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THE ARCHITECTURE OF CONTEMPORARY POLISH LIBRARIES SELECTED PROJECTS



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ABSTRACT: Purpose of the article - Technologies, materials and current trends are the elements that influence design and architectural language. They shape the face of objects created in accordance with new perceptions of the functionality of architecture, including contemporary libraries, which, while remaining part of the culture industry, must have an appropriately designed and arranged space. Multifunctionality is now a unique feature of architecture, which allows libraries to implement a variety of projects. The final shape depends on the architect's comprehensive view of a given space, and projects commissioned in the 21st century are the best example of this. The objects described herein are not exclusively new constructions, but also those that have been modernized or adapted. The competition designs, which express the architects' visionary imaginings of the future, are also important for getting to know the perceptions of modern libraries. Delving into their architectural form and design will allow us to understand them and set the direction in which their design should go. **Research methods** – Architectural literature, technical and design documents, photos, competition designs, and the

content of websites of individual institutions contributed to the source materials, which were the basis for describing their history. The analysis of the above made it possible to indicate the changes that have occurred since the beginning of the 21st century in the field of design. **Results and conclusions** – Contemporary libraries, being carriers of material and non-material values, are an area of strong influence on the user, who is invited to explore on many levels. Their modern architecture further deepens these feelings. An architect who wants to create an excellent library, regardless of whether it will be a university library or a facility dedicated to local communities, must plan it so that users experience positive emotions while inside. Only then will the library be not only a place of practical development, but also a place for dialogue and the exchange of experiences. It is also worth remembering that libraries, being part of the municipal infrastructure, turn good cities into great ones, creating the reality of its surroundings. The library space is a constantly developing fabric, a network of connections, which, if properly designed, can have a positive impact on the lives of the inhabitants.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 1930s, the classic concept of the functional tripartite division formulated by the Italian architect Leopoldo Della Santa began to wane. The division of the library space into zones intended for readers, staff, and book collections was abandoned (Della Santa, 1816) in favor of an open library enabling direct contact with the book collection, which first took place in the United States and then in Europe (Maj, 1987, p. 13). At that time, the architects again looked critically at library architecture and presented a proposal for change. For the next decades, following the ideas developed in 1933 by Angus Sned Macdonald who believed that modern buildings should be characterized by „flexibility, changeability, adaptability”, conceptualizations were based on the needs of utility (flexibility). The issue of the appearance and functionality of libraries was revisited in 1994. The solutions proposed by the British architect Harry Faulkner-Brown in the field of construction, technology, and interior architecture (Faulkner-Brown, 1994; Szczygłowska, 2008, p. 468) were revised in 2006 by Andrew McDonald, who announced that the new century required a different perspective (McDonald, 2006; Świrad, 2010, p. 13). Without rejecting the principles of Faulkner-Brown, he presented new solutions that took into account ongoing social and technological changes (Tokarska, 2013, p. 683).

Contemporary libraries, classified as belonging to the cultural and creative industries sector, require special buildings to fulfill their assigned functions (Lewandowski & Munk & Skrok, 2010, pp. 3-7; Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, pp. 94-137). Their position in this sector is strong because they are in the first circle known as the “core of creativity” or the “root of creativity”, which brings together initiatives related to art and cultural

heritage (KEA European Affairs, 2006, p. 2; Krapiński, 2014, p. 24). The remaining creative industries fall within the subsequent circles that radiate around this core. Libraries are at the very center as institutions promoting cultural values, as well as enabling people to spend free time away from the hustle and bustle of the city (Jankowska, 2012, p. 179; Oldenburg, 1999; Płócienniczak, 2014, pp. 177-187; Tomaszewska, 2013, p. 13; Zybert, 2017, pp. 14-47). However, in order for them to play an important role in this sector, they need appropriately designed multifunctional spaces. Whether such unique places attract users and improve the quality of life in the region (Krapiński, 2012, p. 22) depends on architects, who are also included in the core of the creative class according to Richard Florida (Florida, 2010, p. 61). The technological and design solutions used by them will not only determine their success, but will also affect the emotions and intellectual sensitivity of visitors. Of course, the reception of the facility by the society will ultimately be influenced by the attractiveness of the programs being implemented, but the issues of proper management are no less important here (Konieczna, 2009, p. 21). Today, modern library buildings tell a story about a changing architecture and a revolutionary approach to the designed space and are the result of cooperation between architects and investors. In the case of adapted or modernized facilities, it is also a dialogue between the existing structure and the surroundings in which the building is located. Nowadays, next to monumental university institutions, more and more small centers dedicated to local communities are being built. Then, libraries share space with cultural centers and together provide access to knowledge. The development of civilization has provided us with many educational opportunities, and the library plays an important role in this chain.

Reflection on the image of the contemporary library will not be limited to discussing purely architectural issues, but will be an attempt to describe them in a broader context. Answers to the following questions:

– why is it necessary to have a different perspective on buildings designed for the needs of modern libraries?

– how do architects belonging to the creative class see new libraries that are multifunctional centers?

– what materials and technologies are dominant in their projects?

– how do they shape the space to make it user-friendly and functional?

– what is the participation of female architects in the project being executed?

will allow us to indicate the direction of changes in the architecture of contemporary libraries. The facilities presented here were selected due to the time of their creation (2000-2019) and their method (adaptation, modernization, new implementation). For each object, its architectural and design values are described, which determine its character and evoke po-

sitive emotions not only when we look at their visual aspect, but also when we become direct users. It is also worth discussing the competitions for library buildings, which are more and more often announced by city authorities. On the example of projects prepared for Szczecin, contemporary trends in shaping library spaces have been shown. The winning projects offer a wealth of knowledge on this subject. In the selected and described spaces, regardless of whether they were adaptations, modernizations, or completely new projects, a cultural code has been written and various types of experiences are being shaped which increase their attractiveness in the eyes of their users.

RITUAL OF TRANSITION – ADAPTATION

Intelligent libraries define the visions of their own development more and more effectively and develop indicators of their success. With the help of designers, they shape their own spaces to encourage visitors and integrate local communities. Their interestingly arranged buildings are not necessarily new investments. Only in recent years, architects have implemented several successful adaptations, modifying railway stations or historic factories. This is not a new phenomenon, such solutions have been used before, and abroad as well, for example in Braunschweig, Luckenwalde, Lucerne, and Siena (Hauke & Werner, 2012). Regardless of the period in which these transformations took place, these objects have one thing in common: they are not isolated entities, but function within the local structures and serve the local communities. Adaptations confirm that architecture, thanks to a strange mixture of science and art, is magic (Piano, 2003, p. 16). The award-winning branch of the Florian Ceynowy Municipal Public Library in Rumia and the Wiktor Bazielich County and Municipal Public Library in Stary Sącz are good examples of this, because in these places the world of science and rationalism coexists with the world of poetry and symbols¹. For these institutions, recognition of this is very important, but their fate depends on the acceptance of the local community and whether they will be perceived as attractive places, with a rich educational offer where one can spend interesting leisure time in well-designed spaces. Their design is an expression of the present times and of the intentions of the project's authors and investors, aimed at creating a specific effect for the user. Originally arranged spatial structures

¹ This Branch of the Florian Ceynowy Municipal Public Library in Rumia won, among others: second place in the Solidarity 2014 competition; first place in the 7th edition of the Polska Architektura XXL plebiscite; the POLITYKA Architectural Award (2016); and the Library Interior Design Awards in the "Single Space Design" category (2016). The Wiktor Bazielich County and Municipal Public Library won 3rd place in the competition for the Stanisław Witkiewicz Małopolska Voivodship 2018 award in the category of public utility architecture.

can be found, among other places, in Rumia, where a railway station from the 1950s was adapted to the needs of a library. In this case, interference was limited to the interior. A center was established that combined the functions of a library and a cultural center. The „Stacja Kultura”, a name acquired from the neon sign inside, is a „third place” for the inhabitants which favors the equalization of educational opportunities and provides entertainment. A reading room, a computer room, a conference room, and a playroom for children have been designed in this small space, and cultural events take place in the courtyard of the ticket hall. The new library would not be so attractive if it were not for the interior arrangement and direct reference to the history of the building and the world of railways.

Crossing the threshold, we see black wall racks made of steel I-beams, reminiscent of railroad tracks, and red seats similar to those of historic wagons. Stairs leading to the mezzanine and slats masking the lighting above the information center are also made of I-beams. The advantage of „Stacja Kultura” is its designer interior, emanating with positive energy. Red sofas and hangers for clothes, a library counter, skirting boards and door frames in the same color enliven this building inconspicuous from the outside. Red, which is the dominant color, is contrasted interestingly with the gray stone floors and the wood-like stoneware tiles filling the spaces between the shelves. The look is complemented by white sofas, wall murals with the history of the city, and the library logo. The type of narrative proposed by the Sikora Wnętrza architectural studio, a story about an accessible and user-friendly library, met with approval and the project became an interesting answer to the challenges of the present times (Załoski, 2015, p. 84; Cymer, 2015; *Dworzec kolejowy w Rumii. ...*, 2014; *Rumia: Stacja ...*, 2016; *Stacja Kultura ...*, 2019; *Stacja Kultura ...*, 2014). Library facilities also appeared in the historic spaces of railway stations in Rabka Zdrój, Oborniki Śląskie, Wrocław, and in the bus station in Kielce. In all these cases, the basic functionality of the buildings has been preserved. Adaptations of their individual parts for library purposes were carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the conservator of monuments (*Rabka ...; Wkrótce otwarcie ...*, 2020; *Dworzec autobusowy ...*, 2020; *Biblioteka na dworcu ...*, 2017; *Biblioteka im. Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza*).

The Wrocław library in Psie Pole has also come to form a significant element in the city’s metabolism, thanks to which the perception of the area has also changed. The FAMA Library and Cultural Center, despite its small space, is popular among the local community, whose members can use the auditorium, art and movement laboratory, computer laboratory, and recording studio in addition to the library itself. The new facility inherited from its predecessor – the FAMA cinema – not only its building plot, but also its name and historic neon sign. The former building was replaced by a modern structure that fits perfectly into the existing space. It

is not a typical transformation of a building's function, but more an adaptation of space that previously played a culture-forming role. The interior of the new facility, which can be seen through the glazing at the pavement level, encourages one to stay there for a long time. The gray, cozy space is enlivened by a yellow ribbon of workstations and seats, and graphite furniture completes the arrangement (Głowacki, 2017, p. 56; *Centrum Biblioteczno-Kulturalne ...*, 2016; *Konkurs ...*, 2014).

Examples that illustrate well the appropriate use of the adapted space are also the Wiktor Bazieliński County and Municipal Public Library in Stary Sącz, the Library in Cieszyn, the Municipal Public Library in Opole, the H. Łopaciński Regional Public Library in Lublin, the TUVIM Municipal Library in Łódź, the MOKSIR Public Library in Chełmek, and the Julian Przyboś Municipal Public Library in Przeworsk. Such libraries are multifunctional centers that carry out educational and cultural tasks in originally arranged and expanded interiors. The facility in Stary Sącz offers a reading room with a children's and youths' section in bright rooms inspired by Scandinavian tradition and design. In *Książnica Cieszyńska*, additional space following renovation has been arranged separately for: a library, a conservation workshop, a conference room, user services, an exhibition gallery, and a special glass room for the book collection of Father Leopold Jan Szersznik. In the case of the library in Opole, readers acquired an interesting reading room, media library, conference room, social room, and a café with a periodical reading room which can be accessed from the park. An interesting solution was also chosen in Lublin, where the underground area was developed and designated for warehouses, a conference room, and an internet reading room, while the TUVIM Municipal Library in a revitalized tenement house in Łódź is set to attract readers not only with its programs, but also with an interesting interior design, swings, an energy bike, and a picturesque green patio. Recently opened branches in Chełmek and Przeworsk offer readers interesting programs and additionally access to a common room for children, a multimedia room, and a café. All activities are undertaken not in modern facilities, but in the revitalized and re-arranged spaces of the former kindergarten and the building of the "Sokół" Gymnastic Society. (*Powiatowa i Miejska ...; Siedziba – Książnica ...*; Hamada; Stiasny, 2008, p. 52; *Biblioteka Publiczna MOKSIR...*, 2020; *Otwarcie nowej ...*, 2020; *Zaglądamy do...*, 2020; *Sąsiadka ECI ...*, 2019). It is also worth mentioning one of the latest adaptations, namely the transformation of a former gym belonging to the Klementyna Hoffmannowa High School in Warsaw. The project, executed in 2019, was created as a result of cooperation with students of the Faculty of Interior Design of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. The bright, minimalist interiors have a place for group and individual work as well as a relaxation space and meeting zone. The designers' inventiveness allowed them to design

a space with a unique atmosphere which quickly gained the approval of young people (Knysak, 2020, p. 108).

