

Architectural Narration of Memorial Architecture Throughout 20th and 21st Centuries

Form, Spatial and Exhibition Design as Means to Deliver Stories and Experience

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Abstract

The symbolic and meaningful richness of the architecture of commemoration reminds us of important events in the history of mankind, mixing past realities with present-day meta worlds largely created by architecture and place, as well as exhibitions, objects, or even our own experiences. Semiotic opulence, and therefore also the narrative richness of architecture and objects has a role that can mutually reinforce the message, which in practice occurs moderately often. With the help of four case studies, I tried to define strong elements that initiate a dialogue or conduct a monologue with the recipient. Through the following comparison of the examined objects and their features, partial conclusions characterizing each project were drawn, and then they were put together in order to answer the question about the hierarchy of the narrative of the architecture of remembrance and historical artifacts. The consistency of all forms of communication is very important for the overall impact on the recipient. The cooperation between artists and architects during the design of the memorials turned out to have a significant impact on emotions and thoughts. The completeness of the achieved narratives often means that the boundaries between architecture and objects blur. The presence of both components adds to the strength of the media's transfer.

Keywords:

memorial architecture, architectural narration, semiotics, art and architecture,

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Introduction

The main objective of the work is to examine the architectural narration of memorial architecture and the role of housed artifacts in the process of storytelling. In order to do that, five projects were chosen based on their exterior and interior design as well as the presence of historical or cultural objects which can be found within their walls.

The Jewish Museum by Daniel Libeskind presents an expressive form and spaces that, through their proportions, materials, the use of light or emptiness, affect the visitor by telling him a story. Nevertheless, the presence of exhibits in the museum is negligible, as the mediation between history and the recipient is guided by architecture. The opposite approach is presented by the Warsaw Rising Museum, where historical objects and carefully designed exhibition spaces play a major role in the narrative process. Architecture, a historic building, Tram electricity supply, is symbolic in this case. It is not intended to exalt the visitor or cause catharsis, but to create a secular and sacred space of remembrance for exhibitions and exhibition facilities reminding about the events of the August 1944 uprising. Each of the following projects, the Steilneset Memorial and Katyn Museum, was selected to explore other types of architectural narratives as well and to get a more complete picture of the considerations. The projects are listed in chronological order according to the construction completion date.

Two of the selected projects are located in Poland, the other two in Germany and Norway. All projects, except for the Steilneset Memorial, are dedicated to commemorating the events of World War II, however, due to the strong narrative of the project in a slightly different form than the other objects, it was included in the considerations, complementing the architectural narrative through the use of design and exhibits.

Memorial Architecture has its function as a museum for certain events, yet also a story telling one with its form. As Walter Benjamin (2007) says:

"Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception – or rather, by touch and sight", All chosen projects entail unusual atmospheres and hence subjectivity of perception as a result of the symbolic nature of architectural design (discussed in the next chapter Memorial Architecture). This formed a challenge for an objective opinion and estimation of the actual impact on the receiver, as the perception of space is filtered with one's own experiences causing often deflection of the meaning leading to own interpretations. There is however an ambiguity to this individuality of perception, for the semiotics of architectural languages does not only convey the message decrypted with the aforementioned personal experience, yet also with cultural and historical, thus more universal and rational, forms of heritage and design elements. (Larson, 1997)

The research to date covers the topics of memorial sites, specific architectural realizations and exhibition spaces, but little has been analysed in the relations between them. This work aims to fill this gap. Considerations and analyses are conducted to answer the question: Is architectural narration superior to the exhibition design or is there a relation which can lead to enhancement of conveying the story?

This history thesis was written on the basis of project documentation, authors' statements, atmosphere analysis, literature review. In order to obtain more information, e-mail correspondence with some museums, designers and commissions for architectural awards was also conducted.

The work begins with brief considerations on the architecture of memory. Topics covered include semiotics, perception and functionality. There are also questions about whether memory architecture is needed and if so why. In the following sections, selected projects are discussed with particular attention to the architectural narratives and those related to objects, and the relations between them.



Memorial Architecture

The Role and Perception

The role of the architecture of commemoration is to keep in memory and constantly recall events from the past of significant historical, cultural and ethical value. This typology of buildings is intended to remind both of the events and the people who participated in them or were indirectly affected, and their experiences (Pešterac, 2016). The architecture of commemoration definitely has a different effect than everyday buildings such as a shop, school, average apartment building, etc. Architecture cannot become a tool of pure functionality, bodily comfort and sensual pleasure, devoid of a mediating, existential task (Pallasmaa, 2012). Some might even argue that they are sacred spaces. Daniel Libeskind, when asked if he considered museums to be secular churches, said:

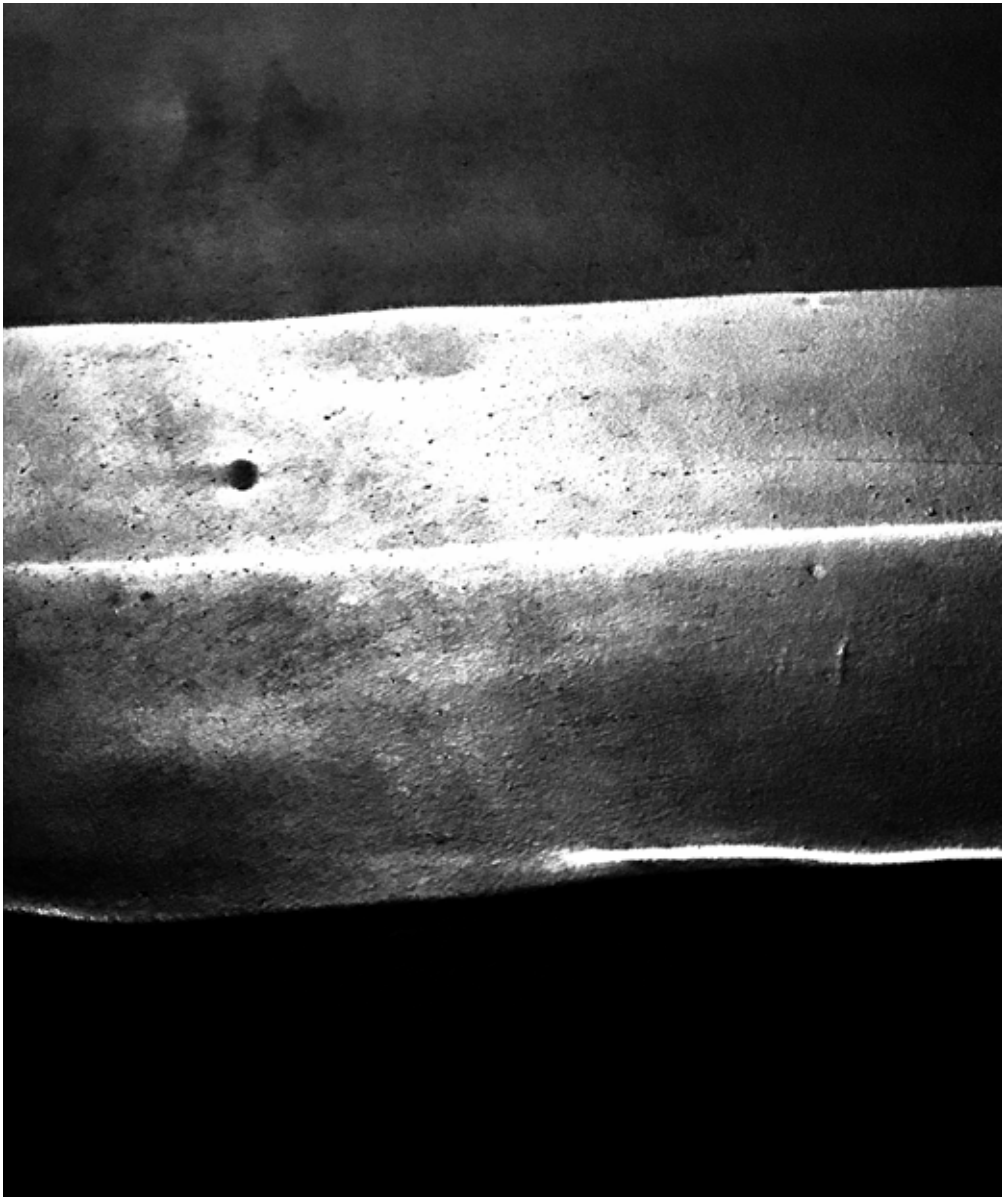
"Well, museums are very important throughout the world. Museums are being built not only to house particular collections and particular programs, but also to regenerate cities themselves. There is a competition all around the world (...) for museum buildings, because museums today represent a public discourse, a public activity, and a public attraction. So undoubtedly, museums today perform a considerable function which gather citizens desires, emotions and visions." (Libeskind, 1999)

Wojtkiewicz (2017) argues that factors such as narration, the correct use of time and the sequence of events at the memorial site give them a sacred status. Deep architecture makes us experience ourselves as complete and spiritual beings (Pallasmaa, 2012).

When considering the action and impact that certain events, e.g. WWII, have had on the history of mankind, it is essential that the goal of architecture is to commemorate the fallen and to draw the appropriate conclusions to prevent similar events in the present and future. A threat to this type of narrative is to provoke aggression towards the perpetrator and forget what is really more important - the loss of human life, dignity or faith. One might wonder if it is really worth to create architecture of commemoration. According to Dimković (2016), thanks to this type of architecture, we are able to remember about given events, create their representation and connect the past with the present. The continuation of history and the indissolubility of events and human heritage are also symbolically represented by the project of the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind. The original name of the project is "Between the Lines" (Libeskind, 2001), in which one of the lines symbolizes the continuation of history as a whole, and the other broken one reminds of the turbulent events of modern history. (Ingold, 2007). However, despite historical continuity, we are unable to live in memories. The meanings and forms of places are constantly changing, people who have experienced the event directly are slowly departing. As Pierre Nora (1989) says, events are a constant and contemporary problem, so we need a space devoted to past events, as memories alone are not enough.

