

The Influences of Everlasting Architecture in Ephemeral Architecture in Transylvania

Teodora Balan*¹

¹*Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning. 34-36 Observator Str., 404890, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

(Published online 28 February 2016)

Abstract

Ephemeral architecture contemporary techniques began to be used increasingly more often in Romania. The attention of this study will focus on Transylvania, because here we have identified several characteristics of ephemeral-everlasting relationship. Due to the way of life and ancestral occupations - farming and sheep breeding, Romania has a long tradition of temporary constructions, which provided housing in summer or during transhumance. Temporary shelters are of different types, depending on their use and the materials used. In the lowlands and hilly regions are used mainly clay and vegetable materials, wood is used only for certain parts of the structure, while in the mountains wood is the main material. Also, the lifespan differs based on utility, area and material. Although they are used only in summer, some structures can withstand the winter, with regard especially those in the mountains which only requires seasonal repairs. The rest are rebuilt every year. Speaking of the study, it is important to emphasize that there are influences of everlasting elements in the ephemeral architecture from ancient times, in the form of repetitive structures, even if the traditional temporary structures are not directly linked to the contemporary. In contemporary Transylvania, we have identified a large number of projects that contain an everlasting-ephemeral relationship. They are presented in the paper. The time frame of the study is 6 years from 2009 to 2015. Although the number of projects is quite large for the studied period of time, the number of the characteristics type of the everlasting-ephemeral relationship is quite small. We identified two types of structures: recurring and intermediate. It is interesting to note that sometimes projects do not fit into only one category, they borrow characters from each other.

Rezumat

Tehnicile arhitecturii efemere contemporane au început să fie utilizate din ce în ce mai des și în România. Atenția acestui studiu se va concentra pe Transilvania, deoarece aici am identificat mai multe caracteristici ale relației efemer-peren. Datorită modului de viață și a ocupațiilor ancestrale - agricultura și oieritul, România are o tradiție îndelungată de construcții temporare, care asigurau nevoia de adăpostire pe perioada verii sau a transhumantei. Adăposturile temporare sunt de diverse tipuri, în funcție de utilizarea acestora și de materialele folosite. În zona de câmpie și deal sunt folosite cu preponderență lutul și materialele vegetale, lemnul fiind folosit doar pentru anumite părți ale structurii, pe când în zona de munte lemnul devine materialul principal. De asemenea, durata de viață diferă, în funcție de utilitate, zonă și material. Deși sunt folosite doar pe timpul verii, unele structuri rezistă peste iarnă, fiind vorba, mai ales, de cele din zona de munte care necesită doar reparații, restul fiind reconstruite an de an. Din punct de vedere a studiului, este

* Corresponding author: Tel./ Fax.:+40745589841
E-mail address: teodora.balan@arch.utcluj.ro

important de subliniat faptul că, există manifestări ale perenizării efemerului din cele mai vechi timpuri, sub forma structurilor recurente, așa cum sunt ele definite în capitolul anterior, chiar dacă structurile temporare contemporane nu au o legătură directă cu cele tradiționale. În Transilvania contemporană, am identificat un număr destul de mare de proiecte care conțin caracteristici ale relației efemer-peren, ele fiind prezentate în continuare. Intervalul de timp în care se încadrează studiul este de 6 ani, din 2009 până în 2015. Deși numărul de proiecte este destul de mare pentru perioada de timp studiată, din punct de vedere a caracteristicilor relației efemer-peren în arhitectură, numărul lor este destul de restrâns. Am identificat două tipuri de structuri: recurentă și intermediară. E interesant de menționat că uneori proiectele nu se încadrează doar într-o singură categorie, ele împrumutând caractere.

Keywords: ephemeral, perennial, temporary.