The increasingly common trend for institutions from the cultural sector to use existing infrastructure in a manner different from its original purpose meant that, for example, a historic villa or an apartment house could be adapted and expanded for future library and cultural institutions. Despite the use of contemporary architectural language, architects created spaces that fit perfectly into the old fabric of the city. The key problem in this type of project, when the existing functionality of the facility changes, is always the protection of old buildings. Reconciling investors' expectations with conservation requirements is difficult, but not impossible. In the cases described, compromises were achieved. FAMA from Wrocław is one example of a project falling within a zone subject to supervision. The architects from the ENOE Architecture and Design studio had to take into account the proximity of tenement houses from the turn of the 20th century. Thanks to the adopted solutions, the building blends into the street frontage and, by making reference to the form of modernist projects, engages in a dialogue with them. A historic villa in Stary Sącz from the beginning of the 20th century has also retained its former appearance. The local library has gained space while recalling the times of its first owner, the lawyer Edward Seuchter. The architects decided only to extend its rear part. The façade, preserved and restored, is the most beautiful part. Thanks to the works carried out, the building has become a showcase for the city and through its architecture it exudes an atmosphere of creativity (Hajok, 2018, p. 76; *Powiatowa I Miejsko-Gminna ...*, *Rozbudowa ...*, 2018). A new life, filled with history, has also been breathed into the historic apartment house called "The Mint",² which houses the collections of the Cieszyn Library. Blending into the Old Town buildings, it houses two institutions - a library and a museum. Prepared by the architect Krzysztof Barysz of studio Urbi S.C., the project incorporated the extension of the existing structure within the space of the former city walls. The result was an interesting tension between the old and new parts of the converted building. The proposed solutions abound in quotes from historical architecture. In this way we have references to former mansions in Moravia (a façade with a stylized colonnade), the defensive character of the old part of the building (a stylized escarp as the base of the building), and the eclectic architecture of Cieszyn from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (Majewski, 2004, p. 29). A nineteenth-century apartment house in Opole also serves the functions of a library and a cultural institution. The

² In the 17th century, the mint of Duchess Elisabeth Lucretia was located in the apartment house. Later, the building was taken over by the Jesuits, and in the 18th century it was in the hands of Baron Jerzy Fryderyk Bludowski, whose coat of arms has been preserved on the front wall (https://kc-cieszyn.pl/strona_glowna/siedziba/).

historic space was a challenge for architects from the ARCHITOP studio, who decided to expand the building's volume. Its original character and historical neoclassical façade have been preserved. The added part is in keeping with the old buildings and surroundings (the nearby Młynówka canal, the Old Town, the Gothic-Baroque Franciscan monastery, and the Museum of Prisoners of War) (Majewski, 2011, p. 56; Hamada). The completed adaptation and extension was appreciated by both users and architects,³ being praised for the "exceptionally careful design of the municipal library building, well referencing the existing building and the rich urban context; for the harmony and proper articulation of individual elements of the complex in relation to the park and the bank of the Odra River; for great architectural culture; restraint and elegance of the applied material, texture and color solutions" (*Nagrody SARP rozdane 2011*). In the 21st century, the baroque outbuildings of a former monastery, previously adapted for the needs of the Hieronim Łopaciński Municipal Library in Lublin, were also expanded. The building underwent reconstruction for the first time in the interwar period, when a three-story building was added. As the result of another architectural intervention that took place after World War II, the library gained a new book warehouse. Thanks to the works carried out in 2004–2006, underground warehouses and a four-story block were built, located on the side of the baroque convent of the Visitation Sisters (Stiasny, 2008, p. 52; *Polskie biblioteki ...*).

Buildings that house cultural institutions are often some of the most interesting and visible objects in the city space. This is also the case with the library of the Łódź University of Technology, which has taken over the former warehouse of the Fryderyk Schweikert Wool Auction Society. Although the adaptation of historic architecture always raises a lot of controversy and fears, in this case it was possible to save the factory-town spirit of Łódź. The architects refrained from interfering with the external structure and kept the original shape of the building with its red brick façade which is associated with austerity and industrial spaces. Inside they left brick vaulted ceilings and undivided halls which were intended for warehouses. In this case, the brick gives the whole interior a period atmosphere. Designed at the beginning of the 20th century, this building was one of the first on the European continent to use reinforced concrete. Thanks to little interference, a space was created that is full of references to history, and at the same time is modern and multifunctional (Skubała & Kazan, 2011).

³ The building received awards from, among others, the Internet plebiscite for the architectural Favorite of Poland 2000–2012, which was part of the *Życie w Architekturze* competition (3rd place); and the Mister Architecture of the Opolskie Voivodship 2010–2011 competition (distinction). The facility was recognized as the best architectural facility built with public funds in 2010 under the honorary patronage of the Minister of Infrastructure (<https://mbp.opole.pl/biblioteka/nagrody>).

A railway station, a historic apartment house, a factory, a kindergarten are an open-ended catalog of spaces that are now adapted to the needs of libraries. Another unusual location worth adding to this list is that of a green house. The Glass Trap Media Center was opened in 2012 in the Zielonogórska Palmiarnia (Zielona Góra Palm House). In its interior spaces we can not only admire exotic plants, but also pass time with our favorite reading. Located on the top of Winne Wzgórze and surrounded by a vineyard park, together with the 19th century vintner's house which belonged to August Grempler, it is a tourist attraction (Nędzyńska, 2012). The library is an asset to this locale, as is the Grafit Library in Wrocław, as well as the Manhattan Library in Gdańsk and Sopoteka in Sopot, which are located in shopping centers. It is worth devoting a few words especially to the Sopoteka, whose space was arranged by the studio of Jan Sikora, already known for his project in Rumia. In the case of "Stacja Kultura", we had a direct reference to the history of the building in which it is located, and in Sopot the architect was inspired by the city itself, the beach and greenery. Bright, harmonious and natural interiors encourage visits, especially after the summer season, because in the library spaces you will find deckchairs and multimedia beach baskets as well as comfortable sofas and cushions. Light wood, white and green colors and the various seats mentioned above define the character of this place (*Mediateka w Sopot ...*, 2015; Safader; Warnke, 2016; *Tak wygląda...*, 2015).

In the cases described here, the historical architecture provides a perfect complement to the newly created spaces without losing any of its character and originality. When expanding these libraries, technologies and materials commonly used all over the world were used. Glass, concrete, and aluminum are among those most frequently used in these projects. Glass has gained particular importance in modern architecture, although its use poses problems with regard to thermoregulation and lighting. From the beginning of the 20th century we find it used in the projects of Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier. Currently, we find it most often in public buildings. The façade of the Wrocław FAMA was made of glass whose panes reflect the surroundings and encourage passers-by to enter. In this case, it was combined with gray grooved concrete plates and aluminum. In Stary Sącz, glazing from the garden side makes it possible to contemplate nature, and the brackets supporting the ceiling structure seen through them resemble tree branches. The same material was also used by architects in Lublin, where it was used in the construction of the south-west façade. Daylight reaches the building through glass walls and narrow window slots, and its intensity is regulated by shutters: wooden and rotating inside, vertical outside. In Opole, on the other hand, the main entrance to the building is hidden among glass and pylons. In this way, the old building was connected with the added module with

reinforced concrete and layered external walls. Glass and openwork metal mesh panels also enliven the façade of the new part made of graphite fiber-cement panels. In addition, they were used to build an open patio on the side of the Museum of Prisoners of War. Thanks to this solution, the building is better lit, and the readers have the opportunity to look out at the old town buildings. From the side of the park, the glazing reaches two stories, which makes the two worlds, the outer and the inner one, interpenetrate. The historic and modern spaces are connected by a system of footbridges separated by an "illuminated, stone-filled 'moat' with bamboos, which continues with a crack in the interior running through all floors, and on the outside appears as a narrow glass connector illuminating individual stories" (*Wnętrza biblioteki...*, 2011). The interiors exude austere character, not only because of the glass. This impression is intensified by leaving ventilation systems visible and by the use of stone and two-color granite paving bricks (Hamada; *Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna ...*, 2011).

However, it is not only the ubiquitous glazing that determines the reception of adapted objects. Architects use various solutions to catch the eyes of passers-by and encourage them to visit the re-imagined spaces. In Opole, it was decided to place fragments of Edward Stachura's poetry on part of the facade. Additionally, the medieval city walls with stone stairs were revealed and restored. From the side of the canal the building was constructed on a high pedestal, and the partially reconstructed fortifications protect it against flooding. The architects referred back to the historic tower located in this place through ornate, open-work balconies with metallized laminate cladding. All these elements affect the visual perception of the building. In Wrocław, recreational terraces created on the back courtyard side, on an annexed avant-corps and a square with concrete seats, are designed to encourage a visit. In Lublin, on the other hand, a portico was designed along the side façade with historical references. Thanks to this solution, the entire project fits in better with the surroundings and the reinforced concrete columns, moved away from the glass curtain wall, give it an impression of monumentality (Majewski, 2011, p. 56; Głowacki, 2017, p. 56; Stiasny 2008, p. 52).

The current location of libraries in buildings originally meant for other purposes confirms that architecture, being a living creation, allows for their use in a different way than intended, thanks to technology and design ideas. In these cases, the architects' task is to find connections between the existing state and the investor's expectations in order to create a functional space and at the same time preserve the historic substance. Thus, an architect never works alone, and the designed buildings are the result of cooperation. In the cases described here, the architects managed to carry out the reconstruction with respect for historical values and to reveal the potential hidden in these buildings, confirming that architecture

is a product of the mind. "Architectural thought is something conceptual, while perception, on the contrary, is completely sensual. [...] on the one hand, the intellectual sphere to create architecture, and on the other, a completely sensual world to experience it" (Perrault, 2003, p. 29).

LIBRARIES ENVISIONED ANEW – MODERNIZATION

Currently, „we live in times of a technological revolution, the Internet can be considered one of the most important inventions of our era. We live in large agglomerations, we are developing rapidly, and information has become one of the most valuable currencies. At the same time, we are constantly busy, we do not have time for ourselves, and the ubiquitous technology reduces the sense of security and violates our privacy. Cities generate a huge amount of pollution, poisoning us and our planet every day. In the rush of duties, we lack time for contact with nature and rest" (Granosik, 2019, p. 50). All this means that local communities expect their cities to have a variety of spaces enabling relaxation and development. The library is to be one of these, different from the library known a decade ago, still evolving and adjusting to the changing reality. Would the word „place" or „space" be more appropriate to describe its character? We most often see a place as a „quiet center of established values", which we experience as a pause, somewhere we can stay. Such a place, safe and predictable, is the opposite of a space, which is associated with movement, size, or openness. However, what at the beginning is a space, becomes a place as you get to know it. It is no different in the case of modern libraries, which we initially look at as multifunctional objects, and when we get to know them better gain a different dimension in our eyes, becoming a „third place" where we like to spend our free time. The changing needs of users and the progress of civilization lead cities more and more often to decide to modernize old buildings and make them functional and friendly places, and not just spaces which we move around in (Matlina, 2013, pp. 3-20; Tuan, 1987, pp. 16-24). It is a natural course of things, but in order to bring a positive result, before sitting down to work, the architect should think about the reader's expectations and what makes him or her feel good in a given place. Contemporary architecture is a thinking machine whose soul is initially created by an architect but whose later functions are taken over by the user, as in the modernized libraries in Strzemieszyce in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Sosnowiec, Mielec or Warsaw (Warsaw Public Library), Poznań (Raczyński Library), and Krakow (Jagiellonian Library). Recently, it is not only smaller centers that have gained a new face, but also large academic institutions whose interiors, over time, have required a new look at their functionality.

