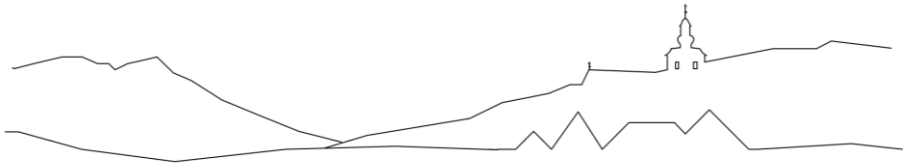




PERIPHERAL SITUATIONS

The critical analysis of contemporary architecture in Székely Land



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THESES

Kovács-Magyari Zsuzsa

2023

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2023

ABSTRACT

In my DLA research, I am studying the equilibrium situation of the tendencies of new architectural approaches emerging in contemporary Székely Land architecture. Because of its geographical location - within Romania, as a periphery located in the center of the country, and internally, as outer rim – Székely Land appears as an isolated region throughout history. Its natural and built environment conditions have been preserved, the wave of change affecting it slowly, in contrast to the processes that occurred after the regime change and in the early 2000s, which led to changes in traditional economic and social values.

The contemporary architecture has also responded to this by drawing inspiration from the cultural landscape and the traditional architectural values, continuing in an organic way the settlement patterns that had previously presented a uniform image. In my thesis, I will present the pathfinding of a group of local architects, the development of a common approach that started with the village protection program in 2009, and then I will analyze contemporary architectural examples, highlighting the common trends.

Contemporary architecture in Székely Land can be defined as regional, small-scale, rural architecture. Therefore, the theoretical background of my research is provided by the conceptual framework of regionalism. In general, regionalism means that a regional unit is organized as a whole on the basis of identity and shared values. The search for identity or the search for one's own character of the local architects legitimizes the appearance of regional architecture analyzing the conditions of the area, where the basis of planning can be the knowledge, understanding, reception, and reinterpretation of culture, landscape, the existing built environment - material, structure, scale, proportion, function and use - and contemporary architecture abstracting elements of traditional architecture.

01 – Thesis

The autonomy of the architects in Székely Land, the informal practice of professional organization is based on a **historical autonomous, self-organizing form**, which is build on the local community consciousness and identity, consciously recognizing and integrating historical values.

The cultural landscape, the tradition is an identity-shaping force, and the Székely society is also characterized by a specific historical form of self-organization, which evolved at the time of settlement and determined the traditional spatial structure and settlement patterns. The common reflection about local architecture and the technical dialogue about the architecture of the region's past, present, and future started with the village protection program, which began in 2009, when many of the architects simultaneously recognized the importance of the existing built and landscape environment as well as the importance of vernacular architectural values, and then made the efforts to assess and preserve them.



02 – Thesis

The guidelines set out in the village protection program and the municipal development strategies form **the basis for the development** of contemporary architecture in Székely Land.

The experiences, surveys, and studies gathered during the village/value surveys not only serve to protect heritage but also integrate further construction into existing traditions: the architectural approach and creative attitude that was formed at this time has now become an exemplary practice in contemporary Székely Land architecture.



03 – Thesis

The architects of contemporary Székely Land strive to ensure that the demand for visibility of the periphery should not become **an end in itself**: the internal demand for visibility can lead to a created localism. The architectural practice should draw its main inspiration from other, culturally based reflections on place, rather than from the language of form.

