

## Creativity as a solution – two examples from the work of the architect Andrea Bruno

Szekeres Balogh Iolanda\*<sup>1</sup>

\*SC Arhing SRL, Tirgu Mures, 47A Ghe. Doja St., Mureş county, Romania

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### Abstract

*Certainly the existence of a new attitude within the profession make it look sharper today the idea of Robert Venturi saying in 1966 that the problem of architecture and modern urbanism stans in the failure to recognize the architecture's complexity and contradiction, pluralism and permissiveness, capable to simultaneously incorporate multiple senses of the meaning or to transmit historical significance. Our objective is to present a kind of architectural modeling wondering today, when we ask ourselves to rediscover the historical language related to architecture and urban development, if we can use creativity as a solution for the issues that concern the integrity of the historical monument buildings. If we understand creativity as a modeling process of its existence or creation of a new reality, this architectural model would be a solution of research, knowledge and transformation of reality. We study the Italian architect Andrea Bruno (born in 1931) in two case studies and three creative directions: authenticity, intelligent capitalizing of relationships and creating exterior additions to buildings for the relationships proposed in this context. We intend that the research result represent the identification of general principles of his concept of creatively using architecture, contrast and light for directions, tensions, architectural accents, continuing the memory of the events through morally assumed functional and architectural creative extensions.*

### Rezumat

*Cu siguranță existența unei noi atitudini în interiorul profesiei a făcut să apară mai clară astăzi ideea lui Robert Venturi care spunea, în anul 1966, că problema arhitecturii și urbanismului modern este nerecunoașterea complexității și contradicției, a pluralismului și permisivității, a arhitecturii capabile să înglobeze concomitent mai multe sensuri ale înțelesului sau să transmită semnificație istorică. Obiectivul nostru este să prezentăm un tip de modelare arhitecturală întrebându-ne astăzi, când punem problema redescoperirii limbajului istoric legat de arhitectură și dezvoltare urbană, dacă putem apela la creativitate ca soluție la problemele de reîntregire a clădirilor monument istoric. Dacă înțelegem creativitatea ca un proces de modelare a existentului sau de crearea unei realități noi, modelul arhitectural prezentat este o soluție de cercetare, de cunoaștere și de transformare a realității. Vorbim despre arhitectul italian Andrea Bruno (n.1931), în două studii de caz și trei direcții creative: autenticitate, valorificare inteligentă a relațiilor și crearea adărilor exterioare construcției pentru relațiile propuse în context. Ne propunem ca rezultatul cercetării să reprezinte identificarea principiilor generale ale conceptul său de folosire creativă a arhitecturii, contrastului și luminii pentru direcționări, tensionări, accente*

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<sup>1</sup> Contact author: phone: + 4 0741091502

E-mail: [sziolanda@gmail.com](mailto:sziolanda@gmail.com) ; [office@arhing.ro](mailto:office@arhing.ro)

*arhitecturale, continuând memoria evenimentelor prin extensii creative funcționale, arhitecturale asumate moral.*

*Keywords: creativity, memory, conservation, new project, model, compensation, context.*

## **1. Introduction**

Some attitudes within our profession are considered similar to the American experience of the late twentieth century which Robert Venturi, Robert Stern and Charles Jencks wrote about. That was a call to find and interpret "the presence of the past", as R. Venturi called it, and history in a creative sense. In those conditions "architecture was able to simultaneously incorporate multiple senses of meaning [and] to transmit a historical significance ..." [1]

Today, we have a different position on the ideas of complexity, contradiction, pluralism, permissibility, acceptance of function with multiple interpretations, of "clear, clean but dull, tedious" [2] solutions or of the creative solving of tensions and ambiguities of architecture. We also raise the question of rediscovery by architects and planners of the historical language linked to traditional architecture and urban development to answer the question "... how could conservation shift the focus or update its mission". [3]

The goal of our application made for a space built architecturally by the heritage, is supporting the view that for the present use of Buildings, Cities and Territory, creativity is a solution balancing architecture and the immediate architectural context / urban / landscape / territory by non-invasive measures of the present for the future. This mental and social process and also philosophical is triggered by the architect characterized by awareness and consciousness [4] in an architecture that is "necessarily ... complex and contradictory" (Robert Venturi). And if we refer to creativity as to a process modelling existing reality or creating a new reality, the spatial compensatory pattern of architect Andrea Bruno that we are talking about is a manner of research, knowledge and transformation of reality, checked in time.

