

ARCHITECTURAL ART
IN THE LIGHT OF
KANT'S
CRITIQUE OF THE FACULTY OF
JUDGMENT

Towards a definition of pure architectural art

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This article intends to give a definition for pure architectural art. It does this in the light of Immanuel Kant's work.

Architecture is an ambiguous discipline. It is one of the most fundamental languages we share, determining the functional and symbolic order of the spaces we inhabit. In this sense, architecture is fundamentally ideological. It also claims to be art. The science of aesthetics, invented in the eighteenth century by Baumgarten and established by Kant, has enabled us to understand how de-ideologisation is necessary for beauty and how the arts have been liberated from common languages and rhetoric since the Enlightenment. It also shows how they have been brought into the realms of sensitivity and individual subjectivity. The modern concept of beauty is therefore in conflict with the fundamental purpose of architecture, which is to bring order to the common. Within this framework, architecture must necessarily be maintained within a pre-modern conception of art and is incapable of being truly artistic in an aesthetic and modern sense. However, a careful reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* can put us on the trail of pure architectural art, provided we rid ourselves of certain preconceived ideas.

Introduction: general context of the possibility of an architectural aesthetic

Ambiguity of architecture

Architecture is an ambiguous discipline. It is one of the most fundamental languages we share, determining the functional and symbolic order of the spaces we inhabit. In this sense, architecture is fundamentally ideological.

It also claims to be art. The science of aesthetics, invented in the eighteenth century by Baumgarten and established by Kant, has enabled us to understand how de-ideologisation is necessary for beauty and how the arts have been liberated from common languages and rhetoric since the Enlightenment. It also shows how they have been brought into the realms of sensitivity and individual subjectivity. The modern concept of beauty is therefore in conflict with the fundamental purpose of architecture, which is to bring order to the common. Consequently, architecture must necessarily be maintained within a pre-modern conception of art and is incapable, in this framework, of being truly artistic in an aesthetic and modern sense.

However, a careful reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* can put us on the trail of pure architectural art, provided we rid ourselves of certain preconceived ideas. In this article, we will attempt a definition of pure architectural art.

The modern human condition: the lonely individual in the infinite universe

To fully understand the importance of aesthetics, we must first review, albeit briefly and at the risk of oversimplification, the existential, metaphysical and civilisational assumptions that define modernity.

Since Kant, the human existential and metaphysical condition has been characterised as melancholic, oscillating between the excitement of liberty related to the idea of mastering one's destiny, and a dejected and resigned existentialism. The demand for liberty, accompanied by those of conscience, responsibility and heightened morality, has characterised bourgeois modernity ever since the Age of Enlightenment and has become universal. The loss of God (or of the evidence of his presence), as well as a pre-established order of the world and existence, has been replaced by a cult of effort and self-fulfilment. Above all, each individual is metaphysically responsible for realising the meaning of their own life.

Modernity is the liberty, solitude and total responsibility of the orphaned individual under the starry sky. According to a famous anecdote, Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) fell into a deep depression in the summer of 1801 after reading Kant. The violence of existential clarification coupled with the abysmal liberty articulated at that time still seemed unbearably new.

Since then, humanity has domesticated despair and built myths that allow it to maintain a teleological illusion (mysticism for romantics, materialism, science, technology or progress for liberals).

The Copernican revolution that Kant brought about with his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and *Critique of Judgment* (1790) affects not only the meaning of existence, but also our aesthetic relationship with the world. This relationship deter-

mines our subjectivity and our capacity to transcend our individual presence. It also concerns a new concept of beauty and architecture as art.

a. Critique on architecture

Architecture in the *Critique of Judgment*

Transgression

The *Critique of Judgment* is a foundational text in the new science of aesthetics. It explores the relationship between the individual and the world, and the associated joys and sorrows. Although Kant does not specifically examine architectural art, he does not devalue it from the fields of art either. We know little about the extent of his knowledge of architecture. He is generally wary of providing examples and never mentions specific situations in his speculative work, as this is not based on individual cases. In the *Critique of Judgment*, the few references are to Wieland for literature, Frederick the Great for poetry, and St Peter's Basilica in Rome and the Great Pyramid of Egypt for architecture. No works or artists are mentioned in relation to painting, music, or sculpture.

