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The Public Lettering in selected architectural examples in Central European countries (Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary) in the years 1990–2013.

After the fall of communism, a period of the last 25 years has been a time of reconstruction and socio economic development for the countries of Central Europe. These changes were also perceptible in architecture and typography.

In my research I would like to analyse some architectural examples in which public lettering occurs as a coherent part of a building and is used in a responsible way towards the receiver in terms of the form used and the meaning of the message.

The starting point of my work is the definition of public lettering invented by a prominent Italian professor of palaeography Armando Petrucci, who described the term as: “Any type of writing designed to be used in open spaces – but also in confined spaces – to allow multiple readings (group or mass readings) and at a distance. The text in question is to be written on an exposed surface and the writing to be sufficiently large to present the message (verbal and/or visual) in sufficiently discernible and clear way.”(Petrucci 2010, s. 11) Lettering in connection with architecture has potential to shape a strong impression of space, can contribute the way how we perceive buildings. Public lettering is part of the architectural whole and should be associated with the meaning and function which is dedicated. Understanding this issue is fundamental in research.

I decided to choose the Visegrad Group countries because they are not sufficiently investigated. There are many interesting examples of the use of lettering that correspond to my assumptions and that at the same time remain fairly unknown. By describing these examples and conducting interviews with architects and designers I try to understand the meaning of these projects in social communication processes.

Research

Scientific purpose

The primary scientific purpose is to attempt a critical analysis of examples of architectural projects in which public lettering plays an important role. In this regard it is necessary to determine the lettering functions in architecture and to compare them with each other. By studying these compounds, it is possible to define what is the impact of typography on the architectural imagery.

The main research questions

How architecture allows letters to perform their functions?

What is the connection between public lettering and a given building?

What kind of materials use designers / architects to express through public lettering the meaning of the message?

What are the relations between lettering, words and space of the building and its surroundings?

Research methodology

1. Desk Research (preceded by checking the information in terms of their reliability, the credibility and validity):

- identification of the analysis period. Comparison of the potential of today’s architecture and typography of historical achievements.

2. Research on the collected materials:
 - analysis of texts (literature, magazines),
 - analysis of the online press archives, blogs, discussion forums,
 - analysis of photographs documenting the selected architectural projects.
3. Interviews, survey of architects, designers:
 - implementation of interviews.
4. Research work on the project results:
 - organize data
 - data analysis
 - conclusions
 - define the concept of publication
 - development and design publications
 - preparation of a comprehensive report of studies
 - evaluation of the project
 - presentations, lectures

Research tools

1. The interview questionnaire containing questions about the motives of applied design solutions and technology.
2. Questionnaire for the research desk research, including ordering information collected under the terms of previously accepted method of their hierarchy. Specification in separate boxes name of the project, the authors, the date of completion of the project, place of execution, etc. with a short description of the general characteristics.
3. Addition the photographic material by implementation of the photos selected projects.

Publication design

Aim of the project

The aim of the publication is to disseminate knowledge about the public lettering in the Central European countries formed after period of system transformation.

Design issue

How to make, architects and designers have broadened their knowledge of public lettering by reading a book?

Target group

First of all, the work is directed to graphic designers and architects as well as historians dealing with design and people who are not professionals in discussed subject.

Design assumptions

The main goal of the design was to create a publication that will be present the content in a clear and understandable way.

- Developing a set of works, which will indicate the diversity of use the public lettering in architecture,
- adaptation book format to the collected photographic material,
- creation identity of publication relating to its content,
- designing the orientation and navigation through the book,
- use of typeface that will be economical, clearly separate the various groups of information,

- selection of uncoated paper, adapted for indigo print,
- establishing the project cover to three-dimensional nature of the presented works.

The book intellectual structure

Basically, the book is divided into two parts. The first is an essay which refer the overall issue of the use of public lettering. The second part contain descriptions of presented examples, and interviews with graphic designers and architects.

The concept of publication

Identification of a book based on the use of selected characteristic of lettering characters taken from described projects. They were standardized in terms of colour and scale.

By placing them in the table of contents, the internal title pages, and as a paging, organize diverse content. At the level of the overall structure of the book help the user to orientate and navigate. Distorted letters are the result of their original adaptation to use in a specific architectural context.

Technical Specifications

net size: 165 x 240 mm

Block

volume: 176 pages

paper: Papyrus MultiOffset 120 g

colour: (4 + 4) (49 pages)

contributions eights

Cover

binding: block thread-stitching gluing, hard cover.

covering: Satyna 250 g

volume: 1 page

colour: (1 + 0) black

blind embossing

round back

thread: White

Typeface

Karmina and Karmina Sans have been designed by José Scaglione and Veronika Burian (typetogether). These humanistic modern typefaces, which have similar proportions are compatible to each other, so they can be used for the typesetting of different types of informations depending on the features they play in the text. Karmina is designed primarily for typesetting continuous

goes well with reproduced illustrative material. Karmina combines a large x-height result of these features is high legibility and economy.

Parameters of the main typographic elements

main text – Karmina Regular 10.5/15.5 pt

chapter titles – Karmina Bold 15/15.5 pt

sub-headings – Karmina Bold 10,5 /15,5 pt

footnotes – Karmina Regular 8/11 pt

link to footnotes in the text – Karmina Sans 10.5 /15.5 pt

footnote number – Karmina Sans Semibold 8/11 pt

captions under illustrations – Karmina Sans Regular 8/11 pt

paging – Karmina Sans Regular 8 pt

initials in interviews – Karmina Sans Light: 9/15.5 pt

Page proportions, column, grid

The proportions of the page is 2:3. Spreads designed in a symmetrical arrangement.

Grid master pages has been designed in such a way as to ensure consistency of the variables: typographic (including various types of texts), illustrations (photos, graphics).

Due to the characteristics of the Karmina used large line spacing, number of rows in the column equal 36.

Placement of column

The width of inside margin is connected the type of binding.

Margin values given in pica:

top – 5p8

bottom – 4p6

outside – 2p10

inside – 4p3

Beginning of chapter on recto page

The first chapter on recto page have been distinguished by lowering the column.

Footnotes

Footnotes use a column break into two, separate from the text. In addition, this solution allows to adjust the column width to a small typeface size.

Photos

Most of the images in the publication was made specially by the professional photographer Anna Sielska. Created photographic material fully corresponds to my earlier assumptions that involved the presentation of buildings with special emphasis on public lettering.