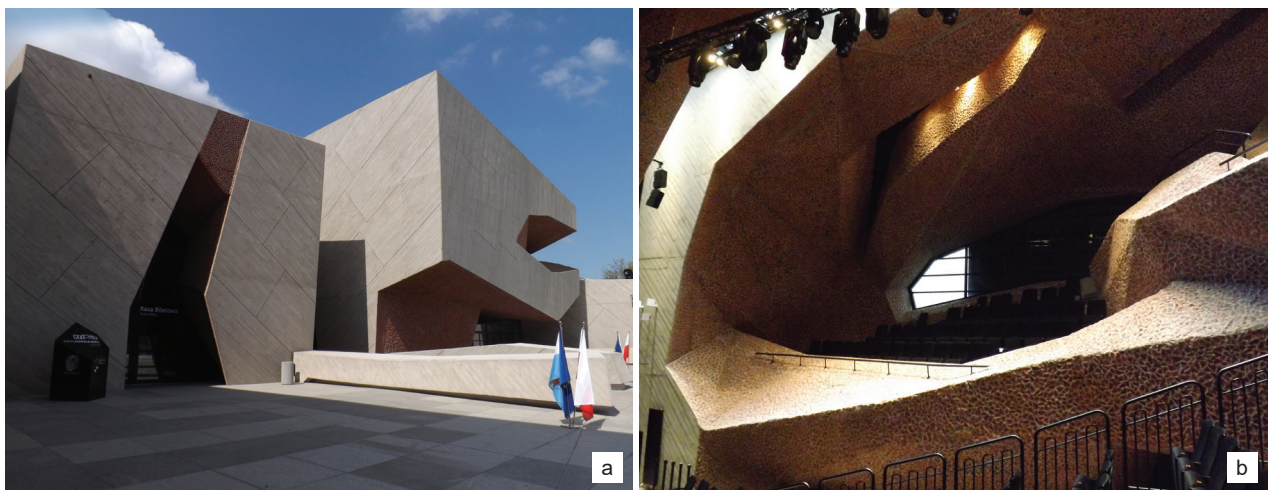


Fig. 7. Jordanki Culture and Congress Centre in Toruń: a) view from the east, b) interior of the auditorium
(photo: E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich archive)

Il. 7. Centrum Kulturalno-Konferencyjne Jordanki w Toruniu: a) widok od wschodu, b) wnętrze sali widowiskowej
(fot. archiwum E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich)

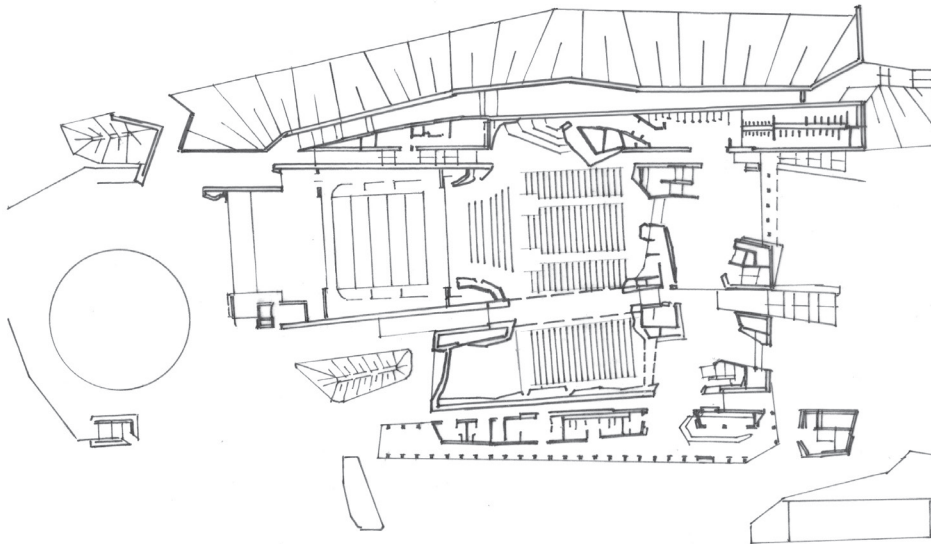


Fig. 8. Jordanki Culture and Congress Centre in Toruń – ground floor plan of the building (elaborated by E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich based on [17])