## **2. Some considerations on the method of creative restoration**

Architecture to which we refer is that of the historical monument, the original substance preserved, accompanied by the historical message, for which Bruno conceives architectural - spatial models of extension in the immediate built context. He does not create new concepts but generates each time, a concept based on creative associations between existing concepts of restoration.

Unlike conservation containing scientific methods of identifying the building in time or restoration methods which is, as it is well known, a transformation / modelling process, the value of the creative restoration model is the result of juxtaposing / association of scientific conservation with contemporary architecture, archeology, design, urban or other contemporary arts or as Hanna Derer says, "the understanding and, consequently, the enhancement of the intrinsic cultural resource of the object or assembly in question is only possible by applying several reading tools" [5].

Does the creative approach, wondered A. Bruno, have the double intention to create new architectures for new functions and use the conservation of the existing ones in their current uses or, does it have a simple intention to pass what is authentic to another generation?

Bruno's answer is the strengthening of the existing historical monument and an interference added as creative architectural extension in order to enhance its presence through the idea of "being there" or the enhancement of cultural values of the goals and site.

In our case, it is thus a dual solution for the storage of the values of authenticity by the smart use of relationships in solving functional and site requirements.

The quality of this process of perceiving objects and phenomena is given by the representations with which we achieve and which we archive mentally in images that have symbolization, intuition or control functions. We cannot think otherwise. The architectural object answers to a functional request and implicitly includes as major valence, memory or more accurately remembering. The simultaneous understanding of property architectural forms as "phenomena of superstructure" and "components of the collective memory" was made, necessarily, based on the contemporary principle of transdisciplinarity". [6, 7]

Whether it's a home, a public institution, an urban space or an object, in restoration, architecture is the one bearing meanings, traditions, rituals and social, economic and cultural or philosophical details. To what extent all this can be balanced, forwarded, assumed, denied highlighted or faded should be the choice of architect, increasingly aware that creativity is one of the tasks of finding the soul of the building. [8]

When notions such as creativity, creative interfere the first thought should not be addressed to the creator but to the ability of the architect to look at the historical monument as a recovered architecture and to find solutions to support the building restored in modern times. He must have the ability of knowledge, learning, information on the existence of works and personalities of the historical monument preservation world who have thought the solving of the problem in the context.

What kind of architect chooses Creativity as a solution? An architect philosopher, a well-trained professional, belonging to a culture, to a context that he understands, interested in the arts around the profession of architect, in the preservation and promotion of the values of authenticity, he is the one able to work in the patrimonial field, and as it is often said that he can dialogue with history, in order to increase the value of historical heritage.

In this study we analyze two examples of the work of architect Andrea Bruno (n.1931). His creative solution is a compensatory spatial, bi-component architectural model suggesting the historical archetypal message, extension of the context and not of the original content. It is a competent and coherent response to the problems of the existing architectural space built in relation to which he was asked to give an answer.

The first case is that of Les Briggittines Chapel in Brussels, Belgium, [9] by means of which we want to illustrate the idea that "mutual support of assumptions built through independent means [10] of restoration of the monument and of contemporary architecture can be a creative way beneficial to both.

The second case is that of medieval Wall of Tarragona, Spain [11], where the dual, archaeological and urban investigation advances work hypotheses in relation to the conservation / restoration of the architectural space of the monument.

### **3. Which are the creative directions in the works of Bruno ?**

Creative directions used are functional in the context and assumed morally both by the architect and by the community, being works won through a contest by a team led by Bruno. The chosen solution is always complex and sometimes dual. What are these lines of work? We believe that the most frequently used are the following three:

- intelligent use of the relationships;

We are talking about the relationships existing and newly created between existing original material substance, including the aesthetic values associated with it and the contemporary material substance with its technologies of development, between preservation and reuse of the historical monument, between history, memory and territory / landscape, through a new regrouping such as: conservation - history - territory or reuse - memory - landscape.