1. Introduction

Permanence and stability have always been essential qualities of architecture. For everlasting architecture we can take this for granted. Unlike everlasting architecture, ephemeral architecture contradicts permanence, which leads to the need of reevaluating the entire definition of architecture. The value of ephemeral architecture occurred during the last century when visionary architects such as Richard Buckminster Fuller, Cedric Price or Archigram group, managed to prove its importance and applicability on a large scale. Even though their projects were rather utopian, they served as a source of inspiration for contemporary projects. Finally the evolution in technology and building materials implicitly, gave wings to the imagination of architects.

Ephemeral architecture has different roles today, most of them sharing common ground with everlasting architecture. As a result, there are many studies which classify ephemeral architecture by various categories or which use ephemeral architecture as research methodology for proving theoretical concepts.

This presentation is focused on the ephemeral-perennial relationship in Transylvania and it's a part of my PhD thesis.

The PhD study aims to analyze the relationship between ephemeral and perennial, assuming that there is a common ground and that the two meet and influence each other. Research is carried out both comparative by analyzing in parallel the perennial-ephemeral relationship and ephemeral-perennial relationship, and unidirectional, from the perspective of how evanescent architecture can influence the everlasting architecture. I did not insist on a study starting from the perennial architecture and the ways that it can influence the ephemeral architecture because I considered the two being separate subjects which deserve to be given individual importance.

2. The characteristics of ephemeral architecture in relation to perennial

Going through the literature, I observed the lack of theoretical studies to substantiate the hypothesis of a relationship between ephemeral and perennial architecture, although a lot of examples proving this connection can be found across the globe. This led to a series of questions: Is there a common ground where the two intersect? What happens when the two meet? How can one be influenced by the other?

The characteristics of ephemeral architecture in relation to perennial take place through different processes, but to identify them, I had to observe and analyze temporary architectural interventions at international level. We chose to study structures built during 2010-2015, a period of 5 years

offering a wide range of examples, connected with the present. From the research, we established six ways in which this process occurs: the signal structure, the provisional structure, the recurrent structure, the intermediate structure, the remembered structure and the portable structure.

Ephemeral architecture contemporary techniques began to be used increasingly more often in Romania. The attention of this study will focus on Transylvania, because here we have identified several characteristics of ephemeral-everlasting relationship.

Due to the way of life and ancestral occupations - farming and sheep breeding, Romania has a long tradition of temporary constructions, which provided housing in summer or during transhumance. Temporary shelters are of different types, depending on their use and the materials used. In the lowlands and hilly regions are used mainly clay and vegetable materials, wood is used only for certain parts of the structure, while in the mountains wood is the main material. Also, the lifespan differs based on utility, area and material. Although they are used only in summer, some structures can withstand the winter, with regard especially those in the mountains which only requires seasonal repairs. The rest are rebuilt every year. Speaking of the study, it is important to emphasize that there are influences of everlasting elements in the ephemeral architecture from ancient times, in the form of repetitive structures, even if the traditional temporary structures are not directly linked to the contemporary.

3. Everlasting-ephemeral relationship in Transylvania

In contemporary Transylvania, we have identified a large number of projects that contain an everlasting-ephemeral relationship. They are presented in the paper. The time frame of the study is 6 years from 2009 to 2015. Although the number of projects is quite large for the studied period of time, the number of the characteristics type of the everlasting-ephemeral relationship is quite small. We identified two types of structures: recurring and intermediate. It is interesting to note that sometimes projects do not fit into only one category, they borrow characters from each other.

Recurrent structure is a structure with a lifetime of several months, built in a place that hosts a construction from time to time. In this category are to be found several functions. The most common are the pavilions constructed for various events, which take place at regular intervals, in the same place. Also, the buildings that depend on weather conditions are recurrent structures, such as, for example, ice hotels that can be built and used only in certain climatic conditions.

Intermediate temporary structures are raised in temporary unused areas, or areas in a constant change. Temporary constructions that occur in these areas prevent the alteration of the places. Basically, they are a link between the old and the future function, preventing the degradation. Between the construction of the past, present and future, there is a functional link, as there are recurrent structures. The only common point is the place. Each building has a different purpose, establish other relationships with the place and social space.