By freeing himself from anecdotal aspects, customs, practices and contingencies, he is able to radically rethink the foundations of art and overcome the intellectual impasses resulting from the ongoing negotiation between new spiritual aspirations and the inertia of established knowledge. He reveals the new modern ideological framework of individuality in the making during that time, but surpasses it by far when it comes to architecture. Undoubtedly too much, which is why his ideas are so poorly integrated, if at all, into architecture by his contemporaries, and why he finds himself at an impasse when it comes to reconciling the practice of the discipline of his time with the conclusions of his aesthetic theory.

In any case, Kant's project does not aim to establish architectural models, methods or artistic theories. Furthermore, Kant excludes the possibility of an architectural or artistic theory. There is no science, he writes, but only a critique of beauty, meaning that beauty cannot be defined theoretically, but that it is necessary to denounce what cannot be considered beautiful. Therefore, Kant's philosophy does not claim to establish a set of rules for art. Its focus is on defining art and distinguishing it from the factors that prevent its proper understanding, with the aim of explaining its ontology.

In particular, the de-ideologisation process has clarified the difference between transcendental beauty and the ideological aspects of society that obscure its purity.

This has also made it possible to restore natural beauty to the realm of art, presenting it as an archetype of de-ideologised beauty. In architecture, this way of thinking clearly distinguishes works that contribute to maintaining social order from those that touch on individual spirituality and may belong to the realm of art. This distinction sheds light on the dilemma faced by architects seeking to create an aesthetic that reflects their era: as the discipline is inherently connected to political and economic powers, it is fundamentally

involved in matters of order. It is therefore naturally conservative and resistant to freeing aesthetics from tradition and convention.

In fact, the *Critique of Judgment* is too abstract, profound and unsettling to be used directly. This is why, despite Kant's immense influence, it was, at best, misused.

Architecture in the third Critique

However, for Kant, there is no doubt about the artistic nature of architecture; it is omnipresent in his *Critique of Judgment*. It is mentioned as often as the other arts and in many different contexts. According to our inventory, he refers to architecture in §1 (where he differentiates between true aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction linked to reason, provoked by a regular building), §2 (where he demonstrates the various forms of ideologisation of taste, using the example of the different ways a palace can be appreciated), In §7, he addresses the principle of the universality of beauty using the example of a building. In §14, architecture enables him to distinguish between the sensual and spiritual aspects of appreciating an object. On the basis of sumptuous buildings, he distinguishes authentic beauty from ornaments, particularly colonnades. In §16, he differentiates between buildings such as churches, palaces, arsenals and pavilions to illustrate the difference between beauty that expresses a purpose and true beauty. In §22, in the *General Remarks on the First Section of the Analytic*, he discusses the importance of understanding forms and buildings as a whole to appreciate beauty. In §26, he uses the pyramids of Egypt and St Peter's in Rome to illustrate the impotence of the imagination in the face of gigantism and present the idea of the whole, thereby explaining the shift from the beautiful to the sublime. In §33, buildings are one of the objects of investigation in the Judgment of taste. In §51, he classifies and defines the different arts.

However, in §52 to 54, unlike with the other arts, he does not detail how architecture affects feelings. This would undoubtedly have led him to clarify his definition, enabling us to better understand how the art of building can bring about the 'free play of cognitive faculties'.

Liberation: de-ideologising architecture

Beauty in architecture stripped away from the good and the right

While *Critique of Judgment* is by no means a treatise on architecture and does not define what a good building should be, it does define beauty and art. This enables us to determine the criteria by which a building can be considered art. However, it does not address non artistic aspects that could also constitute architecture.

Nevertheless, while he admits that an object can provoke beauty while appealing to other functions of knowledge, especially in the field of architecture where 'use is a condition to which the aesthetic ideas are confined¹', it is important to remember that Kant warns that 'the agreeable (the sensation) prevented the judgment of taste from being pure, so does a connection of beauty with the good (i.e., as to how, in terms of the thing's purpose, the manifold is good for the thing itself) impair the purity of a judgment of taste²'. Beauty will therefore be all the more appreciated when it is strictly circumscribed.

¹ KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 191, §51.

² KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 77, §16.