Il. 8. Centrum Kulturalno-Konferencyjne Jordanki w Toruniu – rzut parteru (oprac. E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich na podstawie [17])

with the texture of the wall intelligible. Only a sophisticated viewer will guess the message. Comparing this realisation to other achievements of the Menis Arquitectos team in Tenerife (the MAGMA Arts and Congress Centre in Adeje, opened in 2006 [19], or the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer in La Laguna, completed in 2019), one can find characteristics of the architect's work. The handling of concrete blocks mixed with local volcanic rock gives the effects of a rock formation created by long-term geological processes. The inspiration of lava and volcano is clearly evident there. Also of interest, as in Toruń, is the masterful handling of daylight, which is let into the interiors through fissures [20]. The building in Toruń, due to the nearby panorama of the Old Town, could not be high; it has six storeys, including two underground ones, and the total area is 22 000 m². The building is characteristically a multi-purpose one. In addition to concert and conference halls, a press room, rehearsal hall, restaurant and underground parking for 185 cars have been designed. The two concert halls, a larger one for 880 spectators and a smaller one for 300 people, can be combined into one larger hall by sliding a wall. In addition, provision is made for the mobility of both halls and auditoriums, which can be either flat or on several levels, and the main stage has the option of opening out onto the square from the rear side. It is then possible to hold performances outside (creating an interference theatre) [21, p. 190], among the greenery that occupies a large part of the plot and surrounds the building. Also the ceilings in the auditoriums are movable, the acoustics can be changed depending on the type of event [16]. The facility is planned for symphonic and opera music concerts, entertainment, as well as for theatre performances, conferences and film screenings.

Museum of the World War II in Gdańsk

The museum's design was awarded first prize in an international architectural competition in 2010, which attracted 240 contestants from 33 countries and ultimately 129 entries. The competition jury was chaired by Daniel

Libeskind. The museum was created by the KWADRAT team of architects from Gdynia – Jacek Droszcz, Bazyl Domsta, Zbigniew Kowalewski, Andrzej Kwieciński. The design was made in 2009, with construction lasting from September 2012 to March 2017. The building was located near the Main Town on Wałowa Street at the point where the Radunia Canal flows into the Motława River. From there, it is only 200 m to the famous Polish Post Office building and 3 km by water to the Westerplatte peninsula. Nearby, the Young City is being developed as part of the revitalisation of the former shipyard areas [22, pp. 16–23]. On the other hand, from Długie Pobrzeże and beyond the Motława River, both on Wyspa Spichrzów (Granary Island) and on Ołowianka, new buildings have recently been constructed – hotels and multi-family residential buildings that do not imitate history, but show an interesting contemporary interpretation of the place [23, pp. 96–104]. The total area of the museum is 58,000 m² and the area of the site is 1,700 m². The museum consists of six underground storeys and eight above-ground ones. Inside, three narrative blocks are proposed: The Road to War, The Horror of War and The Long Shadow of War – a total of 18 thematic sections showcasing 2,000 exhibits; 240 multimedia stations have also been created. The team of architects called this building a “silent design”, because all visitors to the museum, as well as those walking along Długie Pobrzeże Street, are surprised by its unusual shape, which moves at first glance and imbues the place with drama (Figs. 9, 10). It can be interpreted in various ways. The most frequent associations bring to mind a vision of a fragment of a ruined building, also a tower, which has sunk into the ground as a result of warfare, but also a fragment of a submarine emerging from the water, or a bomb or a missile stuck in the ground [24, pp. 186, 187]. Jacek Droszcz explains the designers' assumptions as follows: [...] *history has shaped this building* [...]. *This intended strong spatial accent is to lead a specific dialogue with the historic towers of the churches and town halls of Gdańsk, blending in with the silhouette of the city with its contemporary form* [...] [25].