In a review of Pierre Nora's work by Dimković (2016), the author mentions three forms of the space of commemoration, i.e. physical, symbolic and

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- Dimković DM. Memorial Architecture as the Symbol of Remembrance and Memories. SEE J Archit Des. 2016 June 10; 2016:10018. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3889/seejad.2016.10018>
 - Ingold, Tim. "How the line became straight," in *Lines: A Brief History*. London, New York: Routledge, 2007: 152-170.
 - Nora, P. (1989). *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*. *Representations*, (26), 7-24. doi:10.2307/2928520
 - Pallasmaa, J. (2012). *The eyes of the skin : architecture and the senses* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
 - Pešterac, A. (2016). The Role of Space in Memorial Architecture. *Contour Journal*, 1(1). Retrieved from <https://contourjournal.org/index.php/contour/article/view/51>
 - Libeskind, D. (2001). *Daniel libeskind: the space of encounter*. Thames & Hudson.
 - Libeskind, D., & Binet Hélène. (1999). *Jewish museum, berlin*. G B Arts International.
 - Wojtkiewicz, S. (2017). The Symbol Criteria in Design Approach of Landscape and Architecture Memorial Site. DOI: 10.21005/pif.2017.29.D-01



functional. Dimković adds that recalling memories is based on psychological rather than historical grounds. This phenomenon has been going on since antiquity, when there was a need to create a relationship between memories and the place. This account consisted of imaginary content concerning the commemoration of the event, which was then trans-coded in a given place and its space. The semiotic premise of objects and architecture leads to subjective perception, but also, as Pallasmaa (2012) says, architecture strengthens existential experience, an individual sense of being in the world. Giving the phenomenology of psychological empiricism to memory space confirms that communication between space and the recipient, through its influence, reflects the way an individual deals with reality, which implies the ability to accept it and becoming aware of individual and collective loss (Pešterac, 2016). Larson (2017), writing about The Holocaust Memorial Museum, mentions the process of encoding events in architecture, the symbolic form of the message and the subjectivity of reception:

"Even short of a full historical and economic account, we may want to read in architectural objects the possible responses of different categories of users, forming hypotheses about how different publics would "decode" the meaning of a building. I see the reception of buildings (and of any artifacts or products that viewers must seek out) first, from the standpoint of access, with all the triumph over geographic and social distance access implies. Second, I see reception as a particular way of registering the sensorial impact that is inseparable from the first act of understanding and responding to images and sounds, pictures and words, buildings and

films. The elaboration and interpretation of all texts occur and recur in repetitions of the first experience, and in acts of recall; yet it should be clear that sensorial experience is primordial in the reception of architecture. Furthermore, we shall see that the "reading" of architectural texts is complicated by the immediate usefulness of these objects. The semantic meaning of a building (its "message") must first of all be what it is for, to whom it is open, and subliminally, as I suggested, how costly or cheap it looks." (Larson, 1997)

The architecture of memory is valued for its symbolism, which is commonly perceived as superior to the given form and the materials used. This is probably due to the function of the memory museum, which is not purely utilitarian. The deeply rooted symbolism in structure, space and time means that the material is no longer just a material, but a carrier of history recorded in its matter and aura. Dimković (2016) claims that the memorial also simulates the presence of people who are no longer with us. The juxtaposition of these materials creates a space in which and around which coded semiotic languages manifest historical events. Architecture and memorial sites present a more complex concept of memories, according to which the meta is given meaning to a world that has no time (Dimković, 2016). Pešterac (2016) describes it as:

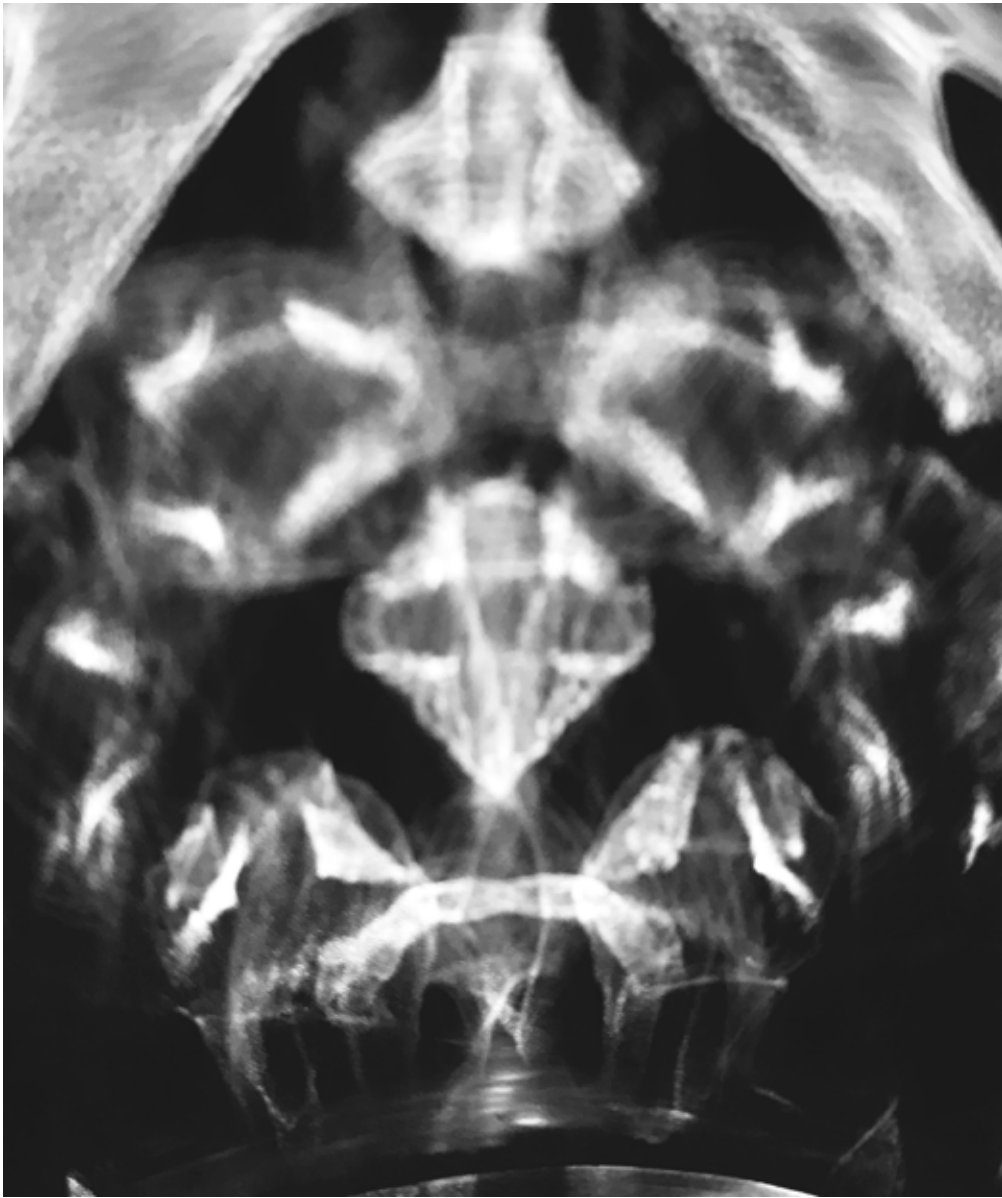
"Space in memorial architecture has a multimodal character and is designed to relocate an individual or a collective to a metaspace, an altered reality in which it is possible to establish an essential inner dialogue with the deepest layers of one's own being. Metaspace, in this case, is provided in the form of in-between spaces, which can

- Dimković DM. Memorial Architecture as the Symbol of Remembrance and Memories. SEE J Archit Des. 2016 June 10; 2016:10018. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3889/seejad.2016.10018>

- Larson, Magali Sarfatti. "Reading Architecture in the Holocaust Memorial Museum: A Method and an Empirical Illustration." In From Sociology to Cultural Studies: New Perspectives, edited by Elizabeth Long, 62-91. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

- Pallasmaa, J. (2012). The eyes of the skin : architecture and the senses (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