His insistence that beauty must be perceived in its purity not only leads to a segregation between architectural art and constructions that are merely products, but also to a gradation in this purity. Consequently, the relationship is reversed: architecture as art is no longer primarily a good building (solid and functional), to which expressiveness is added through ornamentation or decoration. It is rather a construction that primarily expresses metaphysical ideas, and should be perceived as unclouded as possible by practical and rational considerations.

As a first approach, we could already state from the above that the more a building is perceived as good, i.e., useful and pleasant, the less it can be considered beautiful.

We will see how the consequence of architecture's claim to be an art form, should, in consideration of these concepts, constitute a terrible assault on architectural tradition.

De-Platonisation and De-Vitruvianisation³

Extracting pure beauty from a jumble of arbitrary concepts frees architecture from all societal and ideological connotations, refocusing it on the subjective experience of the individual. To remain in the realm of beauty and free metaphysical expression, architecture must limit not only functional or societal expression, but also the canons of Platonic beauty to which it was particularly attached. This includes the quest for perfection linked to reason, as expressed through geometric and mathematical principles such as regularity, symmetry and proportions.

Given that architectural art had been based on the authority of Antiquity, and more specifically on Vitruvius's one, for almost eighteen centuries, the break announced by Kant is considerable. The *De architectura* of the late Roman Republic was continually analysed, commented on and translated, but its authority was never questioned. Every evolution in architectural practice involved a renewed exegesis of this text, which had acquired quasi-sacred status. However, Kant's philosophy disregarded history in seeking the essence of concepts.

Failing to mention *De architectura*, which the philosopher could not have been unaware of (not least because it is quoted by Leibniz and Wolff⁴), is in itself a radically modern liberation. Ultimately, Kant's approach to architecture as an art form renders Vitruvius's trilogy of *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*, which had previously defined beauty, completely invalid.

At best, solidity and utility are prerequisites for a building's existence, but they cannot contribute to architectural art. Beauty itself is completely redefined. According to Vitruvius, beauty (*venustas*) consists of order (*taxis*), disposition (*diathesis*), eurythmy (proportion), decency, and distribution.

All these principles are based on societal assumptions or rational mathematical concepts which, according to Kant, belong to the realm of reason and not to that of beauty.

This is what he covers in §22 of his *General Comment on the First Division of the Analytic*⁵. Regarding geometry, he asserts that: *Everything that stiff regularity (close to mathematical regularity) runs counter to taste*⁶. And Kant explains it:

3 In this regard, see also : GUYER, *Kant and the Philosophy of Architecture*, 2011.

4 see also : GUYER, *Kant and the Philosophy of Architecture*, 2011, p. 9.

5 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 241, §22.

6 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 243, §22.

It is true that the regularity leading to the concept of an object is the indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*) for apprehending the object in a single presentation and determining the manifold in the object's form; this determination is a purpose with regard to cognition, and as so related to cognition it is indeed always connected with a liking (since achieving any aim, even a problematic one, is accompanied by a liking). But here the liking is merely our approval of the solution satisfying a problem, and not a free and indeterminately purposive entertainment of the mental powers regarding what we call beautiful, where the understanding serves the imagination rather than vice versa⁷.

Thus, reflection on what the individual's metaphysical feeling should be in the face of beauty is since defined as incompatible with Vitruvian or classical concepts.

Freeing architecture from the rhetoric of orders

This Kantian metaphysical objective implies that art and architecture must convey an existential thought by their very nature, not merely by default. Until then, buildings expressed wealth, power, nobility, sacredness, and so on, through their mere existence or design, in terms of comparison and co-presence, i.e. rhetorically. This transitive approach, which could also be described as ideologised, relied for example on the column as a means of expression. The three main orders (Doric, Ionic and Corinthian) and their variations established by tradition were a simple, conventional rhetorical means of expressing gradations of wealth, elegance or power. This mode of expression, although omnipresent, does not, as Kant proves, belong to true beauty.

