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GREAT MAN IN ANONIMOUS TIME

"Who is the greatest architect in the world these days?" it is a common question for you, if you happened to be an architect. You might answer: "why to look for great men in these anonymous days?" or "every architectural school has its own saint, guru, somebody who gives principles to be followed." You can skip the answer, but many of us will think of some names – among them is for sure American architect Paul Rudolph. One would be interested in what has this architect made. That answer might be even harder, because of the long, long list, more than a hundred realized buildings, and the same number non-realized projects and studies. His greatness is not in these numbers, but in his projects – some of them are representing progressive steps forward in contemporary architecture movement.

Does 'form follow finance'?

Rudolph is not a functionalist, although he deals with form much better than many orthodox functionalists. But he is not there searching for the form inspiration. Indeed he is suspicious towards dogmatic analytic concept where he finds many (burdens) problems for the spaces solved in "functionalistic spirit". It is for sure that functionalism in solving some problems had stopped before a proper solution. For today, there is a small chance we could follow that track. In wide range of his creative work, Rudolph "has used" rich and generous clients. Bass House – a residence for the Texas billionaire cost more than \$ 1.5 million, and architects opponents, not having own creativity might point the slogan "form follows finance". But, Rudolph achieves the same quality even if he works in limited circumstances. No matter of dwelling units quality, still one fifth of Americans dwells in substandard circumstances. Quite many of Rudolph's activity is dedicated towards social housing. The project "Oriental Masonic Gardens" realized in New Haven is an example of creative value even in limited financial situation.

Our prejudices and suspicion towards so called "international style" and functionalism as its base, are not because of the architectural results of the great founders. When architectural genius is working and creating, he is making respected value, no matter of his means and approach. Our education and sensibility is always in correspondence with real value. Some dislike towards "international style" is in its shortened process which opens the possibility for many limited or even untalented architects. *Less* (in this case) *is* no longer *more*, but **LESS IS THE LEAST**. Some laymen think that everyone is able to paint like Picasso or design like Mies, but they are wrong. They don't understand that it is a big finale of an artistic process and not accidental and occasional simplicity. If an architect thinks this way, his work might not irritate, but might leave us without emotions.

Limitations of regional style

If formalism would not be labeled as (although it should not be) something bad, we could say that Rudolph is a formalist. In spatial solutions, he gives priority to form with permanent search for its psychological impact for user and observer. He develops Wright's attitude that form and function are the same. On that base, he adds all architectural circumstances: environment, landscape, climate, way of life and material. Given these conditions he creates

a building with its own identity. Space without identity can hardly have a virtue of an artistic work. With Rudolph, creative process is understood as a personal effort and that's why he is striving for own expression and own architectural personality. That is a part of author's imagination and dreams put inside the rational part with the purpose of affecting our sensibility. If everything is understandable and if we could explain everything, some unconscious parts would disappear. Those parts are tickling, giving pleasure and opening polemics.

General characteristics of Rudolph's architecture are the delight of shapes and complexity of form. It is more stressed with focal public buildings, with more acceptable excess, then on the residential administrative buildings or those subordinated to the city pattern. Contrary to bad play with form, Rudolph's form emerges as a result of interior space and vice versa. Interior and exterior have never been two separate worlds. They are firmly interconnected. Furthermore, all those shapes with purpose of excitement and exuberance are never outside of construction possibility, but maximal use of those possibilities. Rudolph is an excellent example in making difference between formalism and pseudo-formalism. Characteristics of the latter are also present in "regional styles" which are lately booming here with us, and many former "international style architects" converted to this „style“. The attitude that elements of folk songs will save our environment is a mistake of those who are willing to change our time for some other – past one.

There is more than one limitation of regional style. Rudolph mentions them: first, the industrialization, second, frequent traveling and easy communication, third, constant price increase of traditional materials and craftwork, fourth, influence of architectural magazines, fifth, respect and inclination to popular culture, sixth, the 'do it yourself' movement, endorsed by manufacturers and finally, seventh, abstract values contained in the new concept of space.

Passion for sketching/drawing

Considerable production by Paul Rudolph's office is a result of his great dedication to architecture. There have never been more than fifteen draftsmen in office, because that is the maximum number of people that Rudolph can supervise and fill with his drawings. He is involved in every employee's work and he directly solves every problem of design, way of drawing or detail. The magic of American business did not force Rudolph on the race for profit. He limited his number of projects on the number he is able to work on, completely dedicated with all his available energy, spending a significant amount of time in his office on 57th St, near the Fifth Avenue in New York. The passion and delight for architecture makes Rudolph to be an artist with all traditional meaning of that word. A direct connection with projects is because of his realized values in architecture. On contrary, an alienation ofarchitecture with some architects gains a bad success.

When it comes to division of work and commission, such practice often comes with bad results. For example, when an architect-manager is giving unclear sketches or when only declares his architectural taste and then expects that, in some way by others, it will be developed in a great architecture. No way. There is no architecture without pencil in own architect's hand. Drawings are weapons for creation of spaces and buildings and Rudolph uses that weapon to the maximum. Through many sketches, presentations and working

drawings he is purifying the concept and guides his imagination to the reality. Perspective drawings, made in special Rudolph style, express drawing passion. They are precise, rich and temperamental like the presented space and they have its own graphical value.

Great number of American artists and intellectuals are feeling spiritual connection with European culture. Contrary to the 'superman cowboys', they are coming over here with pilgrimage respect to their roots, to clear up own artistic criteria that might be partly in our mutual heritage. By the end of the month, Paul Rudolph is coming to Dubrovnik. The reason of his visit is not only the touristic popularity of this Adriatic pearl throughout USA, but recommendation from his friends, architects as well as photos of Dubrovnik that astonished Rudolph. Architectural and urban potential of Dubrovnik will surely be very inspiring for the great architect.

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