In the case of libraries dedicated to local communities, their common feature is multifunctionality. Architects for the City Library in Strzemieszyce, Dąbrowa Górnicza, the Gustaw Daniłowski library in Sosnowiec, or the Municipal Public Library of the Local Government Cultural Center in Mielec assumed the creation of a common space for the implementation of library and cultural tasks. In Strzemieszyce, cooperation with the local community resulted in the creation of a center with a place for a club-café and a cinema and entertainment hall, and the revitalized area around the area allowed for the preparation of a place for an outdoor stage and a parking lot (*Biblioteka w Dąbrowie ...*, 2015, p. 13). The same intentions guided the creators of the library in Sosnowiec, which, after reopening, offered access to, among others, multimedia and regional collections. Children in these new spaces have a separate room (The World of Science and Fantasy). The proposed changes met with a positive response also due to the new interior design. The old design from the 70s was replaced with a modern design. The redesigned Zagłębiowska Mediateka is eagerly visited and has received awards (*Zagłębiowska Mediateka...*, 2019; J.F, 2019)⁴. The library in Mielec, which was reopened in 2019, is also popular among the local community. The facility has a separate space for: a library, a children's corner, a teenager's zone, an audiovisual and exhibition room, as well as a reading room with a terrace, where you can read daily newspapers. In this way, it was possible to implement the idea of a multifunctional space, which additionally serves as a "third place" (*W Mielcu powstała...*, 2019).

The cooperation of architects and investors, as well as their innovative approach to modernized buildings, resulted in interesting solutions that will serve the readers well. In the projects described here, a whole range of materials were used, from glass to brick and concrete, thanks to which the facelift was a success. Glass has been used in a traditional manner in Mielec to illuminate the interior of the building, being extended by one floor. Thanks to this maneuver, the library gained more space for the implementation of tasks, as well as a visually interesting exterior. Locating the main entrance from the park side turned out to be a good decision that allowed nature to become an integral part of this project. The rebuilt library is an expression of the harmonious coexistence of nature and architecture (*W Mielcu ...*, 2019). Glass was also used in Strzemieszyce, but in this case it is complemented by traditional brick, concrete, and weathering steel (COR-TEN). Such a combination made the façade eye-catching and entices users to visit and delve into the functional layers of the facility.

⁴ The Gustaw Daniłowski Municipal Public Library in Sosnowiec took third place in the National Open Competition "Modernization of the Year and Construction of the 21st Century" Edition XXIII 2018 in the category of "public utility buildings" (*Zagłębiowska Mediateka ...*, 2019).

The expanding book collections and the expectations of readers force modernization also in large institutions. In recent years, necessary work has been carried out in, among other places, the Warsaw Public Library, the Raczyński Library in Poznań, and the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków. As the result of a comprehensive renovation, the library in Warsaw saw remodeling done in the Reception Area, Lending Room, Audio Book Lending Room, Faustyn Czerwijowski Reading Room, Information Center, Children's Book Museum, Władysław Bartoszewski Reading Room (Magazines), Władysław Bartoszewski Reading Room (Varsaviana), Stanisław Kierbedź Reading Room, the Reading Room of Art and Cartography, and the Reading Room of Old Prints and Manuscripts, among other places. The former layout of the outbuildings has been preserved and greater functionality was provided by roofing the courtyards and extending the warehouse wing. Currently, the functions of the reading room and café have been taken over by the existing internal courtyards. Moving around the facility is facilitated by elevators and a system of footbridges. The works carried out allowed for the redesign of an attractive space in the city center, which is functional and interestingly arranged. Inside, one will find not only a green wall of plants that pleases the eye, but also some art in the form of Marcin Bogusławski's Sgraffito. In this way, the historical interiors gained their own atmosphere. In the construction, glass was used in a traditional manner, covering the roof in the eastern and western courtyards. The latest design achievements were also employed to design the space used by readers and librarians (Mycielski, 2015, p. 76; Kloc, 2020). Further renovation works are currently underway, which will also include the façade of the building. Throughout the library, readers have the opportunity to use computer workstations with Internet access, connect their own devices to the wireless Internet, access databases subscribed to by the library, and use reprographic services and cafés if they need a break from studying.

Following its modernization, the Warsaw library has often been compared to the Raczyński Library in Poznań. In both cases, thanks to the architects' non-standard approach, modern spaces were created. For the Raczyński Library, architects from the JAMS Architects' Studio designed a new building, which became a part of this historic library. By referring to classical motifs, "the unity of form and function" was achieved, and the resulting section, despite the larger volume, was in line with the aesthetics and scale of the surrounding buildings (*Biblioteka Raczyńskich ...*, 2013, p. 40; Warnke, 2016; Pięciak, 2014). The solutions adopted meant that the past was enriched with an intriguing future. The combination of history and modernity achieved by displaying the historic façade of the neighboring building in the new hall gave an interesting visual effect. The impression of harmony between the two buildings was achieved through the use

of polished concrete blocks imitating multicolored aggregates from which the outer cladding of the added part was made. The same material was used to design the interior wall mosaic. The openwork three-dimensional façade, allowing one to admire the interior with an interesting and consistent design, encourages passers-by to visit. Inside, the designers abandoned traditional lighting placed on the ceiling in favor of lamps above desks and bookcases. During the day, daylight passes through “rhythmically arranged windows with deep embrasures” (*Biblioteka Raczyńskich ...*, 2013, p. 32). The decision to support the ceiling of the building only in the corners not only influenced its perception (the impression of lightness), but also facilitated the arrangement of the resulting space. Readers have at their disposal an information center, reading room, lending room, and free access and an open book repository for those who like to work alone. The atmosphere is additionally enhanced by specially designed equipment in the form of wooden furniture and colorful elements. The use of the facility is facilitated by a system of several entrances, available at different times of the day (*Biblioteka Raczyńskich ...*, 2013, pp. 38-39). The decision to expand the library in Poznań was dictated by the necessity to meet the expectations of users. The expanding collection of books kept in several locations and the new cultural and educational functions required more space. The building was also adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, like other modern buildings of today. In this case, the architects managed to find a proverbial golden mean and design architecture that will not only make life easier for readers, but will be as functional as possible. The architects carrying out the metamorphosis of the Jagiellonian Library probably also asked themselves similar questions. The former modernist building by Waław Krzyżanowski was expanded in 1996-2001, according to a design by Atelier Loegler & Partners. It was then decided that the new rear wing would be placed parallel to the front part, behind the block of the main reading room. Red granite on the side walls and sandstone cladding of a similar color to the one existing in the old part resulted in a stylistic unity with the existing buildings. The lightness of the entire project is provided by the skylight and, paradoxically, the stone blinds. Inside, the glazing has been applied traditionally, which illuminates the building and allows the users to admire the greenery. The expansion gave readers a contemporarily arranged space, while the book collection gained additional warehouses in the high wings of the building and rooms on the ground floor and the first floor of the connector above the main reading room. Apart from the lending library, the new building also houses the Main Reading Room, the Scholars’ Reading Room, the Europeanists’ Reading Room & Austrian Library, the Information Science Reading Room, Audiovisual Documents, Manuscripts and Old Prints Reading Rooms, the Graphical and Cartographic Collections Room, the Rare Publications Room, and the Documents

of Social Life and Music Collections Rooms. The conference and exhibition rooms and café are at the disposal of employees and readers. Employees treat books in danger of deterioration at the Acid Paper Clinic (Stiasny, 2002, pp. 28-31; Warnke, 2016).

The modernizations and expansions of the libraries described here were necessary due to the growing collections of books and the expectations of readers. It allowed for the creation of places where one can not only read books, but also develop one's passions, watch exhibitions, and take part in meetings with authors, debates, and book promotions. Libraries have also gained additional space for the implementation of tasks resulting from their status as scientific institutions: publishing activities, conferences, and cooperation with other institutions for the development of culture and science. The adopted solutions, both in terms of the exterior and interior design, made it possible to design attractive spaces that will intrigue with their exterior form for years to come and enable the implementation of program tasks within interestingly designed interiors. The changes introduced in them may inspire architects to develop new concepts for modernizing library buildings.

WELL-TUNED LIBRARIES – NEW INVESTMENTS

„[...] architecture consists of *Ordinatio* [...], of *Dispositio* [...], of *Eurythmia*, of *Symmetria*, of *Decor* and *Distributio* [...] *Ordinatio*, means the ordering of the building and determining of the proportions of the entire work [...] *Dispositio* is the appropriate arrangement of the building elements and obtaining by their juxtaposition of the exquisite work and its quality [...] *Eurythmia* consists in the graceful appearance of the building and in the proper juxtaposition of individual elements. It is achieved when the individual parts of the structure have an appropriate ratio of height to width, width to length and generally meet the requirements of symmetry. *Symmetria* is also a harmonious agreement resulting from the parts of the work itself and the interdependence between specific parts of individual pieces and the whole work [...] *Decor*, i.e. appropriateness in a building consists in the impeccable appearance of the whole composed of individual elements which are considered good [...] *Distributio*, that is, economy is about the proper management of the materials and about saving and moderation in calculating construction expenses. The architect will achieve this first of all if he does not look for materials that can only be found or bought at a high price [...] And in general the layout of buildings should be adapted to the people who are to use them” (Vitruvius, 2004 pp. 15-16). The architectural solutions proposed by Vitruvius are still valid and probably not unfamiliar to designers of modern libraries who are looking for innovative and timeless solutions capable of creating three-dimensio-

nal spaces full of nooks and crannies, where the reader will find a moment to rest and the opportunity to establish interpersonal relations. In such a case, an interesting design will be important for the final evaluation of a given facility (Zych, 2009, pp. 326-327; Kuśnierski, 1996, p. 145). The architecture of today's libraries reflects the current trends and expectations of society towards modern and functional buildings, the design of which, as Vitruvius has already pointed out, „[...] should take into account: durability, purposefulness and beauty. The durability of the building [...] will be achieved when the selection is made carefully, without being stingy, among the many building materials. Purposefulness will be provided to the building by a flawless layout of the space, not limiting its use [...] Beauty will be ensured if the appearance of the building is nice and refined, and the dimensions of individual parts are based on the proper principles of symmetry „(Witruwiusz, 2004, p. 16- 17). Buildings put into use in recent decades meet these recommendations. Bringing together thousands of collections, they are also multifunctional centers that activate local communities. Well-designed, perfect and harmonious facilities are the result of cooperation between architects, investors and users. The results of these many hours of consultations are architectural gems of various forms. Looking at them, we probably ask ourselves what direction the architecture of libraries will take in the coming years, to what extent the buildings under construction will reflect civilizational changes, and how the digitization of intellectual property will affect their design, or whether the new centers will be even more multifunctional. These dilemmas reappear with each new project. The emergence of an interesting layout depends to some extent on whether the architect has “forgotten” what he has already seen and designed. Then there is a high probability that a unique design will appear on his drawing board. Only then will an ideal library be created, resulting from a change in the approach to its role and function in society. Whether it will be a traditional facility or a Mediatheque, Culturetheque, or Interactive Center, depends on the investor's vision. Architects, responding to the individual needs of the client, offer “tailor-made” solutions so that the new building, once completed, fulfills all the requirements as to the form. Currently, modern libraries offer spaces that allow the implementation of diverse functional programs in multimedia studios or various zones dedicated to specific readers. This is the case at the Public Library in Szywna, or at the County Public Library in Czarny Bór, which organize courses in dance and chess, theater performances, film screenings, and conferences. From the sociological perspective the library has an important role to play as a “third place”. By serving the local community as a platform that facilitates communication between people, it helps in building mutual relations, and through its unique and individual architecture it affects the quality of public space. Designing unique forms,