The downgrading of the column, a classic symbol that underpins architectural discipline, and its reduction to the status of an accessory ornament is highly significant in this regard. Kant writes :

Even what we call ornaments (*parerga*)i.e., what does not belong to the whole presentation of the object as an intrinsic constituent, but is only an extrinsic addition, does indeed increase our taste's liking, and yet it too does so only by its form. As in the case of picture frames, or drapery on statues. Or colonnades around magnificent buildings. On the other hand, if the ornament itself does not consist in beautiful form but is merely attached, as a gold frame is to a painting so that its charm may commend the painting for our approval, then it impairs genuine beauty and is called finery⁸.

So much for the column! It is not part of the whole nor does not contribute to the authentic beauty of the object and is likely to cause it harm. Kant's innovation is that, in order to be considered a work of art, an architectural work must be de-ideologised and organised around a complex, metaphysical and abstract idea or concept that is at the root of its beauty and whose purpose is to embody and convey this idea: 'this principle to animate the soul, the material it employs for this, is what imparts to the mental powers a purposive momentum, i.e., imparts to them a play which is such that it sustains itself on its own and even strengthens the powers for such play'⁹.

7 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 242-243, §22.

8 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 226, §14.

9 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 314, §49.

This raises questions about how these confuse and metaphysical ideas, capable of creating authentic beauty, can be transposed into architecture.

Here again, the rupture with the aesthetics of the Ancien Régime is radical. Since then, art must be considered a-social and de-ideologised, absolutely liberated, with the sole objective of reaching the spirituality and feelings of each individual. The aporias inherent in this new definition of architectural art are therefore manifold. In order to overcome these, we will attempt to give this art a new definition.

The impasse of architecture in its pre-modern definition

In §51 of *Critique of Judgment*, Kant attempts to classify the arts by defining each one on the basis of differences. In this endeavour, the main criteria are the concepts of idea and expression.

Kant reminds us in the opening lines that:

We may in general call beauty (whether natural or artistic) the expression [underlined by Kant in the German edition] of aesthetic ideas; the difference is that in the case of beautiful art the aesthetic idea must be prompted by a concept of the object, whereas in the case of beautiful nature, mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object is [meant] to be, is sufficient for arousing and communicating the idea of which that object is regarded as the expression¹⁰.

He then shows that the arts can be divided into three categories: 1) The arts of speech, 2) the visual arts, which include architecture and 3) The art of the beautiful play of sensations (music).

The category relating to architecture is redundantly reintroduced by the concept of expression of an idea: (2) 'The VISUAL arts, i.e., the arts of expressing ideas in sensible intuition (not by presentations of mere imagination that are aroused by words), are those of sensible truth and those of sensible illusion¹¹'.

The expression of ideas through the senses in sensible illusion is concerned with painting. The production of sensible truth through figures in space concerns architecture and sculpture.

The latter aims to represent objects, Kant says 'as they might exist in nature (though, as a fine art, it does so with a concern for aesthetic purposiveness)¹², whereas architecture is the art of exhibiting concepts of things that are possible only through art, things whose form does not have nature as its determining basis but instead has a chosen purpose, and of doing so in order to carry out that aim and yet also with aesthetic purposiveness¹³'. The definition Kant outlines here is essentially based on the difference between architecture and sculpture, which, unlike the former is for Kant 'the simple expression of aesthetic ideas¹⁴' and is made solely to be looked at, is meant to be liked on its own account;

10 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 320, §51.

11 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 322, §51.

12 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 322, §51.

13 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 322, §51.

14 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 322, §51.

though [in] such a work [sculpture] exhibits [its ideal] corporeally, yet the work is a mere imitation of nature even though one that involves a concern for aesthetic idea¹⁵

Architectural art is therefore defined by its distinction from sculpture as an art form that does not seek to depict. This art is therefore closer to the realm of pure ideas sought by Kant. Unfortunately, Kant does not explore the definition of architecture he provides in the following lines in greater depth (unlike the other arts, for which he is more explicit). This definition ultimately falls back on finality in use, which poses several problems.

Here is the complete passage:

Architecture is the art of exhibiting concepts of things that are possible only through art, things whose form does not have nature as its determining basis but instead has a chosen purpose, and of doing so in order to carry out that aim and yet also with aesthetic purposiveness. In architecture the main concern is what use is to be made of the artistic object, and this use is a condition to which the aesthetic ideas are confined. In sculpture the main aim is the mere expression of aesthetic ideas [...] temples, magnificent buildings for public gatherings, or again residences, triumphal arches, columns, cenotaphs, and so on, erected as honorary memorials, belong to architecture; we may even add to this all household furnishings (such as the work of the cabinet maker and other such things that are meant to be used). For what is essential in a work of architecture is the product's adequacy for a certain use¹⁶.