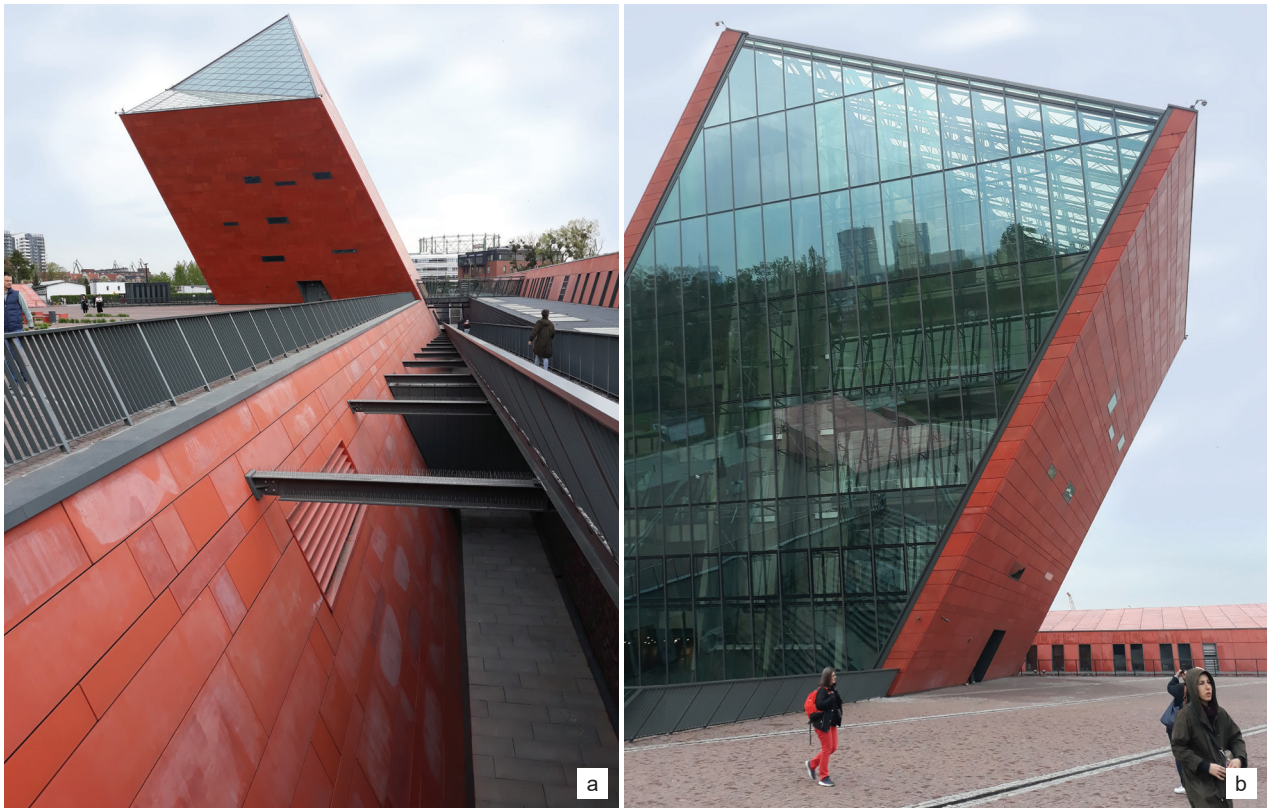


Fig. 9. Museum of the World War II in Gdańsk:
a) view of the building from the south, b) view of the tower from the west (photo: E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich archive)

Il. 9. Muzeum II Wojny Światowej w Gdańsku:
a) widok od południa, b) wieża od zachodu (fot. archiwum E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich)