3.1 Architecture Days Pavilions Cluj

Architecture Days Cluj-Napoca are a traditional event whose purpose is to emphasize the role of the architecture and of the architect in the city and to establish new relations between specialists. The event takes place every two years, and covers over a week, with several sections in several locations. One of the locations is hosted by a temporary pavilion placed each time in another part of town.

The first pavilion, The Garden Bookshop was built in 2009 and was a success, being received

enthusiastically both participants and passersby. The project was an experiment involving students from the Faculties of Architecture in Cluj-Napoca and Timisoara, together with students from the Faculty of Landscape Design in Cluj-Napoca, helped by architects and landscape architects. It was placed near the conferences area, on one of the busiest streets in Cluj, Eroilor Street, the street that benefits from a large pedestrian way.

This pavilion opened the appetite for an unwritten tradition of the Days of Architecture. Each year the event takes place, the students propose a new pavilion in a visible area of the city, becoming a pretext for accidental meetings, for new relationships between specialists and between specialists and residents Cluj.

Over time, Days of Architecture have become biennial event recognized nationally and pavilions designed in each edition can be classified as recurrent structures. I believe that we can make a parallel between Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in London and Architecture Days pavilions, when talking about the relationship with perennial ephemeral architecture by creating the tradition of an event. It appears occasionally, is used to exhaustion, disappears and reappears after a period of time under a different package, but with the same purpose. The scale of projects is different, but the concept remains similar. Obviously, repeating this temporary construction produces a tradition, which helps to perpetuate and increase the value of Architecture Days. Whenever a pavilion of this kind is out on the town, it arouses both curiosity and a memory exercise, following a trend already launched several years before.

3.2 Temporary Intervention, Culture Castle, Blaj

The Atelier MASS project was constructed in 2011 at Transylvania Fest, The Cultural Palace, Blaj. The festival promotes local culinary art, popularizing local communities, traditions and customs of Transylvania.

The project had two parts: in the interior was organized an exhibition for the contest of projects for the rehabilitation of the palace, and the former hall, destroyed by fire and overtaken by vegetation, has been transformed into an outdoor dining.

The project falls into the category of intermediate structures, but can be interpreted as a signal temporary building rehabilitation. However it takes over just a few elements characteristic to signal structures, it cannot be classified in this category.

In the case of the intervention in Blaj, the temporary project comes as a dressing of a deep wound left by the fire in the 90s, metaphorically fixing the temporal discontinuity of the existence of the Palace of Culture.

3.3 Open Days Festival, Banffy Castle, Bontida

Another place that Atelier MASS reactivated on many occasions is in Bontida, near Cluj-Napoca, The Banffy Palace. The Old Renaissance palace and its Baroque extensions have become popular with the beginning of the rehabilitation work in 2009. Since then, there take place every year various cultural activities in order to popularize the castle and to raise funds for rehabilitation.

One of these events was held in 2012 under the name "Open Day". At the event, the design office proposed a scenography similar to that of the Palace of Culture in Blaj, creating an area of contrast between old and new. The castle ruin was framework for indoor and outdoor temporary inlays. The inserts were minimal, made of light materials that have been in a minimal contact with the old structure, without creating a conflict.

This intervention is unique, it is not part of an architectural tradition, but it is in the tradition of an

event. "Open Day Bontida Banffy Palace" has become an event that is repeated every year, the reactivation of the castle ruin is taking place through different methods that attempt to link the history of the castle to the project of rehabilitation. In 2012, they used a different approach from the other 12 issues, with a proposal that attaches great importance to architecture. By inclusion in the tradition of the event this proposal becomes a binder with the past and also offer potential for future imaginative.