In this paragraph, he seems to finally define architecture by its use, i.e., by its functional role. Insofar as he stipulated in §2 that 'the liking that determines a judgment of taste is devoid of all interest' and that satisfaction in a functional purpose excludes the good from the realm of the beautiful, it seems that architecture is distinguished by what should exclude it from the realm of art.

Kant himself, while avoiding unnecessary controversy, argued that architecture is not necessarily art in its entirety. *insofar as they are fine arts*¹⁷, he puts this point in perspective, in particular with regard to garden art and architecture in §14. According to our hypothesis, architectural art must therefore be limited to a specific part of architecture.

This allows overcoming the contradiction. But to give a complete definition, we must also reinterpret the question of use and purpose using a transcendental approach. This will enable us to clarify the definition of pure architectural art in our conclusion.

b. Pure architectural art in light of Kantian aesthetics

Architectural art

Segregation : not all architecture is art

Since modernity, all the arts have clearly embraced the shift towards subjectivity, metaphysics and later abstraction demanded by modern aesthetics. However, architecture has remained essentially entangled in the ambiguity of its semi-functional, rhetorical, so-

15 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 323, § 51.

16 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, pp. 322-323, § 51.

17 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 225, § 14.

cial and ideological status, and has been unable to assume an artistic role. Architects seem to have a guilty conscience that prevents them from focusing on spirituality rather than material, technical or economic conditions.

This is despite the fact that Kant's aesthetic thinking directly concerns our modern existential condition. Today, the difference between architectural artworks and ordinary constructions produced by the building industry is greater than ever. Some architectural buildings are indisputably art (some of them may be internationally published), while ordinary constructions merely reflect a state of society and do not pretend to any level of beauty or transcendence.

Purpose of pure architectural art

Beauty and art, if we condense Kant's formulations, are 'characterised by the provocation of feelings of pleasure and displeasure¹⁸, the free lawfulness of the imagination¹⁹, a free play of our presentational powers²⁰, that 'imparts to the mental powers a purposive momentum, i.e., imparts to them a play which is such that it sustains itself on its own and even strengthens the powers for such play²¹'.

However, the Kantian concept of beauty remains deliberately undefined. The philosopher never describes beautiful architecture or objects, but rather the feelings they evoke and their fundamental existential role.

The *Critique of Judgment* teaches us to distinguish between art and non-art in architecture, thus enabling us to define pure architectural art.

Pure architectural art that responds to this concept is architecture liberated from social order.

If we summarise Kant's idea of art, it is pure and free, addresses individual subjectivity in its universality, is autonomous and self-sufficient; non-referential, it does not appeal to symbolic systems external to itself. Each work is a microcosm that contains within itself the idea of the possibility of its existence and its purpose. It is perceptible as a singular entity. Its finitude rests essentially on the idea that constitutes its own end, and only secondarily on its form. Its beauty arises from the dynamic link between the two.

The resulting art of construction is de-ideologised and non-societal. It opposes the rhetorical symbolism of the Ancien Régime and is stripped of historical references. It is also non-Vitruvian and non-Platonic, and is freed from technique, rational knowledge, reason and ideas of perfection. It is not subject to any thought or purpose, nor does it have a model.

The power of transcendence is the driving force behind art, determining its intensity.

This power stems from a de-deified existence and offers an alternative order centred on the individual. The Kantian, individualistic, humanist ideal holds that the sense of order and harmony is an existential need, independent of any pre-established perfection, which is at least uncertain and may not exist at all. This subjective perception — the feeling of vague satisfaction produced by beauty — corresponds to a subjective sense of harmony

18 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 177, *Introduction, III*.

19 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 241, *General Comment on the First Division*.

20 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 243, *General Comment on the First Division*.

21 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, pp. 313-314, § 49.

and order, and it is art's role to provoke it. Thus, the ideas that art and architecture must convey are essentially abstract, spiritual and metaphysical.