Always, however, as in many of Libeskind's war-related projects, it must evoke strong emotions. The sloping red-coloured tower seems to allude to the brick architecture of historic Gdańsk, although it may also be a symbol of the blood that was shed in the war. Associations and interpretations depend on the individual feelings of the viewer. One cannot pass by the museum indifferently. It seems to scream not only with its programme of internal exhibitions, but also with its sheer external expressive form. From the outset, the architects had in mind a "dynamic form that ruptures the space". This is what the chairman of the jury, Daniel Libeskind, said about the winning entry: *the Museum of the Second World War will become a unique and expressive icon. As a place that commemorates the history of the Second World War, it will be a new symbol that we must not forget, one that will blend into the hearts of the people of Gdańsk, Poland and Europe [...]* [26]. The museum's exhibition is divided into three zones: the Underground – the past, or the drama of the war, the present – the wide square named after Władysław Bartoszewski around the museum at ground level, and the future – a giant leaning tower. The skylight tower, which rises from the square in the shape of a prism on the plan of a triangle, measures 40.5 m high and is very steeply inclined, as much as 56° to the ground, with not only the canopy but also one entire wall made of glass. Inside, there is a library with a reading room (Fig. 10) education and conference rooms and a restaurant with a café at the very

top with a wide view of the city. Illuminated by daylight, the white walls are a symbol of the future with the hope and joy that post-war generations will not experience the tragedy of war. The design of the museum's lower interior continues the architecture of the building and emphasises the theme of war [27]. It is dominated by a dark military mood evoked by the use of the dominant graphite colour everywhere. This is contrasted with bright, slanted walls made of raw concrete, ceramic cladding reminiscent of tarnished sheet metal, ceilings made of expanded metal. These quasi-industrial interiors of the subterranean part are connected by a monumental staircase with solid black steel balustrades, leading down through all storeys, reaching down to -14.0 m (Fig. 10). The plan structure of the building operates with a Deconstructivist breakdown of the functional programme, framed by dynamic, jittery triangular, rhomboidal shapes, depicting movement in architecture [28] (Fig. 11). Taking into account the history of the site, the architects marked the course of the main Grosse Gasse street in the underground part of the building with a wide corridor, which was in lieu of the museum before the war. This space was called the Wiarownia. The area was home to a number of craftsmen's workshops, including those that made buckets. Inside the building structure, the corridor replicates the line of the street, and its axis is covered by a glass canopy. Outside, the line of the street is continued by a long sloping footbridge, leading to the museum entrance from the Radunia canal. The reconstruct-