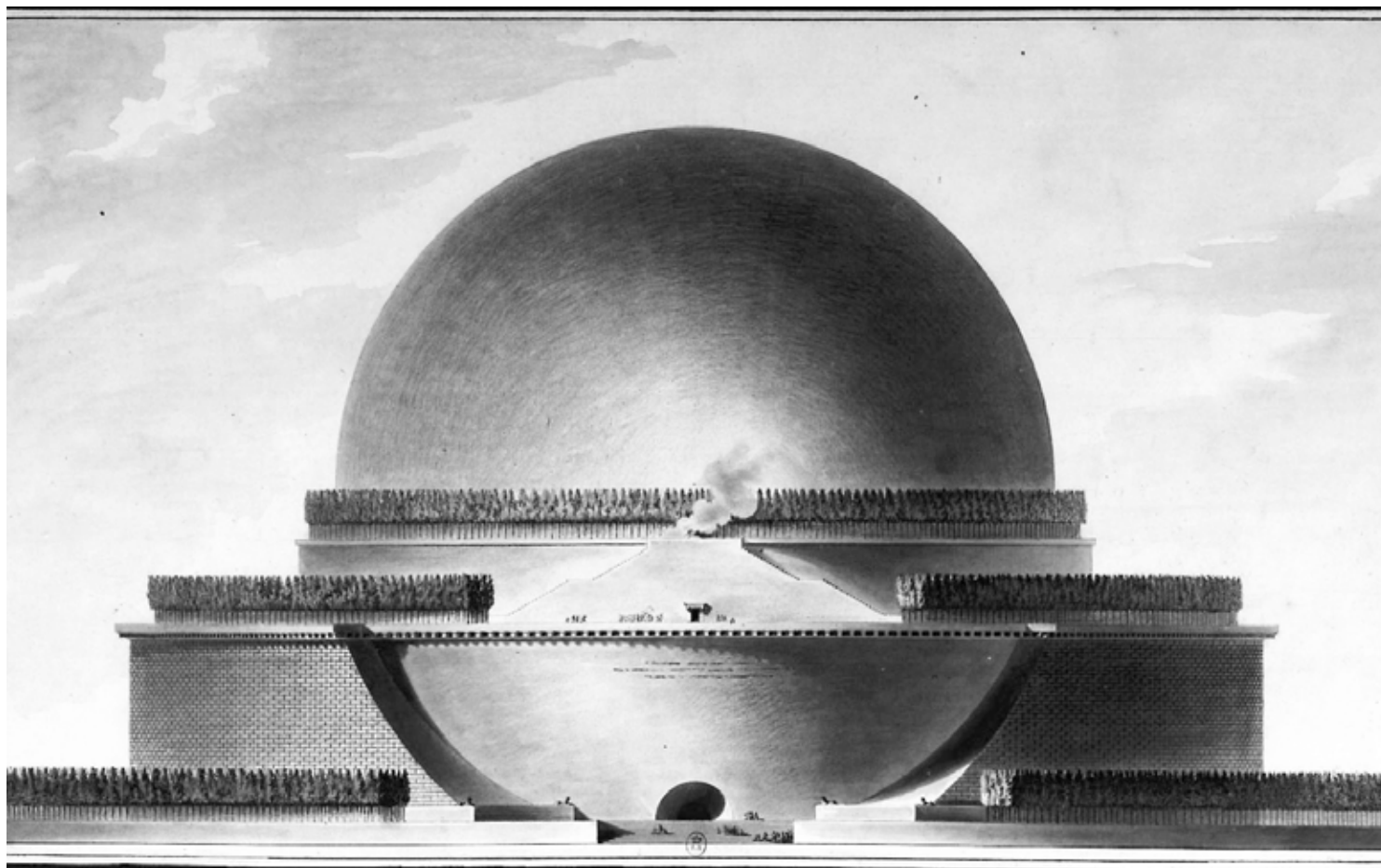
- Pešterac, A. (2016). The Role of Space in Memorial Architecture. Contour Journal, 1(1). Retrieved from <https://contourjournal.org/index.php/contour/article/view/51>



simultaneously be described as real and imaginary. The term refers to the actual physical presence of an individual in real space and time, while the imaginary is a form of heterotopia, an unreal space in which the communicational process is established."

Wojtkiewicz(2017), in agreement with Pešterac, states that the space of architecture of commemoration, symbolism and various symbolized realities result in the stratification of form, space and time into

a transcendental atmosphere. This opens a past reality in the present, thereby transforming the spatio-temporal form of the project. As Peter Zumthor wrote in his book *Thinking Architecture* (2010), "Architecture is exposed to life. If its body is sensitive enough, it can assume a quality that bears witness to the reality of past life. ". However, the experiential scale of these changes depends to a large extent on the individual, his sensitivity and experiences.





Jewish Museum, Berlin

Visual language and materiality

The Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum is an interesting case that influences the visitor with its expressive architectural form and carefully designed spaces inside. This project is of great importance for this research due to the extreme of its approach in relation to the use of spatial design and the negligible amount of display elements used.

Alexander von Vegesack, in the introduction to Boissière (1990), talks about the concept of art museum buildings, which should not merely be warehouses for art, but in themselves should show the value of the art they want to accommodate. One could find in this statement a similarity to museum architecture in a commemorative context. Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum is a work of history, as it were. This building contains and speaks the history through its form, space and materiality.

Before we move on to architecture, the place where the museum is located is worth mentioning - Berlin, the capital of Germany. As mentioned in the previous chapter, semiotics in architecture and memorial sites plays a central role in the narrative process. Benjamin (2007), speaking of translations and complementation by different languages, writes:

"(...) all suprahistorical kinship of languages rests in the intention underlying each language as a whole - an intention, however, which no single language can attain by itself but which is realized only by the totality of their intentions supplementing each other; pure language."

I believe that in these considerations one can go beyond linguistic considerations and apply them, inter alia, to the semiotics of sociology,

cultural studies, history or extra-linguistic signs important for the subject of narrative architecture of remembrance considered in this work. The architectural language of the Jewish Museum enters into a polemic with the narrative of the city (culture, historical discourse) and people (sociology) who want to commemorate the events and invite the Jewish population to the city again. This conversation leads to the mutual strengthening of the narrative of the place and indirectly also of architecture. The Jewish Museum is strongly set in context and supported by other types of narrative. The museum's architectural answer can be read from the form and the facade.

The project was originally called "*Between the Lines*", which is still used by architect Daniel Libeskind. It consists of two lines - organization and relationship. One of them simple, straight, but broken into many pieces; the other is intricate but endlessly continuing. (Libeskind, 2001). Ingold (2007) reflects on this saying:

"This explanation can be taken as a paradigmatic summation of both the calamities of modern history and the irrepressible potential of life to find a way through, and to keep on going, even under the most trying of circumstances. Indeed fragmentation can be read positively in so far as it opens up passages - albeit unconventional ones - that might previously have been closed off, allowing inhabitants to find their own 'ways through', and thereby to make places for themselves, amidst the ruptures of dislocation." And "The line, it seems, has been broken into fragments. If the straight line was an icon of modernity, then the fragmented line seems to be emerging as an equally powerful icon of postmodernity."

- Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 2007: 217-251.

- Boissière Olivier, Gehry, F. O., Filler, M., & Bryant, R. (1990). *The vitra design museum*, frank gehry architect. Rizzoli.

- Ingold, Tim. "How the line became straight," in *Lines: A Brief History*. London, New York: Routledge, 2007: 152-170.

- Libeskind, D. (2001). *Daniel libeskind: the space of encounter*. Thames & Hudson.



A strong and expressive form, which regardless of time will still maintain its power of communication and will be a strong reminder of inviting the Jewish people to Berlin and commemorating the harm done. Picon (2004) argues that the purpose of architecture is to “speak to mind and senses”. He claims that to maintain its status as an artistic practice that represents the common societal values, it has to serve a function more than just physical, it has to be moral as well. The Jewish Museum does not only create a space for remembrance of Holocaust victims, yet serves also as a reminder to uphold cultural values of different nations and oppose the still-present anti-Semitism and racial prejudice.

Narrative of the interior:

The Jewish Museum in Berlin is a combination of old and new architecture. After crossing the threshold of the door, we still have the impression that we are in the secular space of modern times. However, as we move deeper into the museum, the atmosphere changes to a more serious and transcendental one. We feel the atmosphere of space, places and surroundings before any conscious observation of a detail takes place (Pallasmaa, 2012). The contrast of materials, their warmth and texture give the impression of the timelessness of the messages of the building and its history. The hand senses an invisible and formless stimulus, draws it into the world of space and matter and gives it shape (Pallasmaa, 2010). Space is no longer a place for discussion, but for listening and feeling. The ubiquitous concrete, emptiness and limited access to light dominate the visitor, giving the right tone of the narration. Walter Benjamin's One-Way Street concept was applied to a continuing sequence of sixty episodes along a zigzag. Each of

them represents one of the “Stations of the Star” described in Benjamin's text. (Libeskind, 2001). Moving through the space of the old building, the visitor is separated from the Libeskindian narrative of the new museum.

“The existing building is tied to the extension underground, preserving the contradictory autonomy of both the old building and the new building on the surface, while binding the two together in the depth of time.” (Libeskind, 2001)

Only by going down the tunnels to the new part do we slowly but fully become recipients of the history of the Jewish Museum. Particular attention should be paid to the contrast between the interior of the project and its surroundings. Moving from an old building to the new one, the visitor experiences a compression of the tragic events contained in one building. Such an experience makes the symbolism of these events ubiquitous and powerful. On the other hand, leaving the museum building, and at the same time entering the Garden of Exile, allows you to shed the burden of just experienced events. When describing thresholds and transitions, Peter Zumthor (2006) emphasizes that they are of great importance for the feeling of space and give an unbelievable feeling of focus when we enter a closed space. The fact that the entrance to and exit from the Garden of Exile leads through the building means that the visitor must return there and be confronted again with the story told by the museum.

There are three underground paths in the museum that tell of different events (Libeskind, 2001). Nevertheless, concrete is ubiquitous in all of them. The atmosphere accompanying the

- Libeskind, D. (2001). Daniel libeskind: the space of encounter. Thames & Hudson.

- Pallasmaa, J. (2010). The thinking hand : existential and embodied wisdom in architecture (Ser. Ad primers). Wiley.