especially nowadays, is a challenge for architects (Bulikowska, 2019; Kruszewski, 2012; Konieczna, 2006, pp. 217-228; Mueller, 2012). As early as the 1960s, Michael Foucault wrote that we live “in a time of simultaneity, an epoch of juxtaposition, an epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed” (Foucault, 2006, p. 7). Currently, this phenomenon has become even more intense, and thus has influenced the design process and forced the inclusion of many new functionalities that were not taken into account in the 20th century as we make postulations about future libraries. We see a new approach to shaping their form, as in the library in Szywnwałd mentioned above. In this case, glass was used, making the building light, as well as wood and appropriately selected colors. The glass was used to make glazing on the ground floor, separated by wooden shutters (*Biblioteka w Szywnwałdzie ...*, 2015; Cymer, 2015), while color appeared on the upper floor and the gable roof, giving an interesting effect. The building has “a horizontal, three-layered composition: a dark graphite roof crowns the white plastered floor, which in turn rests on the light glass-and-wood ground floor. The contour of the ground floor is ‘unruly’, repeatedly broken – it goes beyond the floor plan, then it goes back radically, never following the geometry of the upper part. On the western façade, the height of the ground floor and the first floor is changed by sloping lines adjusting to the level of the drainage terrace [...]” (Głowacki, 2015a, p. 68). In search of a visionary form, architects sometimes refer to concepts already implemented, looking for inspiration. Scandinavian libraries are a model that is willingly referred to. The reference to local implementations can be seen, among others, in a project prepared for the Municipal Public Library in Czarny Bór, for which a glass pavilion covered with a wooden roof suspended on a reinforced concrete structure was designed. Glazing allows readers to admire the natural beauty of the Boracz Mountains and the Dzikowiec range. The three-meter-long broken overhang above the entrance, from the patio and street side, also refers to the mountain landscapes seen from behind the glass. The combination of glass and wood give an interesting visual effect. Thus, the urban space has been enriched with an interesting architectural form that fits perfectly into the surroundings and does not disturb the relationship with nature (Głowacki, 2015b, p. 64; *Gminna Biblioteka ...*, 2016). Nature is also an important element of the facility in Brzeg Dolny. The architecture of the building of the Municipal and Communal Public Library resembles the dam on the Odra River in the town of Wały. This is not the only reference to the Odra River environment. We can also find them in the ways the landscape surrounding the facility is arranged. Riverside meadows and a green roof terrace are among these. The greenery warms the concrete body of the building with a glazed façade hiding the main entrance (*Tama pięknieje ...*, 2019).

We also come across the dematerialization of glass – which reappears

in subsequent projects – in the Mediateka of the Interactive Educational and Social Center in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, where it harmoniously co-exists with the exterior surroundings: the Rokicianka River and the picturesque park named after count Skarbek. The nearby greenery reflected in the glass façade encourages one to rest after a walk and connect with a book. In this case, the right location and an interesting program made the new facility popular⁵. The form of the new building is the result of a compromise between the investor's requirements and the spatial development plan. A two-story cube was designed by the ENONE Architecture and Design studio, with a non-uniform façade, partly glazed, masking the division into floors, and partly clad with dark graphite aluminum panels, which enliven the narrow, rhythmically arranged window gaps with horizontal brise soleils. The logo of the institution was inscribed in the geometric motif. There are plans for creating a place to rest in the arcades on the side of the river (*W Grodzisku Mazowieckim ...*, 2015). Supporting "pillars are extended in the form of irregularly scattered lesenes, rhythmizing the elevations and creating a lattice with the beams which they carry. It is a kind of tribute to tradition, broken, however, by asymmetry" (Majewski, 2019, p. 61). The necessary ventilation and air conditioning installations are located on the roof. In the case of the Mediateka, glass is combined with aluminum panels, but architects use different solutions, reaching for concrete, brick, or wood. In the Józef Lompy Municipal and District Public Library in Lubliniec, they relinquished concrete in favor of brick, which, in combination with glass, gave the building the desired lightness. Lubiteka is unique because it is full of references to the history of the area, which used to be part of the property of a knight's castle centuries ago. The aforementioned brick is a reference to the old buildings. The perception and definition of this place, where the past is mixed with the present, is probably influenced by the emotions of its users, which are intensified by the adopted architectural solutions, such as a reference to Silesian functionalism from the 1920s and 1930s manifested by window cuts in the plane of the brick wall. The building was built on an L-shaped plan, with a large terrace accessible to readers from which one can see the park and the river, and through glazing one can also see its interior (Majewski, 2019c, p. 62; *Library in ...*, 2016; *New library - not only...*).

The architectural form of modern libraries is influenced not only by the past of a given place, but also by the present in the form of a spatial development plan and the need to refer to the existing buildings, as in the case of the Public Library in Wesoła, which was built near a housing estate and school. This is probably why it was decided to adopt a minimalist form

⁵ The library won an award in the National Open Competition "Modernization of the year and construction of the 21st century" Edition XXIII 2018 in the category "public utility buildings" (1st place).

for the building, with glass used in a traditional manner. The glass gable wall adds spaciousness to the interior, which is further enhanced by the barrel grooves on the ceiling (Majewski, 2019a, p. 54). On the other hand, the County Library in Rokietnica is part of a commercial and service facility whose multifunctional space can be perceived in terms of “heterotopia” (Foucault, 2006) or “non-place” (Augé, 2012). However, thanks to the library, which enables establishing interpersonal relations, the way it is perceived changes from being anonymous to being a place with a specific identity that facilitates interactions. This two-story building, with a modernist form, is designed so that its users do not experience mixed feelings resulting from the combination of culture and commerce. The communication between the library and the County Cultural Center is facilitated by a glass connector. The functionality of the area in front of the building was also managed by placing elements of small architecture there: concrete benches, bicycle stands, litter bins. An interesting solution was to locate a terrace and a garden on the top floor, which in the summer season serves as a reading room. External spiral stairs lead to it, which, together with fan-shaped technical stairs, enrich the visual appearance of the building. The project uses a modular pillar and slab reinforced concrete structure, which facilitated internal division and provided the possibility of countless interpretations of the space. Glass was used in a traditional manner, thanks to which the interiors are properly lit, as well as gray and white AARHUS clinker brick with an interesting surface structure, rough and uneven, as well as concrete, from which the stairs leading to the library were created. By combining these materials, an interesting result was achieved, and the building gained an intriguing form and functional layout (Marciniak, 2018, p. 64; Banaszak, 2018; Wesołek, 2018). Such features were also carried out in Rembertów, where the librarians employed in the Public Library joined the process of designing the project. The realization of public buildings as specific as libraries requires concerned parties to think about architecture in terms of a process, from design to use. It is dictated by the fact that public libraries and local communities are elements of the same story relating to the relationship between contemporary architecture and its users. As a result of this cooperation, the architects designed a building with a clear functional layout and a delightful exterior, which made the city look beautiful. The first thing that draws one’s attention is the unusual façade, the corner part of which is made of a perforated and illuminated steel sheet in a shade of pink, while the rest is made of clinker brick in a sienna color. Brick, one of the oldest building materials, combined with sheet metal gives an original and lasting effect. The surprising façade is not the only element of this building that renders both its exterior and interior intriguing. The architects abandoned traditional windows in favor of openings in the ceiling to protect the book collection from daylight,

which penetrates the interior through the glazing at the front and the glass roof over the single-space hall leading to the other rooms. Only in the part dedicated to children and in the administrative section are there windows (Malkowski, 2011, p. 50).

Due to their remarkable architecture, local libraries are showpieces for their cities. In each of these cases, the form strictly complements the function. In order for the analysis of contemporary library architecture to be comprehensive, attention should also be paid to their interiors, where programs and extra-curricular tasks are implemented. In the small library in Szynwałd, the library zones, with bright shelves and colorful seats, are located on the ground floor and in the attic, connected by fan-shaped stairs and separated from the multi-functional part by a hall. A characteristic element of the design is a triangular cut in the ceiling, which gives the impression of the two surfaces interpenetrating. The rooms, in pastel colors, are illuminated by lamps with an industrial design (Głowacki, 2015a, p. 68). On the other hand, in Czarny Bór the architects presented a completely different concept for the arrangement of the library interior. The unusual solution allowed for an increase in its functionality. Inside the rooms there are cylindrical forms, one of which is a café (accessed from the hall side) and the librarian's station (from the reading room side), and the other is a multimedia room and reading room, connected by fan-shaped stairs. The decision was made to leave the walls, made of sandlime brick "in monochromatic tones, locally broken with intense yellow", unplastered (*Gminna Biblioteka ...*, 2016). Colorful furniture provides an interesting look in these mostly white and graphite interiors. The post-industrial character is complemented by a reinforced concrete structure and an exposed roof structure made of glue laminated wood and sheet metal. Today's libraries, realizing extended social and educational tasks, require architects to develop a clear spatial disposition. The facility in the Mediateka in Grodzisk Mazowiecki has been divided into two functional zones that delight with their design. Various cultural events take place on the ground floor, while the second floor is completely taken over by the library. An interesting solution, rather rare in public spaces, was the abandonment of the traditional cloakroom in favor of built-in wardrobes. Inside, raw, gray architectural concrete walls are enlivened by the yellow concrete balustrades of the stairs leading to the upper floors. Numerous glazings, also in the center of the building, allow the light to create an atmosphere in the rooms, even those located in the back. Thanks to these, the two worlds, external and internal, interpenetrate, revealing the heart of the library and encouraging a visit. In addition, some rooms are illuminated by natural skylights using a system of mirrors. In this case, glass and concrete complement each other perfectly. The lightness of the glass combined with a strong accent provided by the concrete structure determines

the character of the building (Majewski, 2019b, p. 60). Another project in which glass was used in the arrangement process is the library in Wesoła. Thanks to the glazing, the rooms are better lit. After dark, daylight is replaced by lamps mounted on shelves, the glow of which is diffused by the flattened arches of the ceiling. Inside, the readers' attention is caught by a neon sign with the word *Biblioteka* (Library), reminiscent of the 1960s. The clear structure makes it easier to move around the facility (Majewski, 2019a, p. 54). This is also the distinguishing feature of the facility devoted to the inhabitants of Lubliniec. Its wooden interiors are well lit thanks to the use of glass. Wooden blinds and openwork brick walls covering the façade, designed at the conceptual stage, protect the readers from harsh daylight. Bright spaces invite one to visit multi-functional rooms and use books arranged on two floors, connected by an open staircase. On the walls, between the ground floor and the first floor, the names of people related to the area were placed, thereby encouraging visitors to delve into the history of the region (Majewski, 2019c, p. 62). Functionality, individual style, and modern design are the features that distinguish the library in Rembertów, reached by the readers through an intriguing interior. To increase the utility of this small facility, it was decided to use glass partitions and a sliding wall separating the auditorium. On the upper floors, a suspended footbridge facilitates moving around the building. Gray shelves, armchairs, and hassocks in intense colors give an amazing effect to the interior, along with a motif repeated from the facade incorporated into the wooden library counters. Perforated sheet metal in a shade of pink, the same as on the outside, stylistically binds the interior and the external form (Malkowski, 2011, p. 50). A pleasant surprise is also derived from the interiors of Lublin's *Biblioteka na Poziomie* (Library on a Level), which took second place in the Polish Interior 2018 plebiscite in the "Public Interior" category. The architects managed to combine functionality with an interesting design. The first thing that draws attention is the high sloping ceiling. The exposed roof truss adds a dynamic, which is additionally enhanced by the open spaces. The designers decided that the single-story interior would take the form of an open space, with no permanent internal divisions. In order to obtain a larger usable area, two mezzanines, a lower and a higher one, were placed directly into the structure of the roof truss. The library took its name from them. However, these are not the only elements that affect how we perceive the new facility. Most of all, one is attracted by bright, sterile interiors, sometimes broken with the color of books, or by the furnishings in the relaxation area: a green carpet and purple seats. In addition, the glass "windows" in the lower mezzanine floor, through which one can view the room with audiobooks, arouse curiosity. A wheel for audiobooks, seats within the bookshelves, shelves on the stairs, or, as the designers like to say, stairs on the shelves leading to