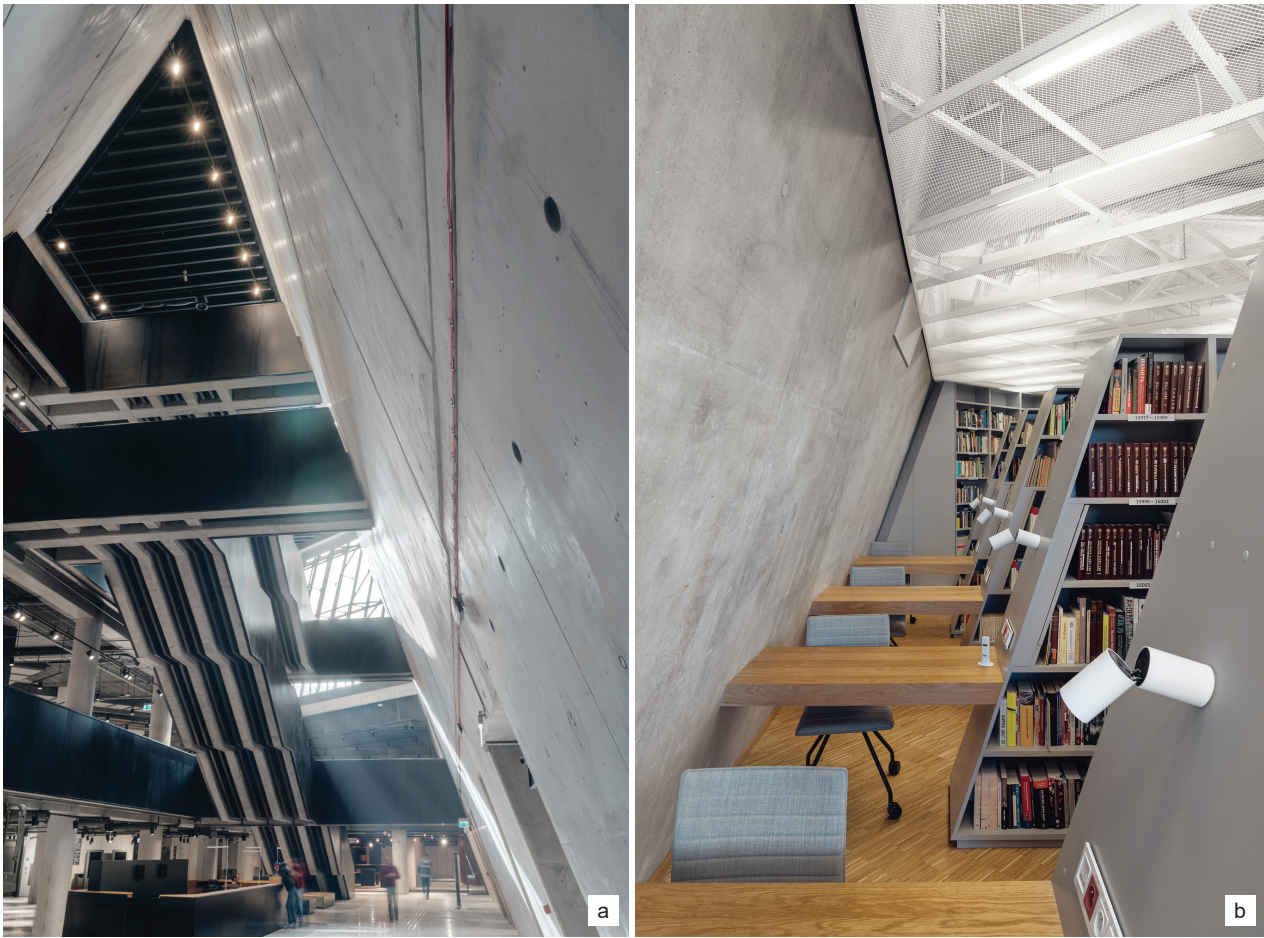


Fig. 10. Museum of the World War II in Gdańsk:
 a) interior of the underground part of the museum, b) interior of the library in the tower (photo by T. Kurek)
 Il. 10. Muzeum II Wojny Światowej w Gdańsku: a) wnętrze holu, b) wnętrze biblioteki (fot. T. Kurek)

ed street, which receives daylight, also provides a resting place for visitors. The architectural concept is that all the evils of war are hidden underground, and that the “light” of hope enters through a gap that runs along the square. It is this crack that constitutes the compositional axis of the whole premise for the location of the main exhibition – as the architects of the museum’s design emphasise [29].

Conclusions

The research carried out has shown that, although with a long delay of more than thirty years, single realisations of the Deconstructivist trend are appearing in our country. A detailed study of their external forms was carried out and the interiors were subjected to structural analysis. Both in the external forms and in the interiors of the discussed buildings, there are characteristics of Deconstructivist architecture, associated with the use of surprising, previously unknown, always different and new, expressive and dynamic shapes. In the contemporary architectural reality, in which we note a great variety of creative attitudes, when no style is obligatory, it is probably interesting to note and introduce this elitist and intellectual trend. It is an expression of the conscious efforts of Polish and European

architects who wish to draw attention in today’s world to avant-garde modern art, which, often opposing traditional art, draws impulses for its development from it [30, p. 12]. Our present demands ever stronger aesthetic stimuli, so that in the viewers living in the age of the microprocessor revolution, computer databases, the ubiquitous and widespread Internet, there is a conscious return to the inner feelings of the viewers, to their freedom of imagination and the memory of the past of the places where now new solids are introduced.