Practically a new strategy to enable or create the different layers of old and new architecture is applied through a “scenographic reconnection... recollections, crossings, virtual corridors, points of planimetric remembrance and suggestion of the rift between old and new, as a major emphasis that uses patrimonial building”. [12].

- the application of the principle of authenticity;

Andrea Bruno pointed out that the basis of success to relate the architecture of the monument at the time of our perception with the architecture of the present by means of the restorer architect was the approach of authenticity. Authenticity is a guiding principle which applies in both areas, conservation and new concept, that has the capacity to create conditions so that the architect can access a wide range of possibilities for suggesting the archetypal historical message.

- creating the additions exterior to construction for the interrelationships that it proposes;

In his case creativity generates “a concept of compensation with the preservation of authenticity” [13]. Highlighting the relationship between the different layers of old and new architecture, Bruno uses art, art of design, to emphasize the differences between the restored areas, thus creating positive tensions. The warning of the public is made through an organization of the architectural place of the monument as a stage for the presentation of a show in which the protagonist is the historical monument itself.

#### **4. In the first case of Chapel in Brussels, the solution makes the restoration of the value of historic monument by:**

4.1. the clear presentation of both old and new components by recognized methods:

- preserving the existing building [14] according to scientific conceptions applying the principle of authenticity. (Fig.1,2.) [15]



Figure 1, 2. The chapel was built in 1667 according to the plan of architect Léon Van Heil for the order of Holy Brigitta.

- new project suggesting the solving of architectural, volume and detail solution; How is this done? The new project creates contrast and avoids opposition, develops and does not destroy the original identity of the old chapel, the registry being contemporary mirroring though a set of ancient references. (Fig.3, 4, 5, 6) [16];



Figure 3, 4. First sketches

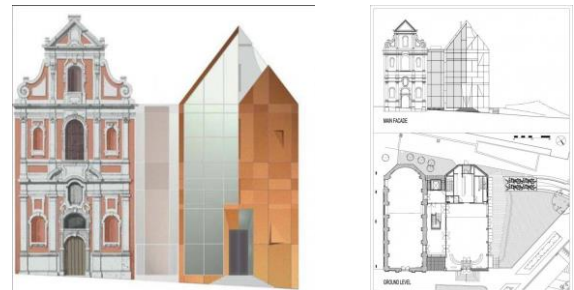


Figure 5, 6. The old chapel

The new building next to the old church which lies next to the structure built of brick and stone is a new alternative architectural image. Both form a new creative solution, a new layer.

- Contrast exploitation: understanding the restoration project as an enhancement of old and new contrast. Bruno highlights by emphasizing the contradiction and creative exploitation of positive tensions (for example the median area is an extension, a volume emphasis through its withdrawn scale and positioning, necessary functional for crossing vertically the two buildings and implicitly for the presentation of the show of the contrast achieved). (Fig. 7, 8, 9.)



Figure 7, 8, 9. Contrast exploitation [16]

4.2. by continuing the memory of the events:

- using the landmarks of remembering, bringing back to memory the information and events of childhood, education, daily life, etc. (Fig. 10, 11, 12) [17]



Figure 10, 11, 12. remembrance, Belgian influence, Breughel House, Quartier des Marolles, Bruxelles.

- continuing the memory of events through creative, functional architectural and volumetric extensions, traversals, perspectives, points of interest, accents, gaps, structural, suggestive inserts and any other architectural means morally assumed. At the level of the functional plan extension is an array of functionality. This divides in areas, maintaining the dual relationship ship-altar and lobby / foyer - functional annexes and at the same time uses the free space between the two buildings to create dynamic linking spaces (staircase, elevator) and functional compensation spaces as in case of winter garden or of the colloquial hall. From the architectural point of view, it is worth noticing the preservation of the median position of the new access portal, the marking of the cornice, the marking of the differentiation between the main and side facades and colour range.