the mezzanine are some of the more interesting ideas for arranging a small space (*Biblioteka na Poziomie* in Lublin, 2018; *Biblioteka na Poziomie...*, 2019). The solutions adopted will likely allow the Lublin library to adapt easily to the changes that will be brought about in the coming years. As in Lublin, the architects in Oświęcim decided to leave the interiors open, which evokes associations with a shopping mall at first. Two entrances to the facility resemble nothing so much as a shopping arcade. Natural light seeping in through the skylight in the roof and internal glazing optically enlarge the space. They encourage people to visit and tempt young readers with an unusual small reading room adorned with a Fiat 126p. (*Biblioteki w Polsce ...*, 2017; *Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna Galeria ...*, 2012). An interesting design solution was also hit upon in Brzeg Dolny. The architects' wide and functional stairs leading to the mezzanine can be used as an amphitheater, providing additional space for meetings. Bright, open spaces have been divided with furniture into several zones, including a relaxation zone, a children's corner, and a multifunctional room. Attention was also paid to the area in front of the library, where, among other things, there is an educational route showing the course of the Oder river and the fauna and flora of the area. In addition, a green terrace was developed and benches with an interesting design in shades of green and blue were placed with an additional functionality that allows you to charge your phone (*Tama pięknieje...* 2019; *Nowoczesne ławki...*, 2020). The institutions presented here delight with their style and are a showcase for the towns. Recognized by the local communities to which they are dedicated, they fulfill their role in the cultural sector and remain functional as a third place. The culture-forming functions implemented within their interestingly arranged interiors are aimed at the readers, as are the commercial functions designed for their convenience.

In the minds of users and of tourists, it is not only small centers but also large ones, visited in person or virtually, that are remembered. Are any of these projects close to the ideal library model described by Umberto Eco and Jorge Luis Borges? Which of them is more delightful in its interior and which in its external form? Which of the large investments made in the 21st century - in Gdańsk, Gdynia, Wrocław, Kraków, Poznań or Warszawa - deserves to be called the most beautiful library? The Main Library of the University of Gdańsk can be proud of its remarkable shape, which resembles a book on its side, with the three capsules mounted on its façade that are in fact individual work cabins, making a reference to ship architecture. As in many contemporary projects, the architects used glass in the design of the entrance area. Glazing, depending on the weather and time of day, allows a kind of play with light, and after dusk it reveals illuminated interiors, encouraging people to visit (Załoski, 2007, p. 68; *Polskie biblioteki ...*). Glass was also used in the design process of the Lech Kaczyński

Main Library of the Naval Academy in Gdynia, where a partially glazed façade was made from the side of the main reading room and the entrance. Thanks to this, the building, built on an L-shaped plan, is better lit, and from several corridors you can admire the landscape of Oksywia (*Morska Biblioteka ...*, 2014). The form of the new library was also influenced by the immediate vicinity, i.e. the historic buildings of the Academy, designed in 1924 by Marian Lalewicz. In order to ensure a uniform style, it was decided that the new design would use concrete, which is a raw and cold material, and sandstone, from which sharp vertical stone blades were made, constituting “the negative of the gaps cut in the façade of the conference part” (Arczyńska, 2014, p. 70). The entire project is completed on the south side by two small half patios. The University Library in Zielona Góra is also architecture in its highest form, combining harmony and precision. As with many other projects, the building, a result of sustainable design, uses glass for the wall covering and main entrance. The remaining glass fronts are connected with graphite panels made of aluminum sheets. This six-story trapezoidal building is designed to interact with its surroundings. The large windows of the library make the nearby Zacisze Park appear to blend in with it. Due to the glass roof over the five-story atrium, the building, despite its large volume, seems to be lighter than it really is. The creativity of architects and the trust placed in them by investors resulted in the creation of a structure of intriguing form which will positively affect the environment in the coming years (Głowacki, 2013, p. 70; *Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Zielonej Górze*, 2012; *Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Zielonej Górze - NOW Biuro ...; Nowa biblioteka...*, 2012). The project for the Environmental Library of Exact and Technical Sciences for the Purposes of the Innovative Economy, of the Wrocław University of Technology, developed by the Heine, Wischer and Partner Architecture Studio, also required conceptual thinking. The institution, opened in 2011 and colloquially referred to as the Bibliotech, corresponds perfectly to the neighboring buildings from the 1950s and fits into the context of this section of the city’s foundations. Its façade, designed with fiber-centered panels, with a layout referring to the surrounding architecture, is enlivened by atypical windows of various sizes (Głowacki, 2014, p. 56). This kind of blending with the surrounding historical context is also achieved by the Scientific Information Center and the Academic Library in Katowice, which, thanks to constructive solutions adopted by architects from the HS99 studio, fits in well with the neighboring buildings: the modernist building of the University of Silesia, high-rise buildings, family houses, and further away mine shafts. Winner of many awards,⁶ it is remarkable thanks to the interestingly de-

⁶ The building of the library has received many awards, including: Grand Prix in the competition for the Polityka Architectural Award for 2011; the title of the Building of the Year 2012 in the Building of

signed façade, which in its red color, changing depending on the time of day, refers to the color of the nearby family houses. Hidden in the structure there are 4,004 windows, through which diffused light penetrates into the interior, giving the entire building its character. The distance from which we look at the library is crucial due to the solutions found for the façade and window design. We can see a monolith from a distance, and close up the body, the creators of which, without distinguishing the façade and unifying the elevations, referred back to the Bauhaus concept of the new space. "Monolithic, reinforced concrete coffer-type ceilings were based on prefabricated columns, the outer walls of the basements were poured wet, and the walls of the upper floors were made of prefabricated slabs with openings for skylights" (*Biblioteka w Katowicach*, 2012, pp. 46, 48). The decision to place the building on a slab based on reinforced concrete piles will allow for the future gathering of a huge book collection (ultimately 2 million volumes). Due to the adopted technical solutions, this space, refined in its ordinariness, will serve its users for years.

The task of linking a newly designed building with existing buildings was also faced by architects preparing the project for the Novum Philological Library in Poznań, which is adjacent to the modernist headquarters of the university (designed by Lech Sternal in 1968) and the Chamber of Crafts and Trades (designed by Piotr Wilczyński and Leon Madejski, 1926-1929). Despite the concerns surrounding the design process, the building, consisting of cuboid blocks, corresponds well with the surroundings. Its external glazed façades, partially faced with sandstone, are enlivened by steel shutters, reducing the intensity of daylight. While working, readers have the opportunity to look out on the nearby Marcinkowski Park. The harmony emanating from the entire building was interestingly disturbed by the decision to have the third floor overhang on the Kościuszko Street side. The new library blends into the historic fabric of the city thanks to one more detail, which is the false entrance and portal on the west side. The structure, illuminated after dark, looks exceptional. The value of the entire project is determined not only by the aesthetic values, but most of all by the fact that the architects, when developing the concept, took into account the possibility of extending the building (Piątek, 2005, pp. 68-69). In recent years Poznań has gained one more building as an expression of modern library architecture. The Library of the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology of the Adam Mickiewicz University was integrated between the two rear wings of the Collegium Maius. Its visual appearance

the Year 2012 poll; The main prize and the Grand Prix distinction in the 17th edition of the competition for the Architecture of the Year of the Silesian Voivodship organized by the Katowice branch of the Association of Polish Architects; 2nd degree award in the science and culture buildings category in the competition organized by PZITB – Construction of the Year 2011 (<https://ciniba.edu.pl/o-ciniba-przeglad/57-narzenia-i-wyroznienia>).

refers to the neighboring building, built in the style of “Wilhelman Baroque”, which is referenced, for example, by a stone pedestal, equal to the height of the cordon cornice in the neighboring building, and by the elevation, especially in the lower story, where the rhythm is irregular due to the different width of the rustication. The plinth, over two stories high, is made of sandstone, which is pierced by a row of windows, and its slightly lower top is completely glazed, thus giving it a lightness. These are only visual impressions, because the core of the structure is made of reinforced concrete pillars, which are additionally an element of the minimalist interior (Majewski, 2009, pp. 72, 74).

The architects designing the Modern Education Center of the Białystok University of Technology also referred to the past. Its form is inspired by the Baroque Branicki Palace. What attracts the eyes of passers-by is not so much the body of the building, built on a horseshoe plan, as its original façade, which is decorated with panels made of glass fiber reinforced concrete incorporating cutout folk ornamentation. Adolf Loos would likely not have found such a solution particularly attractive, because he believed that by rejecting decorative motifs, art moves to a higher level (Loos, 2013, pp. 133-144), but in this particular case it is difficult to agree with him, because the building has gained an interesting setting. Its external structure is also enlivened by blinds and printed glass panels, reducing the intensity of daylight. The library includes not only the building itself, but also the space around it. For the convenience of users, small architecture was designed, and at the end of the main axis of the campus is a garden that serves readers and residents. The implemented project was appreciated by both its users and the industry, receiving awards in, among others, the 7th edition of the *Życie w Architekturze* (Life in Architecture) competition (Mycielski, 2013, pp. 42, 46, 48; *Białystok ...*, 2013; *Centrum Nowoczesnego ...*, 2014; Cymer, 2015; *Nowy budynek ...*, 2012). Small architecture is an element that makes public space more attractive. An interesting example of this is a modern bench located at the entrance to the new library of the University of Wrocław. Its openwork structure is a counterbalance to the monumental building, which was built on the boulevards along the Oder. The building, commissioned in 2011, took over the function of the old building at Szajnochy Street, which has been visited by thousands of students over the years and has hosted many film crews. The latest technological achievements have replaced the old 19th-century shelves and ceilings made of cast-iron openwork spans. The raw building impresses one with its form. The architects designed two compact blocks with different functionalities, separated by a passage leading from the main entrance to the building. During the implementation, concrete was used, which was combined with the glazing in the front part. The intention of the authors of the project was to create a space that would allow for flexible shaping of

the interior, depending on the functional needs and the growing book collection (Wysocki, 2018; *Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we ...*; 2009; *Jest mała i piękna ...*, 2014; Lose, 2000).