- Pallasmaa, J. (2012). The eyes of the skin : architecture and the senses (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

- Picon, Antoine, Emmanuel J. Petit, and Lucia Allais. 2004. “The Ghost of Architecture: The Project and Its Codification.” *Perspecta* 35. p.12

- Zumthor, P. (2006). *Atmospheres : architectural environments, surrounding objects*. Birkhäuser.



journey through each of the paths is a common denominator that still reminds us of the tragedy. As mentioned before, the materials follow symbolism in the architecture of commemoration. Peter Zumthor (2006) describes the feelings related to, among other things, the temperature of the material and what they do with the heat in the visitor's body. The cold of concrete in the Jewish Museum takes away the heat from our bodies and expresses depressing emotions. Its structure, hard and compact, is also a participant in the conversation and may testify to the doomed fate of the victims. The semiotics of architecture, including its materials, open to interpretation, means that it can be interpreted differently by each visitor. In the works of the American artist Jean Michel Basquiat, the understatement and the lack of imposing a rigid definition mean, in the artist's opinion, that we try to read the hidden meanings with greater interest (Great Art Explained, 2021). It is this suggestiveness of materials, space, proportions etc. in the case of the Libeskind project, it allows the visitor to bear the burden of the events of history through gradual cognitive recognition. This purely architectural narrative is undisturbed by a plethora of exhibits, which also affects its definition as expressive enough in itself. Shalekhet- Fallen Leaves, an installation by Menashe Kadishman is an apt complement to the space that fits in with the colors, material and, most importantly, the acoustics of the space.

"Listen! Interiors are like large instruments. Collecting sound, amplifying it, transmitting it elsewhere. That has to do with the shape peculiar to each room and with the surfaces of the materials they contain, and the way those materials have been applied." (Zumthor, 2006)

Fallen Leaves, faces of the victims of the war stacked on top of each other when stepped on, emit sounds collectively, like a groan or a scream that immediately spreads inside the building reaching the ears and hearts of the visitors.

These sounds are a counter-balance to the deaf acoustic emptiness of the building, thus adding complexity to the narrative. Sight isolates while sound engages. With the help of sound, a feeling of being inside is created. Buildings do not respond to our gaze, but reflect sounds back to our ears. Pallasmaa in his book "The Eyes of the Skin" quotes Walter Ong's book: "The enveloping effect of sound [...] influences the human perception of the cosmos" (Pallasmaa, 2012). The sensory quality of the museum and its complementation by the Fallen Leaves installation reach the visitor and his thoughts strongly. Daniel Libeskind (1999) says: *"If a museum is good, then it continues to operate in the minds of its visitors after its closing hours. It continues to be an image which can be filled with dreams, analyzes and thoughts."* The museum's architecture itself presents a strong narrative full of symbolism and possible interpretation. On the one hand, it is rigid and uncompromising, and on the other, a place for contemplation and own reflection. The narrative of architecture, in the case of the Jewish Museum, surpasses that of exhibition objects and installations. Nevertheless, the latter add value and strengthen the message of architecture. An interesting aspect, not yet discussed, are the olfactory values of the building. However, in this matter, neither the building nor the few objects contribute to the narrative.

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- Libeskind, D., & Binet Hélène. (1999). Jewish museum, berlin. G B Arts International.
 - Pallasmaa, J. (2012). The eyes of the skin : architecture and the senses (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
 - Zumthor, P. (2006). Atmospheres : architectural environments, surrounding objects. Birkhäuser.



Warsaw Rising Museum, Warsaw

The Aura of Warsaw Rising Museum's Artifacts

The Warsaw Rising Museum is partly located in the historic building of the tram power plant. The type of narration presented by the museum is strongly defined by the exhibitions and collected artifacts. The building itself is not a museum archetype and does not refer in its form or materials to the event it concerns. When analyzing the facades of the building, it cannot be stated that it is a museum building and what event it would like to tell about. Nevertheless, the structure and composition of the exhibitions can tell a story well, but it requires greater involvement and concentration of the viewer. Here, the museum building was used rather in the art container category. According to Peter Zumthor (2006), quality architecture is one that can move the recipient. The architecture of the Warsaw Rising Museum is beautiful, industrial, but common. He is not the type that can evoke emotions other than the prosaic admiration of the aesthetics of its brick facades or cobblestone floors.

Museum exhibitions, on the other hand, use image, light and sound. They assume the use of multimedia effects that bring insurrectionary reality closer and the stylization of the space to those from the uprising period. The route runs chronologically and thematically, and at the heart of the museum there is a steel monument that passes through all floors. It comes with a beating heart that symbolizes the life of Warsaw in 1944 (1944, 2016). The sensory richness of the exhibitions allows the viewer to partially experience the events, which goes beyond the passive, limited informational character of architecture. The second level of the exhibition can be accessed by an elevator with a collection of insurgent bands. The fights in August and everyday life in the insurgent Warsaw are presented on the mezzanine. The Palladium cinema displays

three insurgent film chronicles of the Home Army Information and Propaganda Bureau, shown during the Uprising. The sightseeing route includes an arrangement of the canal, where identification with the insurgents is supported by appropriate scenery, visual and sound effects (1944, 2016)

The inspiration for the design of the Warsaw Rising Museum were foreign museums such as the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the Terror Museum in Budapest (1944, 2016). Larson (1997), describing his experiences with the Memorial Museum in Washington, also refers to the architectural and exhibition narrative:

"The importance of the public's predisposition confirms that architecture cannot be deterministic: it connotes with great ambiguity. Hence the great importance the various narratives acquire in affixing metaphorical meanings to built forms that do not intrinsically have them. Yet the narrative of the building cannot be what lasts, for it cannot match the narrative of the exhibits, a story that has become the unquestioned and unquestionable measure of evil in our century. A building is a human achievement, it cannot say: "here, only anger and shame are appropriate, sentiment is out of the question; these corpses, these executioners were homo sapiens, our species, as were those like us who chose to ignore it all." The objects of everyday life in the ghettos and in the camps cannot say that either. The photographs and films, like ghosts, can" (Larson, 1997)

Larson emphasizes the superiority of exhibits and exhibitions over architecture. He emphasizes that the museum building is a human achievement that cannot make a statement, as well as everyday

- 1944. (2016). O nas. <https://www.1944.pl/artykul/o-nas,4512.html>

- 1944. (2016). Ekspozycja. <https://www.1944.pl/artykul/ekspozycja,4500.html>

- Larson, Magali Sarfatti. "Reading Architecture in the Holocaust Memorial Museum: A Method and an Empirical Illustration." In *From Sociology to Cultural Studies: New Perspectives*, edited by Elizabeth Long, 62-91. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

- Zumthor, P. (2006). *Atmospheres : architectural environments, surrounding objects*. Birkhäuser.



objects found in ghettos. Unlike them, according to Larson, photographs and films can. Probably the designers of the Katyn Museum, described later, would not agree with it, taking into account the "CERTIFICATE" exhibition, in which such objects were elevated to the rank of relics, the power of which is very strong and memorable (Mycielski, 2015) (Gajda, 2018). An important factor determining the expression of architecture is its local, temporal, historical and political context. Using historical structures with your own narrative and responding to it can also add to the power of the message. However, in cases of inspiration such as the Memorial Museum in Washington, this does not occur, and at the Warsaw Rising Museum, architecture remains rather silent about the events of 1944.

As far as the interior is concerned, the darkness prevails there, but it is lit by artificial lighting. The windows are covered from the inside and keep out the sun's rays. This allowed the designers to adapt the sightseeing paths to the respective exhibitions. The darkness of the interior, however, does not arouse our protest, we discover its special beauty in it. (Tanizaki, 2001). Hughes (2010) emphasizes the important role of light in the process of designing exhibitions and drawing visitors' attention. Thus, the shadow of the interior is an important participant in the narrative that brings sharpness to the other elements. It also describes how new methods make it possible to expand narratives in exhibition environments, creating stories from them and their parts to be shared by visitors. Objects in such an environment are perceived through the prism of its narrative using materials, light, film, or the physical

layout of the room. Hughes also emphasizes that the interactivity of exhibitions has a positive effect on reading the history of exhibitions, especially by children.

Larson (1997) notes that the design of exhibitions should be more focused on a variety of audiences. The Warsaw Rising Museum has exhibitions for various age groups and organizes numerous museum lessons for children, teenagers and adults. In the Little Insurgent Room, designed especially for children, children learn history by watching an insurgent theater or playing the role of scout postmen and nurses. The young visitors can use items stylised as those from the time of uprising (1944, 2016).

The designers, as the museum's authorities claim, first of all wanted to reflect the atmosphere of that time in order to recreate the atmosphere prevailing in Warsaw and the everyday life of the civilian population. The purpose of the exhibitions is to tell the history of the Uprising in all its aspects and convey its meaning (1944, 2016). Very rich in artifacts and carefully designed exhibition sequences create a kind of time machine and allow one to feel the events of Warsaw from 44 The narrative of objects, films, photographs and the way they are presented appeal to the visitor after entering the museum. The shape and architecture of the building are down-to-earth and do not relate to the narrative of the exhibition. In the case of the Warsaw Rising Museum, it is difficult to talk about an architectural narrative. The carriers of the tragic stories of the Warsaw Rising are not the walls of the museum, but what is hidden behind them.

- 1944. (2016). O nas. <https://www.1944.pl/artukul/o-nas,4512.html>

- 1944. (2016). Ekspozycja. <https://www.1944.pl/artukul/ekspozycja,4500.html>

- Gajda, R., Szcześniak, N (2018, May 6). Muzeum Katyńskie: miejsce zadumy i powód do dumy | Architecture is a good idea [Video] YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcZ7PBhHTqY>

- Hughes, P. (2010). Exhibition design (Ser. Portfolio). Laurence King.

- Larson, Magali Sarfatti. "Reading Architecture in the Holocaust Memorial Museum: A Method and an Empirical Illustration." In *From Sociology to Cultural Studies: New Perspectives*, edited by Elizabeth Long, 62-91. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

- Mycielski, K. (2015). Wrażliwość dwóch pokoleń – o Muzeum Katyńskim Krzysztof Mycielski. https://architektura.muratorplus.pl/krytyka/muzeum-katynskie_5525.html

- Tanizaki Junichirō, & Moore, C. (2001). *In praise of shadows*. (T. J. Harper, Trans.). Vintage Books.