There are four main features that together give architecture a special role as an art form, which we will attempt to outline below. They characterise aesthetics and the modern humanism: first, liberation; then affirming autonomy; then seeking transcendence; and finally maintaining a vital dynamic.

Features of architectural art

Liberating and affirming the individual existential condition

The first principle is that of acute self-awareness, liberty, and personal responsibility, as advocated by the Enlightenment. The isolation that results from this reflects this new civilisational and spiritual state. This idea of liberty is fundamentally both inspiring and fraught with the disturbing risk of dereliction. It emphasises subjectivity and liberty. Kantian aesthetics and intransitive architecture are a priori a-social and no longer address, as before, an organised community seeking to reinforce order, but rather emancipated individuals wrestling with questions about the meaning of existence. Beauty is the expression and feeling of a subjective and intense presence in the world, individual and free, confusedly perceived as potentially good.

Stimulating autonomous and sensitive awareness of presence

Secondly, unlike classical beauty, which is based on the idea of a stable and shared order, modern beauty seeks both confirmation of existence and constitutes a dynamic inquiry into the meaning of being. This is reflected in the two relationships between the individual and art: the one that touches on the perception of beauty and the one that produces it and emanates from creative genius. A dual dynamic emerges that concerns perceptions and creative judgment. In both cases, aesthetics is a living and perpetual process of seeking and creating meaning that is continually renewed within a perpetually changing universe.

Beauty, and therefore the architecture that seeks it, aims to create complex and dynamic cognitive situations that provoke the free play of the mind's faculties and the free legality of the imagination in a composition of diversity. Beauty provokes continuous movement, excitement of perception, and a quest for discovery. This dynamism of liberty and discovery excludes disciplines and traditions. The work must spring from the spirit of creative genius, which imbues it with the vitality of its soul. It is the expression of a free intelligence conveying a unique interpretation of a possible order through the interrelation of an idea and a form. The generative principle of the work (the author) nevertheless recedes in favor of the free pleasure of imagination. In this sense, aesthetics defines a demanding relationship between individuality and autonomous, free spirituality.

Individual quest for transcendence through aesthetics

Thirdly, intransitive art seeks, through the provocation of pleasure and pain, a transcendent beauty, that is to say, the principle of a direct relationship, without intermediaries,

between the individual and the *greater whole* (whether nature, the universe, organic vitality, etc.) in which each individual then seeks their place. This universal order now replaces the societal and human framework that previously took precedence and offered (or imposed) each individual their place within a coherent social structure. Art, as redefined by Kant, formalises the incompatibility of the Old Regime with modern existential aspirations. As art, architecture must therefore aim to mediate directly between each individual's awareness of existence and the world; it will therefore favor the expression of the possibility of harmony in the universe and the place that the individual finds within it. The reference to Nature in the broadest sense is fundamental, and the link through art is essential. It thus loses its role as a vehicle for cultural production. On the contrary, the difference between art and nature seeks to fade away.

Kant writes: 'Nature, we say, is beautiful, if it also looks like art; and art can be called fine art only if we are conscious that it is art while yet it looks to us like nature²²'.

Aesthetics and art seek a presence in individual existence rather than societal existence.

Speculative vitality

Finally, this direct link between each individual and the whole gives rise to a dynamic and changing relationship with the universe as a possibility of a higher order. Thus, Kant tells us, 'the principle of finality in nature is a principle of the faculty of judgment²³'. As a principle of organic life, it is also a metaphysics based on the uncertainty associated with perception and the existential quest. Kant writes:

Hence, we must think nature, as regards its merely empirical laws, as containing the possibility of an endless diversity of empirical laws that [despite being laws] are nonetheless contingent as far as we can see (i.e., we cannot cognise them a priori); and it is in view of this possibility that we judge the unity of nature in terms of empirical laws, as well as the possibility of the unity of experience (as a system in terms of empirical laws) to be contingent²⁴.