Projects being currently implemented more and more often take into account environmental protection issues in addition to land development conditions. Architects do not limit themselves only to developing the greenery around the building, but they also make sure that it complies with ecological standards. A good example of this is the Library of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków. The glazing used provides natural sunlight and reduces lighting costs. In the summer season, low-emission glass louvers installed in the skylights on the roof reduce heat (Czapnik, 2011, p. 50). The most famous and award-winning project to take into account the requirements of ecology, however, is the University of Warsaw Library. This building with a soul was designed by the team of Marek Budzyński and Zbigniew Badowski, and the garden layout was created according to a concept by Irena Bajerska. The beginnings of the green building movement date back to the 1960s. Currently, architects who create our surroundings take into account its ideas in their designs. However, in many projects they are only small plantings, enriching the visual layer. The case of the University of Warsaw Library is unique here, because thanks to the roof garden, greenery is an integral and inseparable part, making it blend in easily with the Vistula landscape. In addition, the diverse vegetation captures air pollutants, reduces street noise, and protects the waterproof layer of the roof by retaining and evaporating water. As a result it reduces the load on the air conditioning system by cooling the building down. Rainwater flowing into the storm sewer system is naturally filtered. The openly accessible garden provides an opportunity for calm and relaxation in the fresh air, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, for anyone who wants to visit it. The combination of public space with a garden layout was possible thanks to the architectural solutions adopted. The building consists of a front and a main part, connected by a passage with a glass roof, which allows for the passage of daylight. The façade is covered with green panels with quotations from books, and, as befits a library, an open book with the inscription *Hinc omnia* invites one to the interior. The new building was designed as a multi-purpose facility. Four above-ground stories hide the treasures of the library, and part of the ground floor and the underground are used for commercial and sports purposes (with a multi-purpose sports hall). A cloakroom, exhibition halls, and service points are located on the ground floor. In the spaces inaccessible to the reader there is a depository, the Library's vault, and the Collection Conservation Workshop. The first floor is primarily free access, where workplaces are built into the lines of shelves, making it easier to use the collections. This level also houses formal and subject studies work-

shops, the office of the librarian on duty, general and catalog information, archival card catalogs, laboratories, the seminar room of the Information Science and Didactics Department, and the Lending Room. On the second floor, accessed by wide stairs, there is a main reading room with a reference collection, a librarian's stand, and a magazine reading room with specially designed shelves and free access. Special collections and the 19th-century collection have been gathered together on the third level. Documents stored there are made available in separate rooms, secured with an additional control system. The space that the library currently has at its disposal allows for the organization of cultural and educational events, such as the Night of Museums, University of Warsaw Library for owls, exhibitions, concerts, and conferences. It also favors integration and is adapted to the needs of various user groups. It offers tools to facilitate independent use of its resources. In front of the building there is a historic cast-iron library bookcase from the 19th century, coming from the former library building. With this symbolic gesture, the continuity of its history was ensured. Currently, the former University Library, designed by Stefan Szyller and Antoni Jasieńczyk-Jabłoński, built in the academic Renaissance and Classicist styles, serves educational purposes (Majewski, 2005, pp. 50-51; Warnke, 2016; Budzyński & Loegler, 1995; Hollender, Kobierska-Maciuszko, 1996; Kobierska-Maciuszko, 2001).

In contemporary projects, the traditional way of dividing the interior is being deconstructed more and more often, which manifests itself in the abandonment of the former functional layout in favor of multifunctional, open spaces with an interesting design that can be adapted depending on the educational programs being implemented. Such a result was achieved in the facilities described above, where the users have at their disposal spaces that can be freely arranged into reading rooms, seminar rooms, exhibition and conference rooms, computer rooms, information rooms, individual work stations, and social rooms. The designed interiors are a display of balance and creativity in their approach to a space that plays a culture-creating role. Most libraries have a large part of the book collection open to the public. The ability to freely use the collections greatly facilitates the work of users, but for architects it is an additional challenge, as it requires the use of different solutions than those used in traditionally planned spaces, both in the construction phase and in the interior arrangement. The departure from the traditional understanding of space is particularly visible in the example of the University of Warsaw Library, which, apart from a large free-access zone, has a roof garden much loved by filmmakers and residents.

Apart from functionality, currently designed buildings are also characterized by clean form and careful selection of finishing materials. In the austere interiors of the University of Warsaw Library, which are made

inviting by sculptures by Adam Myjak depicting philosophers from the Lviv-Warsaw school, simplicity allows for concentration and tranquility (Omilianowska, Uchowicz, 2017, p. 29). Austerity of form and even an industrial character are also features of the Library of the University of Gdańsk. In this case, it is offset by the color and light openwork balustrades of massive stairs leading to the individual floors. Its spaces also contain references to maritime themes: The aforementioned balustrades and steel decks are reminiscent of a ship's engine room. The interior of each library has elements that catch the eye right after one crosses its threshold. These can be fan-shaped stairs as in the Polish Naval Academy, or instead a hall serving as a public space, with a three-story atrium, as in the Library of Wrocław University of Science and Technology. The solution adopted in Wrocław allowed for the design of open and spacious interiors, illuminated by daylight flowing from the skylight located above the cascading stairs. Thanks to designers who, in experimenting with form and material, focused on the tactile and sensual aspect of the project, a space was created that emanates calm and elegance. Walls and ceilings of light colors in rooms separated by glazing contrast with the gray of the floors. The whole is complemented by wooden furniture. A space in front of the building containing small architecture, to which an anthracite-colored basalt floor leads, completes the project. A similar aesthetic concept was implemented in the Library of the University of Zielona Góra, where materials were carefully selected to give the rooms an individual character. The arrangement uses wood, with which the staircase and the entrance area are designed and where various meetings take place, and a grassy square with elements of small architecture made of white concrete available to users in front of the building. Another library full of positive impressions is the Center of Modern Education in Białystok, where, with future guests in mind, different colors were used in individual parts of the building to make it easier to navigate through its spaces. Thus the new library is green and the public part is red. Inside, glass was used for the reading room boxes, hanging on poles above the hall, and for the elevator shafts bringing the volumes from the depositories. Interior colors are one of the elements that affect how we perceive a given space. In the Collegium Novum in Poznań, colors mark individual zones on three floors intended for the book collection. As in other institutions, concrete and glass were used, the qualities of which breathe simplicity, and the combination of which with carpets, wooden elements, and the colors of the walls create interesting contrasts. By referring to the basics of design thinking, it was possible to design interiors where every element of the composition seems to be essential. It is no different at the Scientific Information Center and the Academic Library in Katowice. Subtle design and materials, which are the hallmarks of many modern implementations, such as the use of glass and wood, have

determined the way the facility is perceived by users. Glass was used to make vertical planes inside, giving not only the impression of transparency, but also providing an interesting visual effect due to its installation at a specific angle. Wood on horizontal planes warmed the rooms, and the installations hidden under a suspended ceiling made of expanded metal does not disturb their harmony (*Biblioteka w Katowicach ...*, 2012, p. 52, 56). These materials were also used in the arrangement of the Library of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków. The steel stairs leading to the reading room were finished with wood, and glass cubes conceal the air conditioning installations (Czapnik, 2011, p. 51; Czapnik, 2012). On the other hand, the interior of the Wrocław University Library focuses on stylistic austerity provided by concrete. At the same time, its natural gray gives these spaces a calm character and elegance (Wysocki, 2018).

The examples of local libraries and their much larger sister projects presented here were intended to show common features, both in terms of the material used and the way of planning or arranging the space. In all these projects, the perception of the library occurs through the active participation of almost all the senses, corresponding with each other and interpenetrating with one another. In the case of the above-mentioned establishments, a minimalist design proved to be successful, and thanks to modern design concepts, they will serve users for a long time. Their rooms have been assigned a certain functionality. Even the former boiler room of the philological library in Poznań gained a functionality, becoming a place for cultural meetings (Majewski, 2009, p. 74). The conceptualizations described indicate the direction of changes in the architecture of modern libraries and of social expectations in this regard. Dazzling projects are the result of the cooperation of many people - architects, investors and, more and more frequently, librarians. However, today it is not easy to propose an original and functional form. Architects, as representatives of creative industries, face a great challenge. Projects realized by them in the first decades of the 21st century set a good direction for the design of modern library spaces. What, then, will be on the drawing boards of the future? In what directions will user expectations go, and what will be the intelligent library of the future? How many unconventional spaces will be designed? The most important question for the future of libraries, however, may be whether users will want to listen to the narratives created by these modern and intelligent institutions.

INTELLIGENT LIBRARIES OF THE FUTURE – PROJECTS IN THE COMPETITION PHASE

When considering the architecture of modern libraries, it is worth devoting a few words to competition projects which provide knowledge about current trends, the expectations of clients and, above all, architects' ideas. Currently, intelligent libraries are multifunctional centers that not only collect, develop, and make available book collections. The implementation of tasks for education and integration, especially for local communities, by these institutions requires that they have adequate space. The competition proposals, although they may evoke extreme feelings in us due to the adopted architectural solutions, show the direction of changes in the approach to shaping the library space. The example that I will refer to will be the concepts of development and spatial development for the future Municipal Public Library in Szczecin on Prawobrzeże that were submitted to the competition for that project in 2018 (*Biblioteka Miejska w Szczecinie*, 2019, pp. 48-50; BIP - *Miejska Biblioteka ...*., 2018). Going beyond an analysis of the form of the projects by Polish and foreign architects included here, one notes that the main emphasis was placed on the multi-functionality of the facility, which is to serve not only the implementation of tasks, but also to provide intellectual relaxation and awaken the senses. The library in Szczecin is to be built in a large housing estate, where there is no larger cultural institution, and is to be a showcase for the city. The first prize was awarded to architects from the studio APP Architekt Karol Barcz, Kamila Buczkowska KABU STUDIO, who developed a model of the future library, its architectural DNA. Therefore, it is worth consulting the detailed description of the author, because it shows the elements that determined the project's success: "The starting point was to organize the relations between existing objects and to look for added value that would define this space in a new way. Our concept assumed the construction of an object directed simultaneously to all elements of the surrounding buildings, which would allow for free communication between them. The basic concept was to divide the building into three dominant blocks, each of which has a different purpose. The main hall of the library, located in the largest of them, also serves the basic function of the facility, the next block is the meeting room with the stage and the audience, and the third part houses administration and other tasks. These blocks were connected with a ground floor connector serving as the hall. The shape of individual parts of the building and the spaces between them is a direct consequence of the analysis of the directions of the surrounding objects. The 'break-down' of the building allowed for the creation of a system composed not only of cubes, but also of interiors between them. In this way, the idea of an object consisting of three blocks and three squares was born. This procedure made it possible to maintain a more friendly scale and inti-

mate character, and the use of roofs with diagonal ridge axes was intended to give greater plasticity and dynamics to the designed form" (*Biblioteka Miejska w Szczecinie*, 2019, p. 52). In addition to the awarded project, two more studios, which were awarded the second (ARPA Architektoniczna Pracownia Autorska Jerzy Gurawski, SKI Studio Błażej Szurkowski) and third prize (Pracownia Architektury Witold Sienkiel), described the visual concept of the designed institution in a most convincing way. The second awarded work assumed that the new facility would fit into both the social and cultural context of the place. According to the architects, the shape of the future library should be characterized by „homogeneous, smooth surfaces of the façades, ending with characteristic, modularly arranged roof slopes, in their form referring to the surrounding residential and sacred buildings" (*Biblioteka Miejska w Szczecinie*, 2019, p. 53). They believed that the „wide openings of aluminum and glass façades visually and functionally connect the interior space with the surroundings, reviving and illuminating the severe image of the building in the night scenery" (*Biblioteka Miejska w Szczecinie*, 2019, p. 53). The space designed by them is intended to serve the implementation of a wide educational and cultural program. For this reason, it was decided to introduce sliding partition walls and a movable auditorium. Glazing, which not only seduces with its delicacy, but also allows the greenery to penetrate to the inside, and art to the outside, also facilitates contact with the reader, inviting him straight in from the street, from his everyday duties. The role of the „third place" was also envisaged in the third awarded project, where the local community could benefit from its wide cultural offer. It was planned that the body of the new building would be energy-saving and would take the shape of a cuboid with a sloping roof, with interiors that could be quickly rearranged. The jury also gave an award to the SAS studio – Studio Architektoniczne Siennicki, Beyond Visual, and the studio Tomasz Berezowski, Marta Dyrda, Radosław Fikus. The first project conceptualized the separation of an open, multi-functional zone (café, meeting room, games room) and a quiet zone (library). In the accompanying author's description we read that: „a closed top constructed of glue-laminated wood panels, enabling the covering of large spaces of an expressive character, and an open bottom in a reinforced concrete structure, with a ceiling on pillars, providing a stable base for expressive rooflines, gives full freedom in shaping the ground floor space with mobile glazing" (*Biblioteka Miejska w Szczecinie*, 2019, p. 55). The second distinguished project, on the other hand, envisaged the construction of a one-story pavilion, covered with a steep roof, the center of which would serve cultural initiatives. The library, illuminated and open to the surrounding greenery, was planned around its perimeter. The solution adopted here was to facilitate the arrangement and use of the new facility (*Biblioteka Miejska w Szczecinie*, 2019, p. 56).