- Zumthor, P. (2006). *Atmospheres : architectural environments, surrounding objects*. Birkhäuser.



Steilneset, Vardø

The Life and Death Dialogue of Steilneset Memorial

The Steilneset Memorial Commemorating the victims of accusations of pacts with the devil is a great example of how architecture and exposition work together. The project was created in cooperation of the architect Peter Zumthor with the American-French artist Louis Bourgeois. The creations of both authors tell a story, commemorate the victims and warn. Nevertheless, apart from the dialogue with the outside world, they also conduct a strong architectural and political discourse between their own elements, such as accessibility, form, material / matter etc. In the previously discussed topics of symbolism in the architecture of commemoration, the place where the architecture is located was briefly discussed. In the case of the Steilneset Memorial, the crime scene is alleged and therefore representative. "The exact site of the burnings is not known, not least because it is possible that they took place at various locations in the Vardø area during the hundred years of the witchcraft trials." (Tanović, 2019). Nevertheless, it is emphasized that Steilneset is both a reminder of the victims of the 17th century and the persecuted today (Ødemark, 2014). The Queen of Norway claims that thanks to Steilneset, it has finally become clear what exactly happened in the city. This memorial should remind us of this and many other places where, even now, unworthy and unfair treatment of people takes place (Finnmarken, 2011).

The general concept of architecture was to create two separate buildings. "Dot", arousing the trauma of burning people alive at the stake, and "Line" commemorating the victims (Tanović, 2019). The Memorial was designed with great attention and respect for local customs. Peter

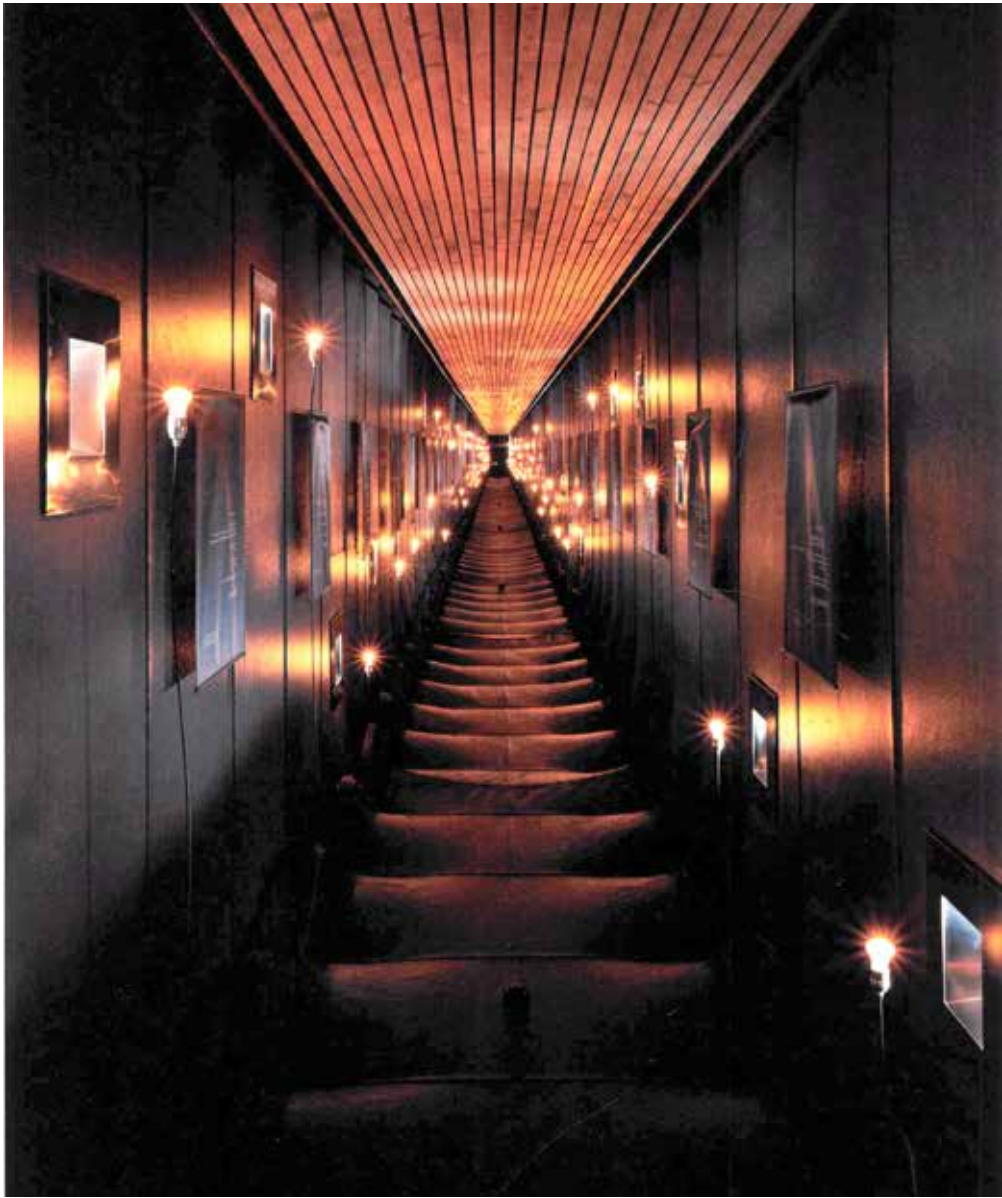
Zumthor, who came to see the construction site, noticed that there are few boats in the harbour these days and that the wooden structures that were once used to drain the fish are outdated and decaying. The same could be said of many houses that have also been abandoned. Little is left of the old custom of lamps illuminating house windows after dark (Zumthor, 2014). The emptiness and silence of the night took over the area. The sound of the night is a memento of human loneliness and mortality (Pallasmaa, 2012), which additionally gives the place and architecture a transient character. Inspired by the place and local architecture, Zumthor designed a memorial covered with a material resembling a sailcloth, which is actually a fiberglass canvas covered with Teflon (Zumthor, 2014). It covers a structure resembling the previously mentioned wooden stands on which the fish were dried. The form of the building resembles a local boat (Ødemark, 2014). Nearby, a few meters away, there is a reflective dark glass pavilion which contrasts with the previously described elongated pavilion on one side and the natural surroundings on the other. This is also where the Bourgeois installation was placed (Tanović, 2019). The materials selected for both buildings strengthen the ambivalent nature of the memorial. The structure of the Memorial Hall is made of wood, which is a perishable material, indicating a specific period in history and its offerings. While the second pavilion is covered with black reflective glass, which forms a cover for installations, trauma and their presence nowadays. Translucency of the black glass panels makes the burning chair partially visible, which adds an aura of mysticism to the important narrative of objects (Tanović, 2019).

- Ødemark, J. (2014). Cultural Difference and Development in the Mirror of Witchcraft: The Cultural Policy of Display at Steilneset Memorial. *The Nordic Journal of Cultural Policy*, 17(2-2014), 187-209.

- Pallasmaa, J. (2012). *The eyes of the skin : architecture and the senses* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

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The use of elements resembling local landscape elements prolongs the life of the unity of culture and memory. Juhani Pallasmaa in an interview with Peter Zumthor said "I think the traces of use and patina and the traces of weather and all that enrich the building: they bring in the narrative of life and time." (Andersen, 2012). Zumthor, by analogy to the characteristic elements of the city found there, fits into the narrative of life and time, which Pallasmaa talks about. This serves to continue the memory of the events. Zumthor created a poetic form by showing an understanding of materials, while Bourgeois targeted human weakness (Tanović, 2019). The monument created by them and Willumsen is unique among this type of architecture, because it does not adhere to the standard selection of materials and presents an unusual way of communicating with the viewer (Guttormsen, 2016). Without a clear distinction between a monument and a memorial, Zumthor used the advantages of both to do everything he could not to create a generic space, but an emotional space that brings the viewer as close as possible to the historical dimension, and thus to some extent to experience and remember the events of the 17th century (Tanović, 2019). Bourgeois takes a slightly different approach. Contrary to Zumthor, according to which materials have an independent existence of their own, which is born out of a reliable process of creation, Bourgeois focuses on a play of emotions and ideas, rejecting craftsmanship. Nevertheless, the materials of both artists and their design approaches assume that they express and evoke emotions in the recipient (Tanović, 2019). Guttormsen and Swensen talking about the symbols of Bourgeois' installation say:

"The result is a disquieting atmosphere of tangled associations, which not only plays a part in the memorial's representational content, but is also capable of touching the visitor at a personal level" (Guttormsen, 2016).