He further supplements this empirical and hypothetical report on nature with the following:

Now this transcendental concept of a purposiveness of nature is neither a concept of nature nor a concept of freedom, since it attributes nothing whatsoever to the object (nature), but [through] this transcendental concept [we] only think of the one and only way in which we must proceed when reflecting on the objects of nature with the aim of having thoroughly coherent experience. Hence it is a subjective principle (maxim) of judgment. This is also why we rejoice (actually we are relieved of a need) when, just as if it were a lucky chance favoring our aim, we do find such systematic unity among merely empirical laws, even though we necessarily had to assume that there is such unity even though we have no insight into this unity and cannot prove it²⁵.

22 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 307, § 45.

23 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p.181, *Introduction*, V.

24 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p.184, *Introduction*, V.

25 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, pp.184-185, *Introduction*, V.

Our relationship with the world, as we can see, no longer has anything in common with that of antiquity, which saw in the idea of the cosmos a pre-established, static, and definitive order in which everything had its place.

Art and architectural art corresponding to modern individualistic spirituality will then seek to transpose into art the possibility of freedom, the dynamic and organic principles of life in nature, its complexity, its energy, its growth, revealed by subjective and changing perceptions of order, thus opening the way to speculation and the confused pleasure of feelings.

Definition of architectural art

Architecture as the art of transcending presence in the world

Accompanying this civilisational and spiritual change that took place at the end of the 18th century, architecture seemed, in its tradition, to be the most fragile of the arts. From the perspective of the new transcendental objective, it should be the most effective of them all.

Through the classification and definition he proposes in §51 of the division of fine arts, Kant placed architecture alongside sculpture in the category of plastic arts, which he presents as a sub-division of the figurative arts, which also includes painting. In a historically conditioned approach, sculpture was defined as the simple expression of aesthetic ideas and a transposition of something that could exist in nature.

Architecture, meanwhile, for Kant, stood out for 'exhibiting concepts of things that are possible only through art, things whose form does not have nature as its determining basis but instead has a chosen purpose, and of doing so in order to carry out that aim and yet also with aesthetic purposiveness. In architecture the main concern is what use is to be made of the artistic object, and this use is a condition to which the aesthetic ideas are confined²⁶'.

Since Kant had previously excluded criteria of use and utility from aesthetic considerations, this first definition seems problematic and needs a reinterpretation.

Taking up Kant's distinction, it seems that the original sentence allows for a more abstract interpretation : 'Bei der letzteren ist ein gewisser Gebrauch des künstlichen Gegenstandes die Hauptsache, worauf als Bedingung die Ästhetischen Ideen eingeschränkt werden'²⁷.

Here is a proposition of interpretation: **in architecture the main concern is the type of use that is made of the artistic object, and this use is a condition to which the aesthetic ideas are confined.**

Thus, for Kant, art is based on the aesthetic idea of use and not on use itself.

If we now consider that pure architectural art does not concern use but rather the transcendence of the idea of use, we resolve the contradiction of architectural art and the relevance of the definition is assured.

26 KANT, *Critique of Judgment*, PLUHAR, trans., 1987, p. 191, §51.

27 KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 2009, §51, 322, p. 214.

Definition of pure aesthetic architectural art

Deriving from this interpretation of Kant's text, I propose the following definition of architectural art:

Architecture as an art form is characterised by its ability to evoke feelings through the work itself. The specific feelings it produces correspond to the projection, in the imagination, of oneself into free ways of living.

Architecture as an art form is defined as the art of transcending inhabitating (use) of the world. It is a work on the space of existence and presence in the world; inhabiting in the philosophical, Heideggerian sense is the subject of its representations.

When the purpose of sculpture lies in the idea produced by the object, that of architecture lie in the idea of the uniquely human and metaphysical presence in the world that it represents.

Thus defined, as a representation of the idea of dwelling, architectural art can legitimately take various forms such as text, drawing, models, etc. Defining architecture through the transcendence of dwelling also allows us to move beyond the reduction to the art of the façade and orders to which it was reduced in the classical age, or to that of line and drawing.

The experience of the individual existential condition, of the interplay of cognitive functions, of presence in the universe, and the consideration of a speculative relationship with an evolving and organic living nature, if they are the markers of the modern individual's appreciation of beauty, will make it possible to conceive of architectural beauty in a more universal way and to enrich it with specificities that the classical tradition pretended to ignore but practiced in a confused manner.

It should also allow for the freedom to imagine other possibilities for human presence on Earth.