Nowadays, cities more and more often announce competitions for public use buildings, wanting to create interesting architectural forms in their area that will have an impact on the area. The projects prepared for the library in Szczecin were unique, and in this case their multifunctionality was an added value. It could not have been built without the knowledge and experience of architects. It is worth referring at this point to Vitruvius, who wrote: "The assessment of each building should be threefold and include: careful workmanship, the grandeur of the building and its layout [...] if it is impressive due to its perfect proportions and symmetries, then due praise will be awarded to the architect. The result will be good if the architect takes into account the advice of both workers and unlearned people. For every man, not only an architect, can judge a good thing, but there is such a difference between them that an ordinary person cannot imagine a thing before finishing it, while an architect, if he imagines a building, has a clear picture of it before starting, both in terms of the general impression as well as purposefulness and proper appearance" (Witruwiusz, 2004, p. 18). The winning design is captivating with its form, and in the future it will have a positive impact on shaping the spatial order of the city. In line with Vitruvius's recommendations, it takes into account the expectations of investors and future users, thanks to which it will be positively received by the local community for many years to come. Contests for the libraries of the future are a good idea because they help to find the best solutions, albeit sometimes too futuristic, for their new form in the rapidly changing modern world.

SUMMARY

When analyzing subsequent projects, regardless of whether it is an adaptation, modernization, or a completely new proposal, we wonder why a given project was chosen. What captivated the architect so that made him stop looking for another form? Looking at the building, we are aware that he has made a selection from an infinite number of other possibilities and the choice made reflects his viewpoint, but also the investor's expectations. Only wandering around these new spaces, observing them, gives us an idea of what determined the decision to implement a given conceptualization, which in the future will invite the user into the world of books, fantasy, and culture, and will be a testimony to the world that surrounded people in a given era. Many of us would probably like to visit an architectural studio to see rejected projects, because they too are a source of knowledge about how contemporary libraries are perceived and what the future predicts for them. The more so because library architecture is an element that changes cities in several ways. Not only does it attract tourists, as in the case of award-winning projects, but it also introduces

a creative and aesthetic ferment. Often inconspicuous from the outside, architectural objects tempt one with functionally planned interiors, with an original design that is a record of the inner life of each building. The monopoly on the perception of library buildings as centers with uninteresting and standard solutions is also broken. Thirdly, thanks to the new enclosures, these centers can support local communities and participate in their lives to a greater extent, becoming more and more often a “third place” offering intellectual entertainment in interesting spaces. In this context, the question posed by Jorge Luis Borges in the essay *The Library of Babel* is a perfectly valid one - What is a Library? Although perhaps it would be more appropriate to ask what is a modern library? Nowadays, thanks to complex functional programs, the library connects generations and invites everyone to travel to the land of books and culture. Due to their interesting visual appearance, wandering around these contemporary architectural conceptions is particularly attractive. In times of rapid changes, when new challenges appear on the horizon, libraries are a permanent element ever present in our space. Of course, they evolve along with civilizational changes and are now characterized by greater complexity than their predecessors from the end of the 20th century. Thus, the requirements to be met by architects who create their spaces are growing, and they should still remain functional even after several years past their commissioning. Most of the projects discussed here were created by design teams in which architects were the leaders. The names of female architects are most often mentioned among people supporting the development of a comprehensive project (collaborative authorship, interior or landscape architecture). In a few cases, they are the co-authors of architectural concepts (including in Białystok, Lubliniec, Opole, Stary Sącz, Szczecin, Szywnawałd), and only in Rembertów and Czarny Bór were they the lead architects. So in the future, will the participation of women in creating Polish architectural culture, in the case of modern libraries, be greater? Although the number of female students at architectural faculties is constantly growing, it does not translate into the projects which they implement, especially when we speak of large facilities built in public spaces. Over the years, the Pritzker Prize, the architectural Nobel Prize, has only gone to five women (Zaha Hadid, Kazuyo Sejima, Carme Pigem, Yvonne Farrell, Shelley McNamara), and unfortunately there are no Polish women in this group. The community of female architects is paying more and more attention to their position in the profession, and publications indicate the need for changes (Stratigakos, 2019; Kunz, 2016; Dąbrowska, 2019; *Zawód architektka*, 2020). However, regardless of who does the designing, the most important thing is that architecture “should be primarily functional, that it should use the latest materials [...], that its form corresponds to the structure, and the structure to the material properties, and finally, that it has its

own artistic expression" (Jakimowicz 1966, p. 5). Although these guidelines of the architect Viollet-le-Duc do not refer directly to libraries, they are universal and current enough to provide a hint for future creators that the designed objects, including those intended for cultural purposes, should be functional, beautiful and immortal.

APPENDIX

LIST OF LIBRARIES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Biblioteka Akademii Marynarki Wojennej im. Lecha Kaczyńskiego w Gdyni (The Polish Naval Academy Library) – project: Warsztat Architektury Pracownia Autorska, architekci Krzysztof Kozłowski, Maciej Jaśkowiec; construction: 2010-2012; bg.amw.gdynia.pl.

Biblioteka Filologiczna Novum w Poznaniu (The Novum Philological Library in Poznań) – project: architekt Tomasz Durniewicz; construction: 2003-2005; bfm.amu.edu.pl.

Biblioteka Główna Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego (The Library of the University of Gdańsk) – project: ArchiCo-projekt Sp. z o.o., architekci Konrad Tanasiewicz, Robert Muszyński; construction: 2002-2006; www.bg.ug.edu.pl.

Biblioteka Grafit we Wrocławiu (Filia nr 5 Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej) (Grafit Library in Wrocław, Branch No. 5 of the Municipal Public Library) – project by Grupa Synergia Anna Bać, Krzysztof Cebat, Piotr Michalski, Sandra Piasek; facility is located in Hala Grafit since 2015; www.biblioteka.wroc.pl.

Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie (The Jagiellonian Library in Kraków) – project: Atelier Loegler & Partnerzy, architects Romuald Loegler, Ewa Fitzke; construction: 1996-2001; www.bj.uj.edu.pl.

Biblioteka Manhattan w Gdańsku (Filia Wojewódzkiej i Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej im. Josepha Conrada Korzeniowskiego) (The Manhattan Library in Gdańsk, Branch of The Joseph Conrad Voivodship and City Public Library) – facility is located in Gdańsk Shopping Center; www.wbpg.org.pl.

Biblioteka Miejska TUVIM w Łodzi (The TUVIM Municipal Library in Łódź) – created in a revitalized apartment house; construction finished in 2020; facebook.com/pages/category/local-service/Biblioteka-TUVIM-100580881720249.

Biblioteka Multimedialna Biblio w Lublinie (Filia Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej) (Multimedia Library Biblio in Lublin, Branch of Municipal Public Library) – project by ReaDesign; construction: 2012; www.biblio.lublin.pl.

Biblioteka na dworcu Wrocław Główny (Filia nr 12 Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej) (Library in the Wrocław Main Rail Road Station, Branch No. 12 of the Municipal Public Library) – project: pracownia ReaDesign; construction: 2017; biblioteka.wroc.pl.

Biblioteka na Poziomie (Filia nr 40 MBP w Lublinie im. Henryka Łopacińskiego) (Library on a Level, Branch No. 40 of the Municipal Public Library in Lublin) project: Grzegorz Kłoda pracownia GK-Atelier; construction: 2018; facebook.com/bibliotekanapoziomie/.

Biblioteka Publiczna im. Jana Pawła II w Dzielnicy Rembertów m.st. Warszawy (John Paul II Public Library in Rembertów, city of Warsaw) – project: Architektki-Grupa Projektowa for the general designer ZUB Wilmer, architects Paweł Chwalibogowski, Anna Smogór-Chwalibogowska, Anna Sochacka; construction: 2008-2010; bpremebertów.waw.pl.

Biblioteka Publiczna im. Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza w Obornikach Śląskich (Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz Public Library in Oborniki Śląskie) – operating in a modernized station from 1958; construction: 2015; kultura-oborniki.pl/biblio/.

Biblioteka Publiczna m. st. Warszawy. Biblioteka Główna Województwa Mazowieckiego (Warsaw Public Library, Central Library of the Masovian Voivodship) – project: Bulanda Mucha Architekci, Andrzej Bulanda, Włodzimierz Mucha, Jacek Chyrosz, Michał Brzychcy; construction: 2013-2015; www.koszykowa.pl.

Biblioteka Publiczna MOKSIR w Chełmku (Public Library MOKSIR in Chełmek) – established in a modernized preschool; construction finished: 2002; moksie.chelmek.pl.

Biblioteka Publiczna w Szywnaldzie (Public Library in Szywnałd) – project: Kucia Tyczyński Pracownia Architektoniczna Architektki Mirosława Kucia – Tyczyńska, Maciej Tyczyński; construction 2012-2014; <http://szywnald.pl/institucje/biblioteka>.

Biblioteka Publiczna w Wesolej (Filia Biblioteki Dzielnicowej przy szkole Podstawowej nr 172) (Public Library in Wesoła, Branch of the Regional Library in Elementary School No. 172) – project: +48 Architektura, architects Karol Szpakowski, Kamil Miklaszewski, Marta Feder, Dymitry Ryabow; construction: 2017-2018; bibliotekawesola.pl.

Biblioteka Raczyńskich w Poznaniu (The Raczyński Library in Poznań) – project: JEMS Architekci, architects Olgierd Jagiełło, Maciej Miłobędzki, Marek Moskal, Marcin Sadowski, Jerzy Szczepanik-Dzikowski; construction: 2013; www.bracz.edu.pl.

Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie (University of Warsaw Library) – project: architekci Marek Budzyński, Zbigniew Badowski; construction: 1995-1999; furnishing: 2000; www.buw.uw.edu.pl.

Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie (zabytkowy gmach) (University of Warsaw Library, historic building) – project: PKZ Zamek, Jarosław

Grzegory, Przemysław Woźniakowski, Dorota Śliwińska, Krzysztof Rutkowski, Marcin Urbanek, Joanna Zajdel; construction 2004-2005.

Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Zielonej Górze (University Library in Zielona Góra) – project: NOW Biuro Architektoniczne, architect Andrzej Owczarek; construction: 2012; www.bu.uz.zgora.pl.

Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu (Wrocław University Library) – projekt: architects Jacek Rzycki, Jerzy Ruszkowski, Jacek Kopaszewski; construction: 2003-2012; www.bu.uni.wroc.pl.

Biblioteka Główna Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II w Krakowie (Library of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków) – project: Ingarden & Ewy Architekci, architects Krzysztof Ingarden, Jacek Ewy; construction: 2001-2010; biblioteka.upjp2.edu.pl.

Biblioteka Wydziału Filologii Polskiej i Klasycznej Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu (Library of the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology of the University of Adam Mickiewicz) – project: Consultor Sp z o.o./APA Jacek Bulat/neostudio. Architects Joanna Kapturczak, Michał Kapturczak, Paweł Świerkowski; construction: 2007-2009; wfpik.amu.edu.pl.

Centrum FAMA we Wrocławiu (The FAMA Library and Cultural Center in Wrocław) – project: ENONE Architektura i Design Rafał Sokołowski, architect Rafał Sokołowski; construction: 2015-2016; fama.wroc.pl.