Light bulbs hanging in the windows symbolize the lost lives of 91 people. Inspired by the light in the windows of local houses visible after dark, they tell about the names, origins and course of the sentence of the trial. You can read about it in white lists printed on black silk plaques next to the windows, one for each victim (Tanović, 2019). Both light sources - flashing fire from the Bourgeois installation and bulbs in the Zumthor windows, illuminate the arctic darkness, referring to local houses in the area (Guttormsen, 2016). The fire that Bourgeois used is a recognizable symbol of destruction (Tanović, 2019). Its nature attracts eyes and attention, but its aggressiveness keeps the observer at a distance. Tanović (2019) notes that Bourgeois cages are closed spaces that are not physically accessible, they can only be observed. Peter Zumthor presents a completely opposite approach. The architect creates a space for visiting, staying and coming again. This contrast gives the whole project a new meaning. The narratives of both creations complement each other, commemorating and teaching the visitor. Although the Bourgeois' installation does not allow access to it, the structure of the pavilion in which it is located makes it somewhat possible. The pavilion, made of seventeen free-standing glass panels (Zumthor, 2014), is highly reflective. Visitors see their reflections in the panes of glass lit by the fire of the installation (Ødemark, 2014). Thus, the visitor, with their personality / soul,

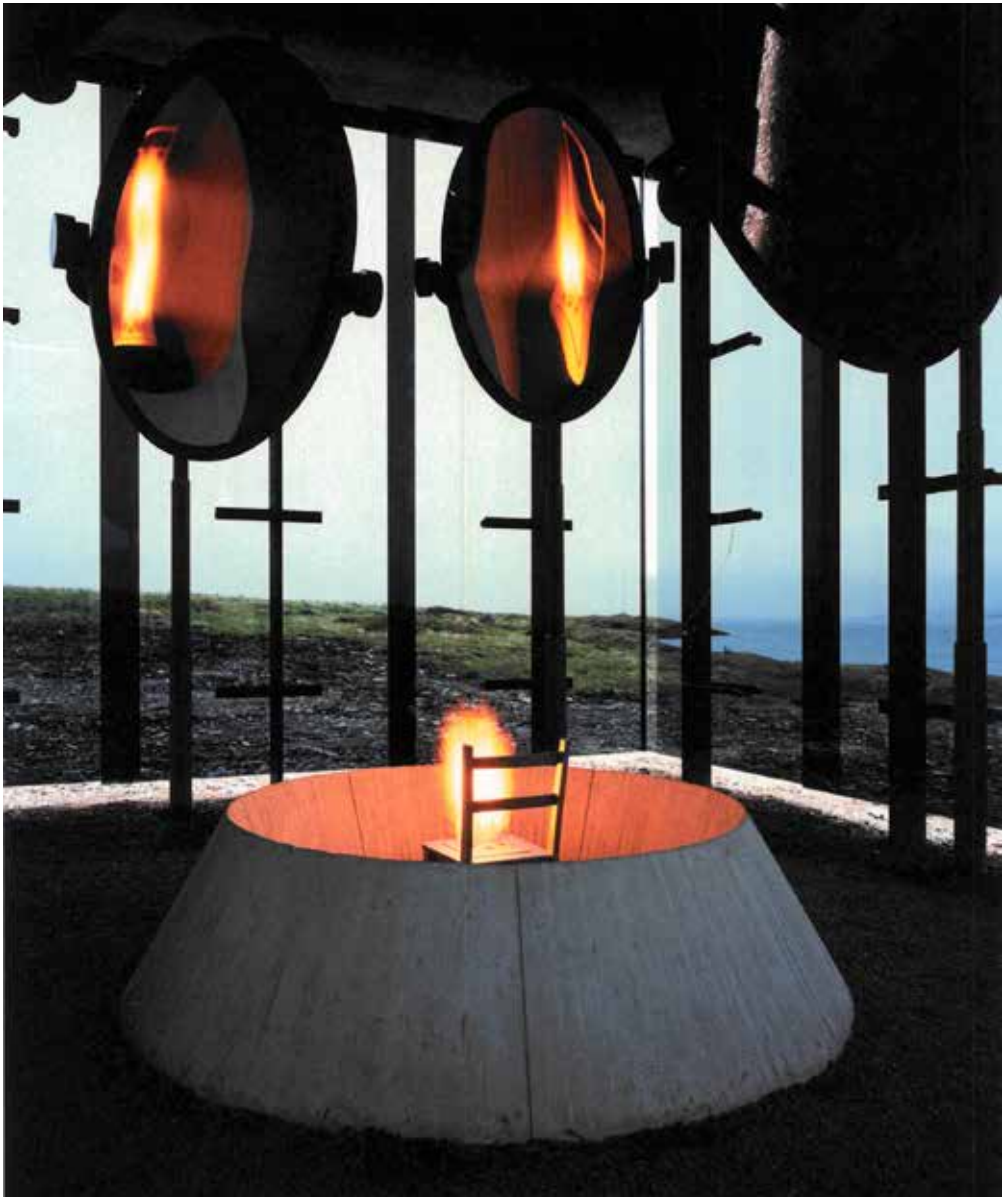
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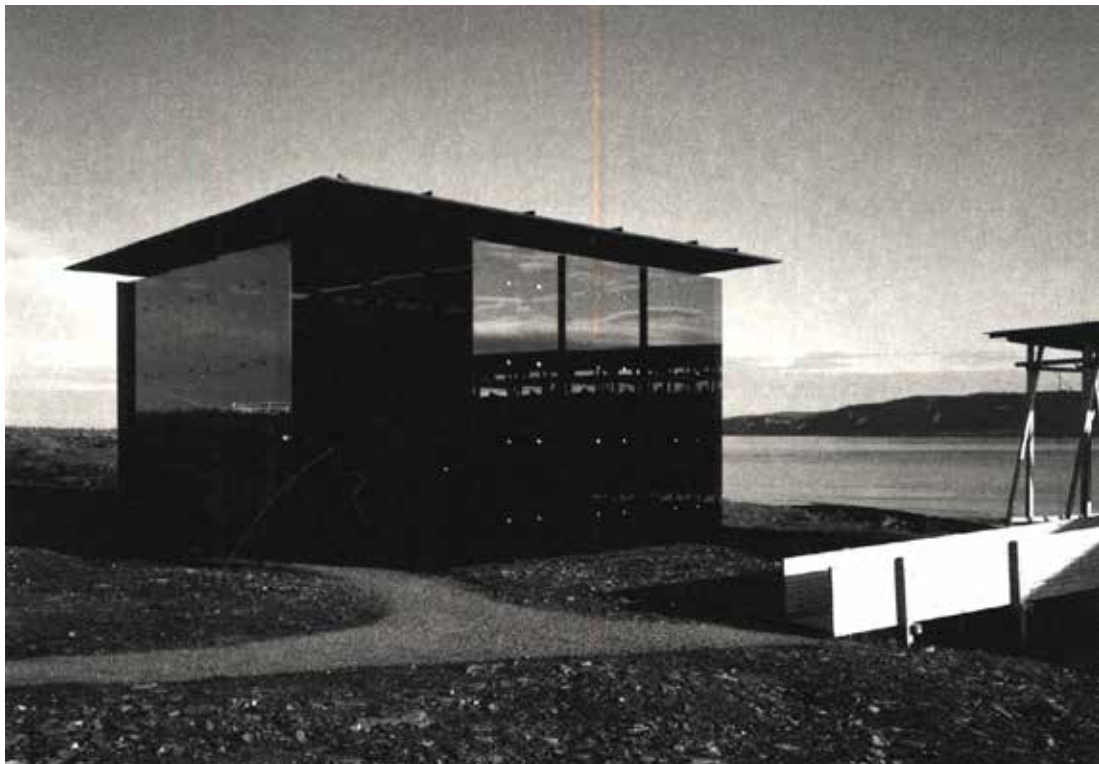
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becomes part of the exhibition. The narrative leads to a conversation with oneself (here caused more by the installation, i.e. the exhibition object, in conjunction with the architecture in which it is located), which indicates a strong synergy between the exhibition and architecture.

The approaches of both artists to design, despite the differences, seem to be very similar, full of sensitivity and strongly influencing the viewer. The use of materials - wood and fire - influences the definition of architecture and

installations, emphasizing their respective impermanent and aggressive nature. The power of communication also exists thanks to the presence of the Zumthor project and the Bourgeois installation. An interesting question would be how the absence of one of these components would affect the other. I assume that architecture could exist without installation, but installation without architecture is unlikely, in this case. But could the message, on the other hand, of one or the other survive and function autonomously?





Katyń Museum, Warsaw

Architecture and Artistry of Katyń Museum

The Katyń Museum is an interesting case of combining old and new architecture. In this project, however, it was done in such a way that no attempts were made to compete with the existing 19th century formation, which is today an object entered on the list of monuments. The design, selection of materials and colours give the visitor the impression of a smooth continuation and blurred boundaries between the already present walls of the citadel and the structures added almost 200 years later. As BBGK Architects point out, there is no division into a museum and exhibits, interior and exterior, new and existing matter. It is one space filled with symbolism, and at the same time understandable and legible (BBGK, 2017). This is a slightly different approach than that presented by the Jewish Museum in Berlin, where the new architecture definitely draws attention with its expressive broadly understood architecture. You could say that the design team used the meaning potential of the place itself, the existing historic structure and its history. Originally, the citadel was erected by the Russians to dominate the city and its people. It was a blow to the heart of the state, which has now been replaced by the exposure of the truth and the accumulated knowledge about the crime committed by the Russian nation (Białkiewicz, 2017).

Symbolism in the Katyń Museum is ubiquitous, and its phenomenon is that the symbols found in the museum are very capacious, but approaching each of them, we can understand them in different ways. Thanks to this wealth of meanings and its suggestive, non-imposing collection of interpretations, we can learn and understand the Katyń massacre (Gajda,

2018). The authors from the studio "Maks" defined the idea of the museum showing the different scales of the crimes committed in Katyń, i.e. both as a historical event with its wide political and historical impact, and from the perspective of a single man's tragedy (Białkiewicz, 2017). It was decided that the museum should not only talk about death, but also about the lives of the victims and their families, as an expression of the memory of them. The idea behind the museum is the road that leads through the historic grounds of the citadel. On this path, the historic context, contemporary architecture, art and exhibition of the museum build a coherent narrative and space for contemplation (Architektura Murator, 2019). Dimković (2016) agrees with that saying: *"The act of remembrance shows that reconstruction of the past directly depends on the interest and interpreted present framework where politics, power and memory are closely related. The process of remembrance no longer means giving importance only to heroic deeds, but individual pain and suffering, as well as the revival of the crimes that were previously concealed and repressed"*.

