

DANIEL RITTER **Personal Errata**

Imperfection as an addition in contemporary architecture

T H E S E S

Supervisor: Mihály Balázs DLA
Masterwork: Family house • Mogyoród

Budapest University of Technology and Economics
Doctoral School of Architecture

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ABSTRACT

Szerző: **Daniel Ritter**
Értekezés címe: **Personal Errata / Imperfection as an addition in contemporary architecture**

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The ideal of a general pursuit of perfection has been found in our universal culture from the very beginning. But the true value of perfectionism is always relative, especially today, at a time when our relationship to internal values has become uncertain.

In my thesis, I attempt to examine the possibility of an alternative interpretation of imperfection in architecture, which views mistakes in a new way, accepts imperfection in the process of design. Though we, practicing architects, always tend to seek perfection, find the flawless state or perfect solution in our design but the question about the definition of the true nature of perfection or imperfection may arise.

On what basis can we call something imperfect in relation to contemporary architecture? How do the different layers of the relationship between planning and contingency appear in architecture?

How do „mistakes and imperfection”, unforeseen or partially planned events enrich architecture?

In my research I examined different examples with diverse locations and I was looking for common attributes characteristic of imperfection.

The thesis relies primarily on international examples, where „error”, „imperfection” and nature become essential creative elements, thereby extending, explaining, completing and making the work honest and true. My point of view is only a possible, alternative interpretation of the world, so the title of the dissertation – *Personal Errata* – is a subjective, imperfect collection of these examples and principles, but an effort to create a coherent framework of interpretation.

THESIS 01

The found situation - natural or built elements - shapes the architectural concept as much as the concept shapes the characteristics of the environment. The architectural work can only be interpreted as a unified composition in this context, it cannot be perfect by itself.

They are built on imperfection, where the found situation helps to formulate architectural ideas. The structure of the Piedra Gentil dolmen - presumably - was built from stone blocks found locally, as thousands of years later, the facade of the SGAE building. The elevation of the building towards the courtyard was formed without modifying the stone pieces found in the quarry in Santiago, but simply by stacking them on top of each other. In the case of the Piscinas de Marés beach or the Serpentine pavilion, the designers considered the situation they found as a concept-shaping feature.



THESIS 02

The formal complexity of the changes fixed in the material, in its self-righteousness, avoids the possibility of intentionality and aestheticization.