Centrum Nowoczesnego Kształcenia Politechniki Białostockiej (The Modern Education Center of the Białystok University of Technology) – project: aa_studio/group-arch, architects Agnieszka Staszczyszyn, Adrian Staszczyszyn, Sebastian Bieganowski, construction: 2010-2012; www.cnk.pb.edu.pl.

Centrum Informacji Naukowej i Biblioteka Akademicka w Katowicach (Scientific Information Center and the Academic Library in Katowice) – project: HS99, architects Dariusz Herman, Wojciech Suwalski, Piotr Śmierzewski; construction: 2009-2011; www.ciniba.edu.pl.

Galeria Książki (w ramach Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej im. Łukasza Górnickiego w Oświęcimiu) (The Book Gallery, part of the Łukasz Górnicki Municipal Public Library in Oświęcim) – project: Suseł & Strama Architekci s.c., Marcin Suseł, Krzysztof Strama; construction: 2009-2011; mbp-oswiecim.pl.

Gminna Biblioteka Publiczna w Czarnym Borze (Municipal Public Library in Czarny Bór) – project: ISB Grupa Projektowa, architects Joanna Styryjska (lead architect), Tomasz Boniecki, Joanna Friedrich, Marcelina Marszałkiewicz, Hubert Stelmasiewicz; construction: 2014; ck.czarnybor.pl.

Gminna Biblioteka w Rokietnicy (Municipal Library in Rokietnica) – projekt: architect Dominik Banaszak (currently LAB 3 Architekci Sp. z o.o.o.); construction: 2017; bibliotekarokietnica.pl.

Interaktywne Centrum Edukacyjno-Społeczne Mediateka w Grodzisku Mazowieckim (Interactive Educational and Social Center in Grodzisk Mazowiecki) – project: ENONE Architektura, architect Rafał Sokołowski; construction: 2017-2018; biblioteka.grodzisk.pl; www.centrumkultury.eu.

Książnica Cieszyńska (Library in Cieszyn) – project: Urbi S.C., architect A. Krzysztof Barysz; construction: 1996-2002; kc-cieszyn.pl.

Lubiteka – Miejsko-Powiatowa Biblioteka Publiczna im. J.Lompy (Lubiteka – Józef Lompy Municipal and Regional Public Library in Lubliniec) – project: H2 architekci, architects Marek Happach, Marlena Happach; construction: 2019; www.biblioteka.lubliniec.pl.

Mediateka-Poczytelnia na Dworcu w Kielcach (Filia Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej w Kielcach) (Mediatheque-Reading Room at the Station in Kielce) – project of modernization of the station by Marcin Kamiński Bartosz Bojarowicz Architekci; refurbishment: 2018-2020; mbp.kielce.pl.

Mediateka Szklana Pułapka (The Glass Trap Media Center) (Filia nr 7 Wojewódzkiej i Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej im. C. Norwida w Zielonej Górze, Zielonogórska Palmiarnia) (Branch No. 7 of the C. Norwid Municipal and City Public Library, Zielona Góra Palm House) – modernization of Palmiarnia 2006-2008; opening of Mediateka 2012; szklanapulapka.zgora.pl.

Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. Juliana Przybośa w Przeworsku (Julian Przyboś Municipal Public Library) – construction: 2019-2020; biblioteka-przeworsk.pl.

Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Opolu (Municipal Public Library in Opole) – project: Małgorzata Zatwarnicka, Andrzej Zatwarnicki; construction: 2009-2010; mbp.opole.pl.

Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Rabce Zdroju (Municipal Public Library in Rabka Zdrój) – project of modernization of a historic railroad station from 1925: Rail Projekt Sp.z o.o.; construction: 2015; biblioteka.rabka.pl.

Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Szczecinie na Prawobrzeżu (Municipal Public Library in Szczecin) – competition project: first prize APP ARCHITEKT Karol Barcz, Kamila Buczkowska KABU Studio.

Miejska i Gminna Biblioteka Publiczna w Brzegu Dolnym (Municipal and County Public Library in Brzeg Dolny) – project: Autorska Pracownia Architektury Bożeny Marszałkiewicz; construction: 2017-2020; www.biblioteka.brzegdolny.pl.

Powiatowa i Miejsko-Gminna Biblioteka Publiczna im. Wiktora Bazielicha w Starym Sączu (Wiktor Bazielich County and Municipal Public Library in Stary Sącz) – project: 55 Architekci, architects Wojciech Świątek, Anna Szewczyk-Świątek; construction: 2016-2018; biblioteka.stary.sacz.pl.

Sopoteka (Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. J. Wybickiego w Sopocie) (Sopoteka – J. Wybicki Municipal Public Library in Sopot) – project: Jan Sikora Wnętrza; construction: 2015 r.; www.mbp.sopot.pl.

Stacja Kultura w Rumi (Filia Miejskiej Biblioteki Publicznej im. Floriana Ceynowy) (Stacja Kultura in Rumia, Branch of Florian Ceynowy Municipal Public Library) - project: Jan Sikora Wnętrza; construction: 2014 r.; www.bibliotekarumia.pl.

Środowiskowa Biblioteka Nauk Ścisłych i Technicznych na potrzeby Innowacyjnej Gospodarki Politechniki Wrocławskiej (Environmental Library of Exact and Technical Sciences for the Purposes of the Innovative Economy of the Wrocław University of Technology) – project: Heine, Wischer und Partner Architekci Sp. z o.o., architect Thomas Heine; construction: 2011-2013; biblioteka.pwr.edu.pl.

Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna im. H. Łopacińskiego w Lublinie (H. Łopaciński Regional Public Library in Lublin) – project: Stelmach i Partnerzy Biuro Architektoniczne Sp. z o.o., architect: Bolesław Stelmach; construction: 2004-2006; wbp.lublin.pl.

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APPENDIX



Figure 1. The Polish Naval Academy Library
(Biblioteka Akademii Marynarki Wojennej im. Lecha Kaczyńskiego w Gdyni)



Figure 1a. The Polish Naval Academy Library. Interior
(Biblioteka Akademii Marynarki Wojennej im. Lecha Kaczyńskiego w Gdyni. Wnętrze)



Figure 2. The Novum Philological Library in Poznań (Biblioteka Filologiczna Novum w Poznaniu). Fot. Karolina Fabiś



Figure 2a. The Novum Philological Library in Poznań. Interior (Biblioteka Filologiczna Novum w Poznaniu. Wnętrze). Fot. Karolina Fabiś



Figure 3. The Library of the University of Gdańsk (Biblioteka Główna Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego)



Figure 3a. The Library of the University of Gdańsk. Interior (Biblioteka Główna Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Wnętrze)



Figure 4. The Jagiellonian Library in Kraków (Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie).
Fot. Mariusz Paluch



Figure 5. Biblioteka Raczyńskich w Poznaniu (The Raczyński Library in Poznań).
Fot. Janusz Sokołowski.



Figure 5a. Biblioteka Raczyńskich w Poznaniu. Interior (The Raczyński Library in Poznań. Wnętrze). Fot. Janusz Sokołowski.



Figure 6. University Library in Zielona Góra (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Zielonej Górze). Fot. Wojciech Kryński



Figure 6a. University Library in Zielona Góra. Interior (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Zielonej Górze. Wnętrze). Fot. Iwo Adaszyński



Figure 7. Wrocław University Library (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu)



Figure 7a. Wrocław University Library. Interior (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu. Wnętrze)



Figure 8. Library of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków (Biblioteka Główna Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II w Krakowie)



Figure 9. Library of the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology of the University of Adam Mickiewicz (Biblioteka Wydziału Filologii Polskiej i Klasycznej Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu). Fot. J. Bułat



Figure 9a. Library of the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology of the University of Adam Mickiewicz (Biblioteka Wydziału Filologii Polskiej i Klasycznej Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu). Fot. Stanisława Kostić



Figure 10. The Modern Education Center of the Białystok University of Technology (Centrum Nowoczesnego Kształcenia Politechniki Białostockiej)



Figure 10a. The Modern Education Center of the Białystok University of Technology. Interior (Centrum Nowoczesnego Kształcenia Politechniki Białostockiej. Wnętrze)

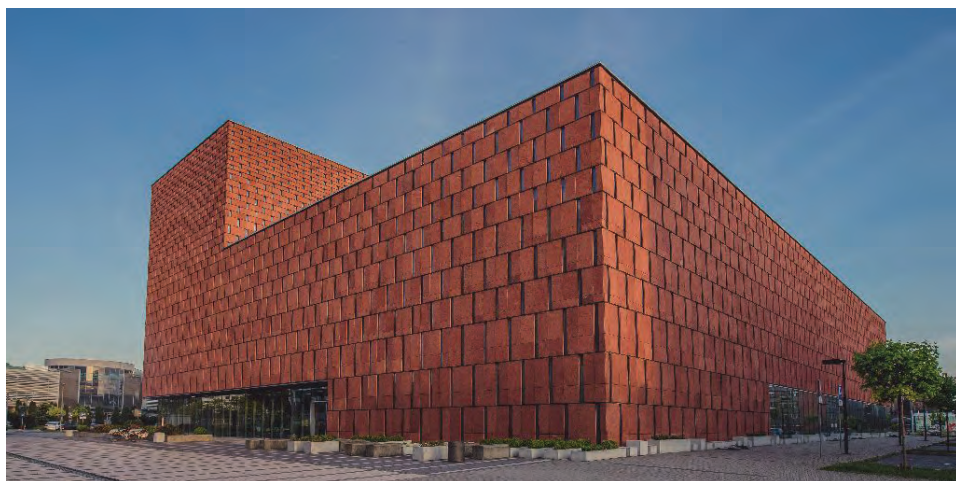


Figure 11. Scientific Information Center and the Academic Library in Katowice
(Centrum Informacji Naukowej i Biblioteka Akademicka w Katowicach).
Fot. Wojciech Mateusiak

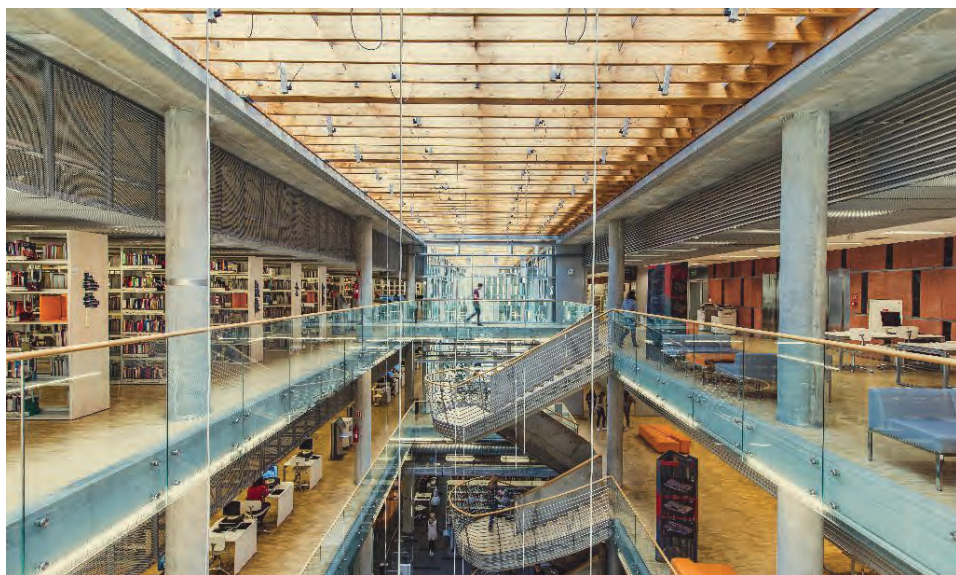


Figure 11a. Scientific Information Center and the Academic Library in Katowice. Interior
(Centrum Informacji Naukowej i Biblioteka Akademicka w Katowicach. Wnętrze).
Fot. Wojciech Mateusiak