From the discussed examples realised in our country, it is evident that in each of the design tasks the architects wanted to present their own interpretations of the tradition of place, almost every time related to the history of the city or the neighbourhood in which new architecture was created. They represent a contemporary, architect’s understanding of the past and the context of the place, which will probably not be understood immediately by all audiences. The architecture of Deconstruction is difficult to perceive. It is an intellectual play, but an important feature of it is the breakdown of forms, the depiction of movement and time, the evocation of emotions and impressions, which is confirmed by all the buildings discussed above. In many cases, in some well-known European realisations of De-

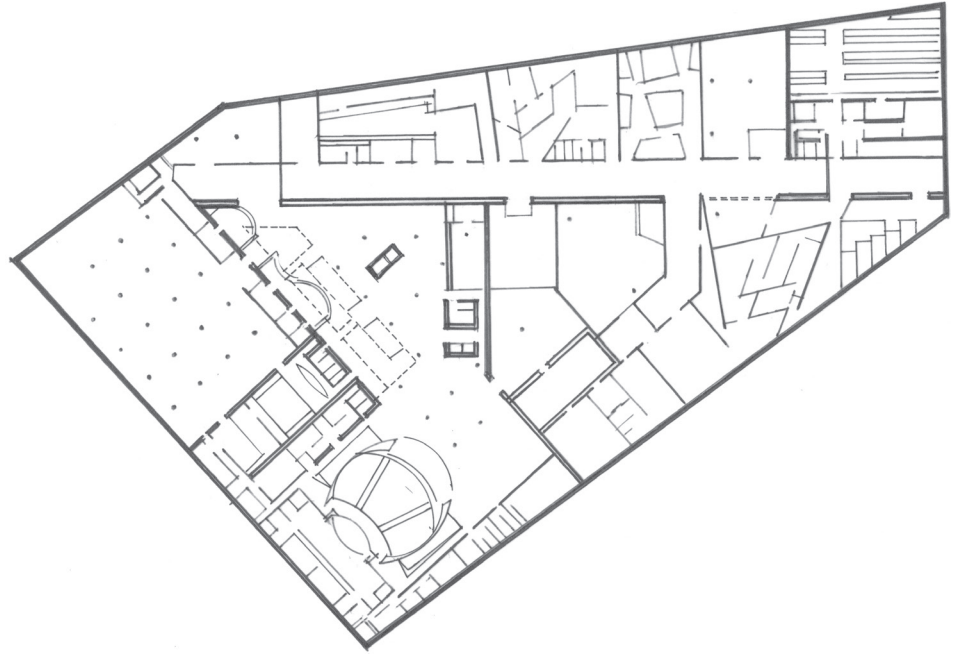


Fig. 11. Museum of the World War II in Gdańsk – plan of the underground part of museum, (elaborated by E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich based on [28])

Il. 11. Muzeum II Wojny Światowej w Gdańsku – rzut części podziemnej (oprac. E. Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich na podstawie [28])

constructivist designs, the problem of blending into the existing environment arises, for sometimes the star-architects reject the surrounding existing context of the new buildings. The Polish realisations show that relating to a place in a contemporary, different from traditional, way was important for the creators of the examples discussed above. Moreover, in the case of the Museum of the Second World War, Libeskind said: *Anyway, this building is so strong that if it were built anywhere in the world, it would be an icon everywhere* (after: [27]).