In addition to the historical architecture and location, the museum authorities decided to officially open the Katyń Museum on September 17, 2015. The non-accidental choice of this day, the anniversary of the invasion of Russian troops, additionally emphasizes the strong symbolic significance of the building. All interventions in the historic structure were made in architectural concrete dyed in the mass of the brick colour, matching the tint of Citadel's bricks (Białkiewicz, 2017). Wherever the museum narrative required it, stained concrete also became a means of architectural expression.

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(Grabowiecki, 2015). Objects imprinted in concrete walls as if they were imprinted in the soil of Katyń, although small, testify to the size of this crime (Gajda, 2018).

The museum managed to combine architecture, landscape and exhibition into one whole (BBG, 2017). The cooperation resulted in an interesting combination and interplay of architecture, landscape and artistry. The complexity of the solutions applied and the cooperation of architects with artists, sculptors and psychologists, among others, makes the museum's narrative comprehensive and very moving. The architects tried not to compete with the exhibition (Mycielski, 2015). As already mentioned, the citadel was accompanied by landscape interventions. The most important intervention was the planting of hornbeams. The landscape looks wild and natural, but in fact it is consciously shaped in a way to imitate Ukrainian and Belarusian landscapes (Białkiewicz, 2017). In April, the month when most of the crimes took place, periwinkle will bloom white in many places. The wild, freely growing greenery is also supposed to contrast with the symbolic forest planted in front of the museum. The trees stand there, unnaturally trimmed in dense, even rows (Architektura Murator, 2015).

The visit to the museum begins on the path leading deep into the citadel's bastion. The ubiquitous theme of the road and all the museum spaces arranged along it supports the museum's narrative, which tells about the path of Polish soldiers and intelligentsia to the USSR camps, to the place of execution, and finally the way to learn

the truth about the Katyń massacre and its worthy commemoration. The first thing we see on the way to the museum is a small forest, which is disturbing because it resembles the Katyń forest through which we have to go to the main exhibition (Gajda, 2018). Hornbeam trees planted evenly on a square plan, form the installation "GUARD". According to the authors of the concept, this artificial regularity of trees, contrary to nature, is an attempt to present the idea of a totalitarian system (Białkiewicz, 2017). A path with an irregular zigzag shape, called "SCAR", runs between the hornbeams. This path, immediately after entering the grove, begins to drop sharply, and the floor changes its texture and expression to rough and uneven. The zigzag of the road collapses, creating a dramatic scar in the ground. It is not comfortable to walk on it, and in fact, one has to take every step carefully, because the path cuts into the forest (Stiasny, 2015), reveals a stone tiles and a deep crevice. One must be careful and focused on their every step. In this way, the feeling of certain anxiety comes in the preparation for what awaits behind the door of the museum (Gajda, 2018). It is a projection of fear and uncertainty felt by Polish people in Katyń strongly affecting the viewer. Behind the entrance gate, there is twilight, from which the silhouettes of Polish officers walking in the tunnel appear (Białkiewicz, 2017). One of the most moving, and at the same time terrifying, scenery solutions in the entire museum. While walking down one is accompanied by blurred shadows. Shadows of soldiers, and in a moment the evidence of the crimes committed against them will be shown (Gajda, 2018).

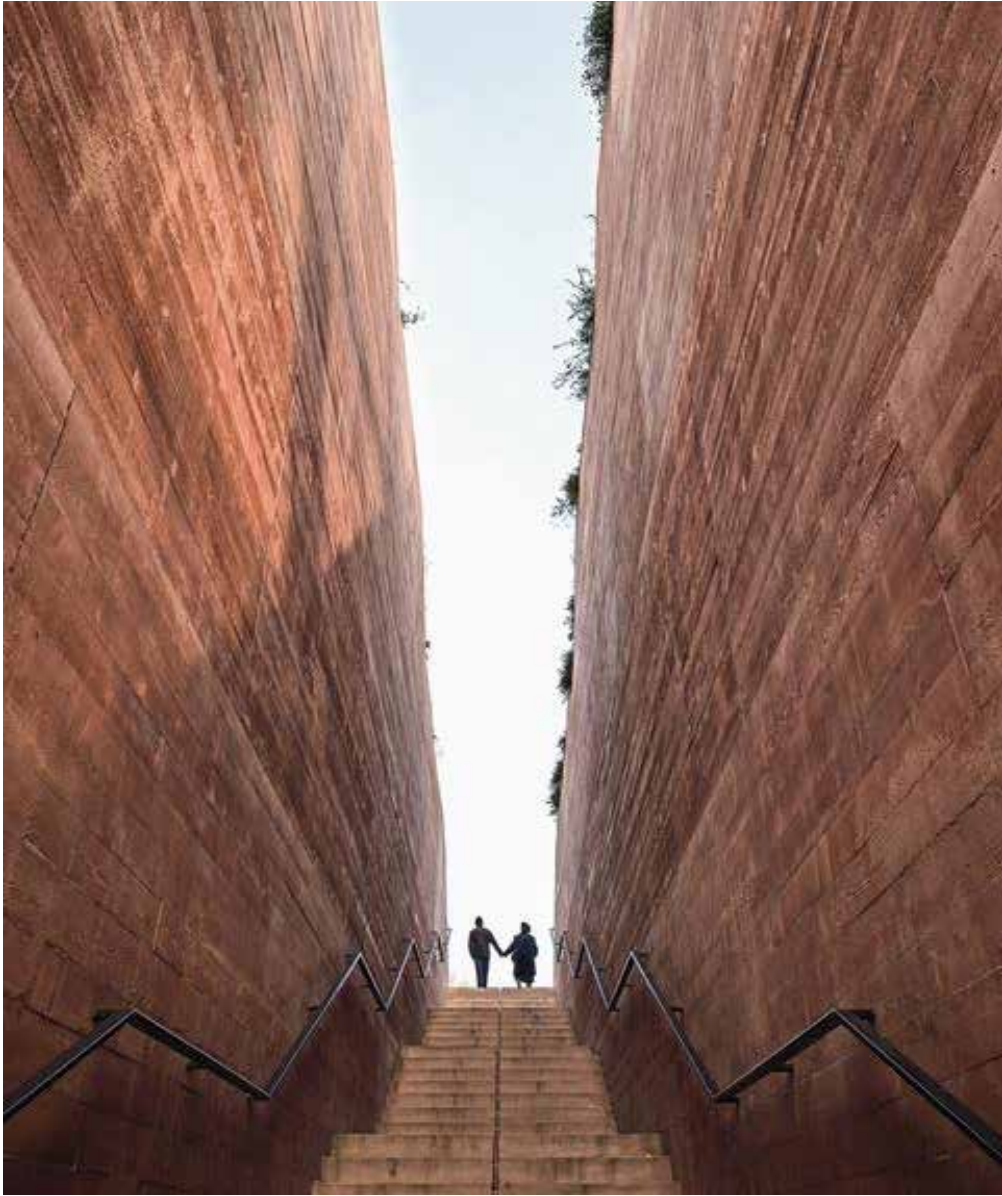
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In the zone that we reach through the tunnel, there is an exhibition entitled "DISCOVERY". The exhibits collected there come from places other than Katyń and cover the period of disappearances. Following these discoveries, we come to the point where the truth about the fate of the victims and the attempts to hide it were discovered. As I mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, Memorial Architecture, Pešterac (2016) talks about the temporal relocation of the visitor's thoughts. The road theme in the Katyń Museum makes this temporary transfer and anchoring in a different timeline possible, but it is rather a spiritual journey. The elements of the "DISCOVERY" exhibition - multimedia screens, touch panels, projections give a more real feeling during this temporary translation. Another visiting zone is the "CERTIFICATE" exhibition. It is located on another floor - in the basement of the caponiers. The presentation of the exhibits also takes a different direction. The elements of this exhibition are personal belongings of the murdered, such as shaving brushes, eagles, combs, prayer books, nail scissors, uniform buttons, pen scissors, dog tags, etc. found in the death pits in Katyń. In this part of the museum, in order to give the exhibition an atmosphere of concentration and the character of a relic, the access of light was limited, so that it is semi-dark. The designers decided to limit all informativeness and figurativeness of the exhibition (Białkiewicz, 2017). Objects extracted from the pits of death, one could say, are the most ordinary everyday objects. Here, however, they are presented in reliquaries, where they are elevated to the rank of treasures, relics (Gajda, 2018). It is possible that this part of the museum leaves the

greatest impression on visitors, where hundreds of open ceramic urns with excavated objects that belonged to specific people. Photos of officers and letters to families are the second, equally important, theme of the exhibition. They are an irreplaceable element of the museum's narrative (Mycielski, 2015)

The stairs of the museum return to the grove. They are cut with surgical precision inside the citadel levee. One could say that this embankment was brutally broken, as were the lives of the soldiers. We start to hear the echo of our footsteps, the voice begins to rumble extremely repeatedly between the 12-meter-high walls (Gajda, 2018).

"The stairs lead us in two directions - down to the plaques with the names of the victims in the arcades of the cannon station, and in the other, it opens towards the sky and light. On the axis of the stairs, among the trees, there is an oak cross - the epilogue of our story about Katyń", says Grabowiecki from BGGK Architects (Grabowiecki, 2015).