In terms of this example, we cannot discuss a recurrent structure because the structure is not cyclical, but the event repeats. We believe that the project falls into the category of intermediate structures, the approach being similar to the Cultural Palace in Blaj.

3.4 Electric Castle Festival, Banffy Castle, Bontida

The second type of temporary intervention that takes place on the Bontida domain is a repetitive event that has the potential to turn into tradition. Since 2013, here is held an electronic music festival. In 2015 the third edition will be held, and after the first two editions it is considered as the largest music festival in Romania given the number of participants. Because the work at the castle rehabilitation progresses slowly, the organisers need to build every year facilities for the smooth running of the event. Architects at Atelier MASS had the task of dealing with these facilities for the first two editions of the festival. The architects created seating areas, bar areas and installations that transformed the castle garden into a playful space, according to the event in progress.

In this case it is an event that aims to become a tradition, following in the same path as the "Open Day", but „electric Castle” benefits from specific architectural intervention each year. The returning of the festival on the castle domain every year brings a new innovative architectural intervention and their repetition transforms the architectural event into an example of the influence of everlasting architecture in ephemeral architecture by recurrence.

3.5 Ice Hotel, Bâlea Lac

Ice Hotel at Bâlea Lac is part of a functional family with a exclusive character (seven ice hotels in Europe), which captures increasingly more attention in Europe. This type of interventions are like the Phoenix bird, they reborn every year, going through a real ice cycle in nature.

The first version of the hotel was built at the Bâlea Lac in the 2005-2006 season, becoming the first and only ice hotel in Eastern Europe.

The concept is similar to ice hotels across Europe. The analyzed case studies come to support this claim, the similarities between the European and the Romanian ice hotels are visible, and for this study we believe that both are part of recurrent ephemeral architecture. The way in which this process occurs is recurrent, cyclical due to construction

5. Conclusions

Ephemeral architecture began to be used in Romania due to the interest of academics, especially in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca, being the result of different workshops. Along with students, the other pol who became interested in this type of architecture are young architectural offices open to innovation, that try to introduce new design methods to improve the quality of life both at Community and individual levels.

The process of developing temporary architecture in Transylvania is a phenomenon in continuous expansion. After analyzing case studies, we observed an increase in the frequency of this

phenomenon in the past 6 years. If by 2009 we have managed to identify only one important architectural example, which settle the relations between ephemeral and, in recent years, the process has experienced an exponential growth.

Perennial ephemeral relationship types in Transylvania are very few compared to the European average. We have identified two characteristics: intermediation and recurrence. In my opinion, the recurrence is one of the easiest ways by which this process occurs. I support this assertion by the large number of examples studied and their diversity of functionally and geographically. This category includes both examples studied in the previous chapter and the ones that we decided not to include them, because they were similar to those analyzed.

I appreciate that in the not too distant future, there will be a diversification of the characteristics by which the ephemeral architecture is reaffirmed in Transylvania, reflected in more projects. This statement is based on the phenomenon of globalization, with the advantages and disadvantages arising from it, the belief that there is the desire and the opportunity to rally the West European architectural phenomenon.

Acknowledgements

This paper was supported by the project "Improvement of the doctoral studies quality in engineering science for development of the knowledge based society – QDOC" contract no. POSDRU/107/1.5/S/78534, project co-funded by the European Social Fund through the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources 2007-2013.