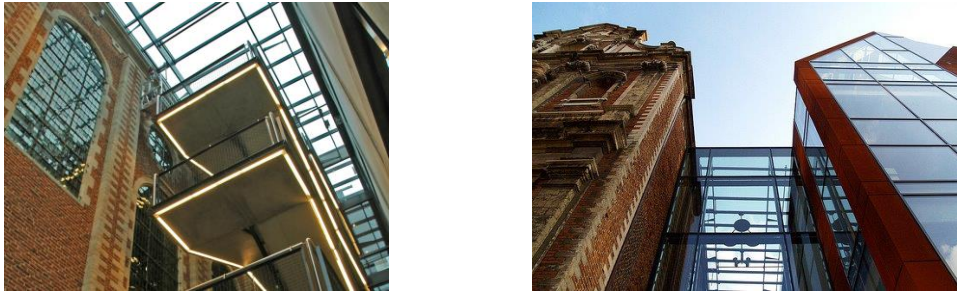


Figure 13, 14. Creativity versus understanding not being opposed particularly.

Lastly, the curtain wall of the volume of the connection body with minimalist morphology emphasizes the façade and the original brick volume, by emphasizing the contradiction and creative exploitation of positive tensions (the median area is an extension, a volume necessary functional for crossing vertically the two buildings - for the presentation of the show of the contrast). (Fig.13, 14.) [16]

#### 4.3. new relationships historical monument - architectural place / bordering area / city analyzing:

- The role of the social: The project arose from the desire of the inhabitants of Brussels (competition) to convert the value of neighbourhood of the place around Brussels station, explicitly of the architectural site of the Chapel into a cultural pole developing the centre of the non - profit organization "Les Brigittines" - Contemporary Arts Centre that used the chapel as a cultural forum.

- Urban value of the area: achieves a functional urban recovery (an area which became the scene of original cultural and social activities through message, colour, sound, etc.) and a volumetric urban recovery, both leading to the change of the relationship between the chapel and the tall and solid block of the background. (Fig. 15, 16.17) [16]



Figure 15, 16. The site before and after urban recovery.

Through creativity, this architectural historical monument and its place reveals behavioral reactions related to memory and assimilation, leading to the emergence of new events.

We refer to creativity as to a process modelling existing reality or creating a new reality. The spatial compensatory pattern of architect Andrea Bruno is a manner of research, knowledge and transformation of reality, checked in time.



Figure 17.

The old building was reinterpreted in a contemporary language. It was a very intelligent define of the word *versus* like *different* not *against*. The question is, said Șerban Sturdza, whether you want to have a past that was and which no longer exists or you want a past which will be transmitted and transformed through time.

- focus on the analysis of the site in a critical area in the urban fabric of the city;  
(This is a special district, deconstructed, by the presence of railways and by the vicinity dominated by the social apartment building in the background of the site).

In these conditions a continuous annihilation of the value of historic monument took place while reducing the historical and artistic value. The heritage building was locked in its own past, Bruno noted, justifying the need for a new chapel. "This doubling changes not only the perception of the church but also the meaning of urban space surrounding it. [He understood the need] to reaffirm the church's existence in a context different from the original one, when church was the spiritual urban [18] centre for the revitalization of old urban structure. Also, for the monument he creates an annexed volumetry, we could call it, for contemporary services. The restoration project is like a contrast enhancement [19] of old and new, and a way to alleviate technical excess characteristic to high-tech community.

##### **5. In the second case of the Medieval Wall in Tarragona, Spain, archaeological investigation and urbanism advance assumptions in relation to architectural study and actual conservation / restoration.**

The goal of the intervention was the enhancement of own cultural resources both of the historical monuments involved and of the site itself. "The purpose of the intervention was to bring tourists to the two sites merged into an archaeological park highlighting the complex layers of history" [20].

The chosen solution is to strengthen the existing historical monument stressing its presence through a new project that, Bruno said, reveals and leaves intact the spirit of the structure. He does this by keeping the memory [21] of the two major poles, on the one hand, the amphitheatre - Roman circus and on the other the structures of the medieval walls, given their openness to the city. Bruno uses

free space, contrast and light to create targets, tension and architectural accents of new and mutual valorization of Roman and medieval buildings.