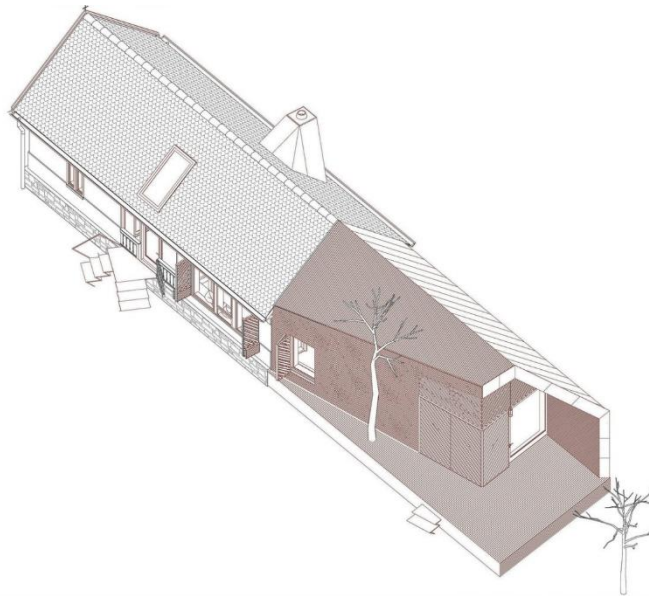
Regional building culture does not conceal ideology, the strong presence of cultural conservatism can result in a stylistic imitation of traditional forms and motifs, which is a narrative approach method. The search for historic continuity is not a regional search for style, it is not purely formal, and it cannot be captured by external features, but it can be defined as a basic attitude.



04 – Thesis

The uniform character of the contemporary Székely Land architecture is emerging along the parameters, concepts, and processes similar to the international examples listed in the treatise, as **a natural process coming from within**, which focuses on the preservation and continuation of the architectural tradition.

In Portugal, in the 1950s, in a series of surveys, the state of traditional vernacular architecture at that time was documented and cataloged, and the results of the research were published, which became an indispensable reference point for future architects generations.¹ In general, the contemporary architecture of Slovenia, the Czech Republic or Portugal has gained international recognition based on existing cultural values. The reason for this interest is not identity-based but relies on local traditional architecture.



¹ Szentirmai Tamás 2012. *Hagyományos egyszerűség – kortárs portugál építészet*. Tézisfüzet a *Kortárs portugál építészet* című könyvhöz. BME Középülettervezési Tanszék, Budapest

05 – Thesis

The contemporary architecture, rooted in tradition, does not copy peasant culture, but transforms it through the asset of abstraction, which can then carry a universal message.

The modern and creative abstraction is typically part of the contemporary European architectural discourse, whereby the building differs from its surroundings through its abstract forms, but also incorporates its more distant influences into its own composition and carries its values in a concentrated way.² The architects presented in this dissertation incorporate universal truths of local culture into their architecture. According to Gábor U. Nagy architecture as a cultural-social phenomenon is stretched between the local and the universal, while at the same time in the process of concrete design material and idea are stretched against each other, and here can be observed the link between art and architecture.³

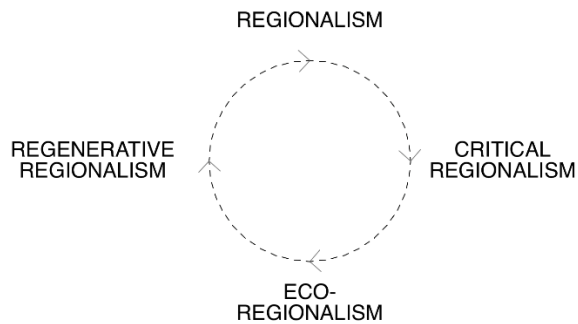


² Dr. Vukoszávlyev Zorán 2012. *Az épület mint táj - tektonikus formaalkotás a kortárs spanyol építészetben.* Tanulmány

³ U. NAGY Gábor 2013. *Táj - Régió - Identitás, Gondolatok és jegyzetek.* Régi-Új Magyar Építőművészet, 2013/3

06 – Thesis

The **theoretical classification** of contemporary architecture in Székely Land **has changed over time**, and the evolution of conceptual versions of regionalism - in line with social, economic, and ecological processes, and thus with its time - can be traced as a result of the experiments of the past 15 years, from creations initially labeled as critical regionalism, through ecoregionalism, which also incorporates ecological aspects, to the latest interpretative framework of regenerative regionalism.



MASTERWORK

Single family house, Budakalász, Pest county
2019

Architect: Kovács-Magyari Zsuzsa

Structural engineer: Tóth László

Mechanical engineer: Pintér Zoltán

Electrical engineer: Handó József

Contractor: Tradihouse Ltd., Zeteváralja, Harghita county, Romania



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