6. References

- [1] Baker, L, 2014, *Temporary architecture*, Braun Publishing AG, Berlin.
- [2] Bishop, P; Williams, L, 2012, *The Temporary City*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, London, New York.
- [3] Gausa, M, Guallart, V, Muller, W, Soriano, F, Porras, F, Morales, J, 2003, *The Metapolis Dictionary of Advanced Architecture: City, Technology and Society in the Information Age*, ACTAR, Barcelona.
- [4] *** "Backstage: Jean Nouvel", în *Wall Street Journal*, pag. 32, Aug 24, 2001.
- [5] a+u 2006:10 – Temporary architecture.
- [6] Aldea, S, "Atelier MASS: Electric Castle 2013 – 2014. Scenografie de eveniment", în *Revista Zeppelin*, nr. 126, iulie-august 2014, pag. 36-42.
- [7] Aldea, S, "Scenografie de eveniment în Palatul Cultural Blaj", în *Arhitect*, nr. 3 din 2012.
- [8] Pavilioanele Zilelor Arhitecturii Cluj, <http://www.arhiforum.ro/proiecte/garden-bookshop>, consultat în 1 iunie 2012.
- [9] Pavilioanele Zilelor Arhitecturii Cluj, <http://www.arhiforum.ro/proiecte/pavilionul-za11>, consultat în 1 iunie 2012.
- [10] Palatul Culturii de la Blaj, <http://ateliermass.ro/filter/projects/BLAJ>, consultat în 12 iulie 2012.
- [11] Ziua Porților Deschise, Palatul Banffy, Bonțida, <http://www.arhiforum.ro/proiecte/ziua-portilor-deschise-deschide-ochii>, consultat în 26 ianuarie 2014.
- [12] Ziua Porților Deschise, <http://ateliermass.ro/filter/projects/BONTIDA-OPEN-DAYS>, 26 consultat în 28 ianuarie 2014.
- [13] Pavilioanele Zilelor Arhitecturii Cluj, <http://www.arhiforum.ro/agenda/start-pentru-construirea-pavilionului-za-2013>, consultat în 7 ianuarie 2015.
- [14] Palatul Culturii de la Blaj, <http://primariablaj.ro/primaria-blaj-construieste-camine-culturale-noi-la-tiur-manarade-si-petrisat/>, consultat în 14 ianuarie 2015.

- [15] Ziua Porților Deschise, Palatul Banffy, Bonțida, <http://ateliermass.ro/filter/projects/BONTIDA-OPEN-DAYS>, consultat în 17 ianuarie 2015.
- [16] Hotelul de Gheată de la Bâlea Lac, <http://www.businessinsider.com/ranked-the-9-best-ice-hotels-in-the-world-2013-11>, consultat in 20 ianuarie 2015.
- [17] Hotelul de Gheată de la Bâlea Lac, <http://hotelofice.ro/ro/hotel-of-ice/history-of-hotel-of-ice-at-balea-lac/>, consultat in 20 ianuarie 2015.
- [18] Hotelul de Gheată de la Bâlea Lac, <http://www.travelguideromania.com/ro/hotelul-de-gheata-de-la-balea-lac-muntii-fagaras/>, consultat in 20 ianuarie 2015.
- [19] [balea-lac-muntii-fagaras/](http://www.travelguideromania.com/ro/hotelul-de-gheata-de-la-balea-lac-muntii-fagaras/), consultat in 20 ianuarie 2015.
- [20] Hotelul de Gheată de la Bâlea Lac, <http://buildipedia.com/aec-pros/featured-architecture/hotel-of-ice-in-transylvanian-alps/>, consultat in 20 ianuarie 2015.
- [21] Hotelul de Gheată de la Bâlea Lac, <http://corbiialbi.ro/index.php/compas/128-meseria-ii-lui-varga-attila-i-hotelul-de-ghea-de-la-b-lea/>, consultat in 20 ianuarie 2015.
- [22] Hotelul de Gheată de la Bâlea Lac, <http://www.detail-online.com/architecture/topics/growing-structure-kagome-sandpit-in-vienna-021002.html>
- [23] Festivalul Electric Castle, Palatul Banffy, Bonțida, <http://ateliermass.ro/filter/projects/ELECTRIC-CASTLE-2014>, consultat în 1 februarie 2015.
- [24] Festivalul Electric Castle, Palatul Banffy, Bonțida, <http://ateliermass.ro/filter/projects/BONTIDA-ELECTRIC-CASTLE>, consultat în 1 februarie 2015.