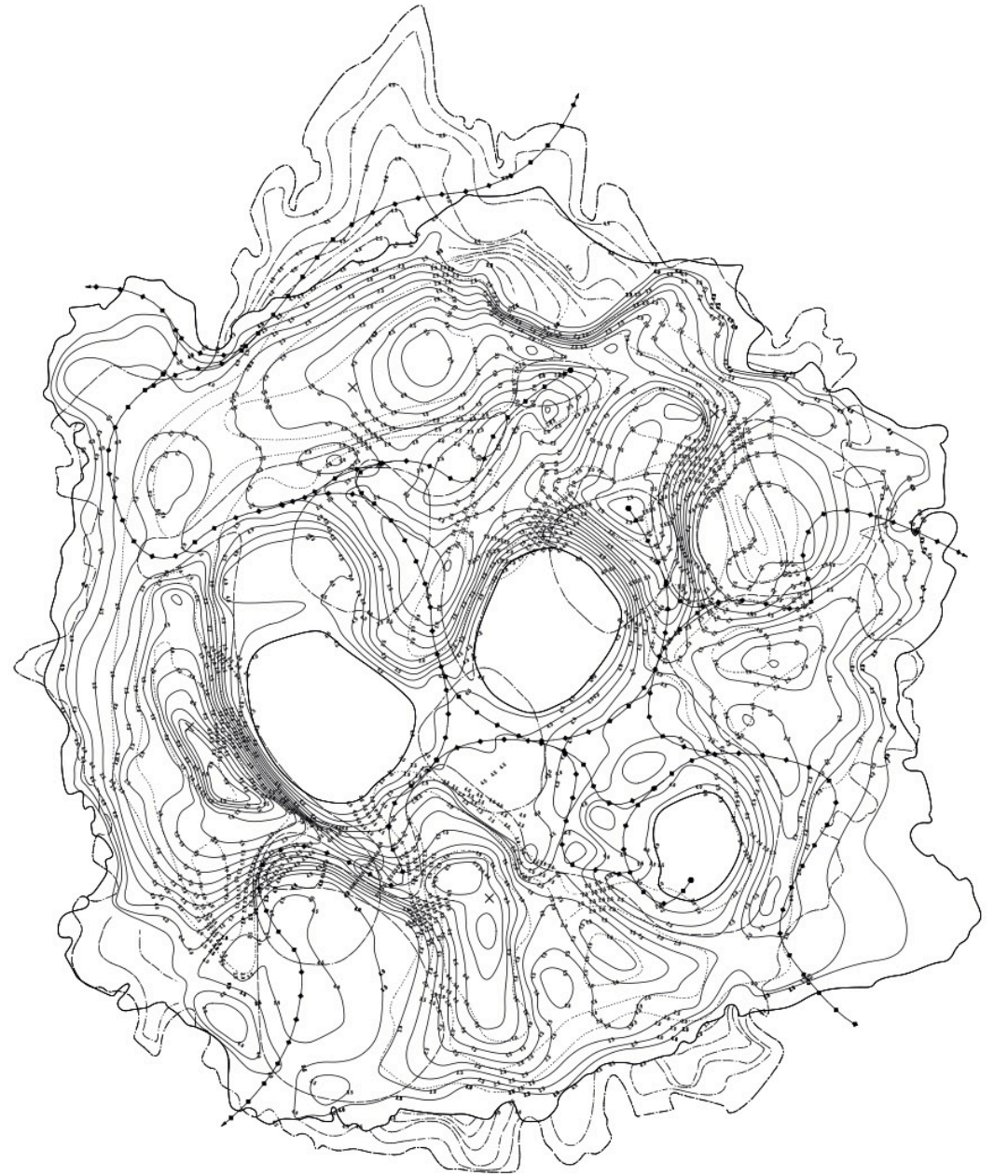
Time brings imperfection into the material and indirectly into the building in the case of the corrugation of the wire glass or the layers of paint that are stacked on top of each other over decades and then come off in small pieces. Preservation of this can be an architectural intention that goes against the pressure of restoration.



THESIS 03

If the form becomes overconstructed as a result of the pursuit of imperfection, the sense of contingency disappears and is replaced by artificiality.

In some cases, the architectural imperfection is only an appearance, in fact they are pre-planned, meticulously documented structures, which are made with engineering precision. It lacks any contingency. The creators achieve the imperfect result consciously and with engineering precision. We could say that the final result is a precisely digitized sketch or concept model. The examples discussed here do not find or allow mistakes or imperfection, but rather design it.



THESIS 04

The imperfection resulting from architectural intent offers the possibility of naturalness. The underdetermination of the forms enables the appearance of architectural desire and at the same time gives room for contingency.

Architects are opposed to an overdetermined design approach - taking into account the engineering constraints - they deliberately under-define the structure, thereby giving space to free shaping and creation together. It contains the beauty of nature and mistakes.



THESIS 05

The architectural concept inspired by nature illustrates the moment just captured and carries the imperfection inherent in change.

The planned part of the architectural concept is the constantly changing appearance in time and appearance. Architects have long been concerned with presenting the honest aging of materials: the patina of copper cladding or the graying of untreated wood cladding are honest means of showing the material's true self. When I think of architecture, such emotional or temporal imprints come to my mind.



THESIS 06

The underdefined imperfection of the architectural program goes beyond aestheticization. With its intentional incompleteness, it leaves room for the user and allows them to shape the endresult.

Literally interpreted informal housing is usually a problem for communities, most of the time these organically created forms of housing reflect a lack of money or a fault in the system. The situation is different, however, if incompleteness is seen as an architectural concept in the case of new social housing.