The Katyń Museum is the result of collaboration between various professions, generations and positions. It is a complete project combining architecture, national monument, landscape, art installations, history, truth and much more. Grabowiecki reflects on the cooperation with Jerzy Kalina and other artists saying:

"It was a very creative, although there is nothing to hide, difficult cooperation. Architecture and art use different languages. Architects are focused on team play; artists are more confrontational and

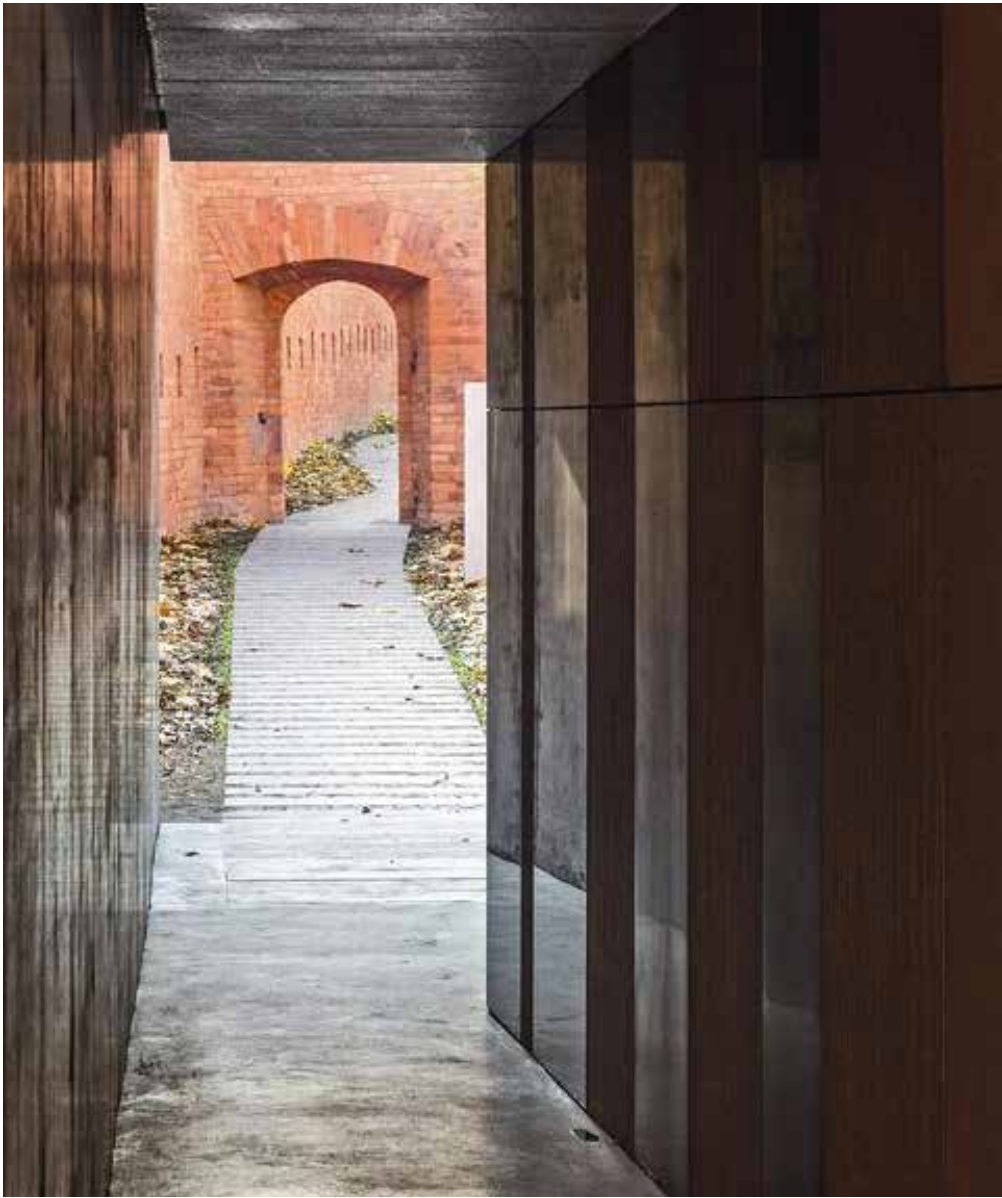
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uncompromising. Jerzy Kalina is a performer, a man of theater, film. His language is scenographic, our language is more abstract and less literal. In this particular case it really struck the generations.

Different sensitivities overlapped each other. In several places we used sculptural means of expression - museum prints artifacts in concrete are of this kind. The two different ones have made the experience of the museum richer and more interesting for audiences of different generations
"(Architektura Murator, 2015).

The wealth of procedures used, such as the symbol of the forest, changes in height and emotions, objects embedded in burnt clay, the motif of a road and a journey, make the narrative of all these elements perceived as one, complete.

In the ideological sphere, the Katyń Museum speaks with a whole set of exhibitions and symbols (Białkiewicz, 2017). The interpenetration of these forms of expression makes the museum speak with one coherent voice. In the case of the Katyń Museum, it is architecture that provides an enriching backdrop for the exhibition and acknowledges the superiority of sacred objects / relics and installations of commemoration.





Conclusions

The architecture of memory is rich in symbolism and hidden meanings. Usually, despite a certain, specific definition, it leaves the viewer the opportunity to create, targeted, but their own interpretation and feelings. Its task is to remind about events and people who passed away with them. Nowadays, many people who visit these places, learn about them anew. The space of commemoration emits its secular and sacred aura. Thanks to it, people who have not experienced the commemorated events personally are able to enter the meta world of events and emotions of the past, still present in the building, or encoded in objects, installations or stories told. Selected case studies present various relations between architecture and the objects it contains. In response to the question about the hierarchy of narratives posed earlier, it is worth noting that both architecture and objects talk about the same events and work together to provide the fullest picture and the most accurate projection of the feelings of those times. In the case of all the discussed projects, with the exception of the Warsaw Rising Museum, the authors of architecture are design studios with world renown. These projects also featured works by outstanding artists: Menashe Kadishman, Louis Bourgeois and Jerzy Kalina. In the case of the Jewish Museum, Kadishman filled a certain space in the museum. The Steilneset Memorial and the Katyń Museum were designed jointly by architects and artists. Daniel Libeskind drew inspiration from, among others, music when designing the facade of the museum, but compared to other projects it seems to be a very purist architectural project. It can be seen that the involvement of artists in the early design stages significantly improves the mutual synergy of the narrative. Then the boundary between the architectural narrative and these of objects begins to disappear, and instead there is coherence and focus on the viewer. The architecture of the Warsaw Rising Museum seems downright arrogant and uninterested in the observer. It exists for itself and leaves the narrative to the exhibitions inside. The Steilneset Memorial and the Katyń Museum present the fullest narratives that bring: commemoration, emotions, reflection, learning and empathy. They also give more answers than

questions. The Libeskind Museum poses questions without giving specific answers, but rather hints. The Warsaw Rising Museum explains a lot, but due to the lack of architectural narration, it does not move us too much to reflect. Its message is purely informative.

One might wonder what influence architecture of remembrance has on us. On the one hand, it ties us to the events of the past, on the other hand, it warns us against ourselves. Sometimes too uncritical approach to the past and clinging to what it used to be can be a kind of barrier to development and progressiveness. However, looking at it differently, it could be said to build a solid foundation for the future. The history carriers teach in a way, but also remind. They usually talk about events that the inhabitants have in their hearts and memories. Also, the relationship between commemorating and reflecting the thoughts of society is quite close. People are, like architecture and objects, memory vehicles. However, our narrative is short-lived and changeable. Memorial Architecture is like the oldest tree in the forest of memory, it reaches deep with its roots and spreads and nurtures the seeds of memory in our bodies and minds.

There is no predefined and unchanging hierarchy between architecture and objects as carriers of historical memory. There are many factors, such as: place, time, geopolitical situation, etc. In the discussed projects the contexts differ significantly, which has a huge impact on the narrative. The Katyń Museum, unique in terms of working with a monument - restoring a historical object and building its narrative by reacting to the existing narrative of the tsarist formation, adds another layer to the complexity of the analysis, because it emphasizes the removal of certain concepts and foreign influences in Poland. This leads to not only a commemoration but also a political statement. The above-mentioned examples talk about history, but also about a vision for the future. They are full of symbols of events, yet can themselves symbolize the values of nations.

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- Jewish Museum in Berlin, exterior (own resources) p.12
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- The exterior of Warsaw Rising Museum (retrieved on 09.04.2021 from <https://warsawtour.pl/project/muzeum-powstania-warszawskiego/>) p.18
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- Symbolic forest in front of the entrance (retrieved on 09.04.2021 from <https://bbgk.pl/pl/projekty/wybrane/muzeum-katynskie/>) p.28

- Reliquaries on the lower level of the exhibition - hundreds of ceramic urns with items excavated from mass graves (retrieved on 26.03.2021 from https://architektura.muratorplus.pl/realizacje/muzeum-katynskie-zalozenia_5527.html) p.30

- Passageway between the cannon station and the square in front of the entrance to the museum (retrieved on 26.03.2021 from https://architektura.muratorplus.pl/realizacje/muzeum-katynskie-zalozenia_5527.html) p.32

- Death tunnel designed by Jerzy Kalina at the exit of the caponier (retrieved on 26.03.2021 from https://architektura.muratorplus.pl/realizacje/muzeum-katynskie-zalozenia_5527.html) p.34

- Exhibition in the barrel interiors of caponiers. Horizontal installations are hidden in the floor layers, and the risers in the drillings in the thickness of the walls (retrieved on 26.03.2021 from https://architektura.muratorplus.pl/realizacje/muzeum-katynskie-zalozenia_5527.html) p.35

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