The architects' concepts presented in the article were probably created as a result of an individual, emotional interpretation of the intention in the spatial and cultural context of the place, understood through the prism of Deconstructivist philosophy, in pursuit of a passing future. Derrida argued that the architecture of Deconstruction notes the Present, for in a moment it will become the Past [10, p. 23]. This Present is characterised by the noting of a movement appearing briefly in a given moment, and this moment as an element of time resulting from sudden transformations, confusions, overlapping – as if by chance – solids is notated by a creative architect. All artists, including architects, who

introduce the avant-garde and innovative “Architecture of Spectacle” must be prepared for criticism and disapproval. Gehry claimed that if he had considered serious criticism of his ideas before completing his designs and had to alter them to satisfy others' ideas about the perception of architecture, his museum in Bilbao would never have been built [31, p. 25]. The buildings of the Deconstructivist trend are always based on the philosophical considerations of their creators, who try to include in the solids unquantifiable values, perceived in the sphere of feelings, emotions, impressions. Tom Dyckhoff, a well-known British architectural critic wrote: [...] “Deconstructivism” and the strange new buildings created in the 1970s by architects such as Bernard Tschumi and Peter Eisenman, pompous and intellectual, did not appeal to the common man; they lacked even the forms that we, who are supposed to live in these buildings, could at least understand a little [32, p. 23].

Translated by
Ewa Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich
Verified by
Marta A. Urbańska

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Abstract

The deconstructivist trend in Polish architecture of the 21st century – selected examples

The article is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the aesthetics of the forms and structures of several selected realisations in Polish architecture, which represent a very elitist trend called Deconstruction. This trend appeared in world architecture mainly at the beginning of the 1980s. It arrived in Poland with a long delay of several decades, as it was only in the 2nd decade of the 21st century that several new cultural objects were realised. After outlining the most important features of this trend, the author analysed and discussed the following selected examples based on an analysis of realisations in Western Europe and the USA: the Fire Museum in Żory (opened in 2014), the Jordanki Cultural and Congress Centre in Toruń (opened in 2015) and the Museum of the World War II in Gdańsk (opened in 2017). In each realisation, as can be observed in the examples of well-known Western creators, the individual philosophy of the architects is important. The article presents the statements of the creators of these buildings. The author also pointed out that at the end of the 1990s, individual realisations of detached houses, private production workshops and interiors appeared in our country as part of this trend. In each case, the aesthetic analysis of these works showed that the selected buildings are representative of the discussed trend, implementing its avant-garde premises, depicting the emotions and moods of deconstruction.

Key words: deconstruction, realisations, aesthetic, structure of forms

Streszczenie

Nurt dekonstruktywistyczny w polskiej architekturze XXI w. – wybrane realizacje

Artykuł poświęcono przedstawieniu i analizie estetyki form i struktur kilku wybranych realizacji w polskiej architekturze, które reprezentują bardzo elitarny nurt zwany dekonstrukcją. Ten kierunek pojawił się w światowej architekturze głównie na początku lat 80. XX w. Do Polski dotarł z dużym, bo kilkudziesięcioletnim opóźnieniem, albowiem dopiero w drugiej dekadzie XXI w. zostało zrealizowanych kilka nowych obiektów kultury. Po nakreśleniu najważniejszych cech tego nurtu, na podstawie analizy realizacji w Europie Zachodniej i w USA autorka artykułu omówiła wybrane przykłady: Muzeum Ognia w Żorach (otwarte w 2014 r.), Centrum Kulturalno-Kongresowe Jordanki w Toruniu (otwarte w 2015 r.) oraz Muzeum II Wojny Światowej w Gdańsku (otwarte w 2017 r.). W każdej realizacji, podobnie jak obserwować to można w przykładach znanych zachodnich twórców, istotna jest indywidualna filozofia architektów – autorów tych realizacji. W artykule przedstawione zostały wypowiedzi twórców tych obiektów. Autorka zwróciła także uwagę, że z końcem lat 90. XX w. pojawiły się w naszym kraju w ramach tego nurtu pojedyncze realizacje domów jednorodzinnych, prywatnych warsztatów produkcyjnych oraz wnętrz. W każdym wypadku analiza estetyczna tych dzieł wykazała, że wybrane obiekty są reprezentatywne dla omawianego nurtu, realizują jego awangardowe hasła, obrazujące emocje i nastroje dekonstrukcji.

Słowa kluczowe: dekonstrukcja, realizacje, estetyka, struktura form