Its creative associations highlight the contemporary-antique and Roman-medieval differences. Where new needs have emerged, they have changed, completed or minimized the unique appearance of the historical monument and the restorer architect needs to make a moral commitment of recovery. Thus the project develops the values of a monumental site at an urban scale, while retaining the various stages of history to the present. "A building is an opportunity to mark the epoch, to set the reason for the change. It is therefore a cultural practice above all". [22]

5.1. Highlighting of the cultural resource of objectives and site is made by:

- restoration of the historic monument value by the clear presentation of the two Roman and medieval components using established methods:

a).conservation of the existing Roman archaeological site Fig.18,19 [23], according to the scientific concepts applying the principle of authenticity, after conducting extensive operations of release (dissolution of non-compliant subsequent and contemporary stages), Bruno explained that one of the outstanding issues of the concept is the differentiated action applicable in restoring the amphitheatre semi-abandoned and suffocated by parasitic buildings. His intervention had two distinct parts: a semicircle was left to conservation in order to contemplate the preserved Roman ruins and the other half was restored.



Figure18 [23]



Figure 19 [23]

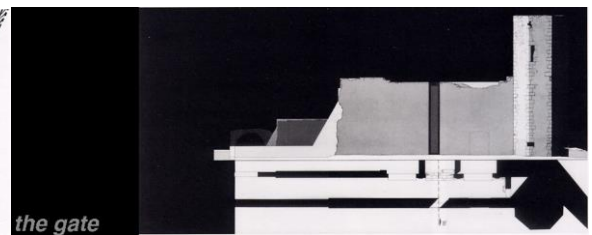
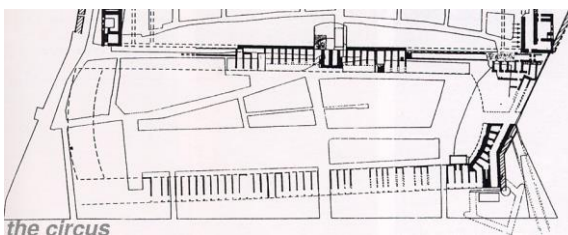


Figure 20, 21. [24]

At the same time, he proposed the conservation of the gigantic medieval wall located about two meters from the Roman site. (Fig. 20, 21.) [24]

b) new project for the suggestion of an architectural route drawing the viewer beyond the first monument with which he/she makes contact. The idea that there is something interesting and worthy to be seen beyond the wall, "an interlude. The revelation in which we perceive the passage of time. " [25]



And in the latter case we are talking about creative and scenographic support, like in case of the chapel, but here he does this by building a non-materiality, a new free space by harnessing the dramatic power of space and time missing from the lives of two monuments, placed in architectural spatial forms. The criticisms which have been made refer to the fact that it lost from the original substance to create the gateway back into the city's history in a step that he considered important.

Basically, works were carried out on the Roman site in the area of the space between the wall with arches of the amphitheatre discovered after the works of release and the medieval wall, perceived by Bruno as space - time between two landmarks of the town's history. It is a "narrow passage of 2-3 m wide with an opening of 12 meters high located in the medieval town wall situated between earth and heaven and becomes an observer, allowing the understanding of time". [26]

"The gate - a clean cut, precise, vertical – is made diagonally in order to avoid the perception of the effective thickness of the wall and to prevent a non-directional view, a sliding along the wall and offers the possibility of deduction by a fissure, that something can be found in the rear, while providing the opportunity to discover the monument at first sight". [27] This gesture of cutting with the sword, as described by Lluís Pinyol Bruno's intervention makes clear that the ultimate goal of the work is the awareness of the value of the Roman archaeological site of 18 hectares, unique outside Italian borders. From the architectural point of view we mention the determination of the gate position as part of a judicious report full-empty, the marking of the difference on the front wall (the edges of the reinforced concrete gap) and the exterior bridge-road as a functional extension until the ruins of Roman circus. It is important to accept the creation of the gate out of practical reasons, to obtain a closed system of crossing.

I believe that Bruno has created between two walls, not a neutral section, metaphysics, but an interactive architectural inter-space volume that keeps the gap of time and space in place, thus creating a positive tension sufficiently large to be sent to the monuments in the future.

c) Contrast exploitation: understanding the project as a new and old contrast enhancement by the contrast full and empty.(Fig.22, 23,25) [23]



Figure 22, 23, cyclopean walls

- continuation of the events memory by:

a) using parts of remembering, bringing back to the memory the information and personal events and those of everyday life. (Fig. 24)[29] Bruno is likely to have registered the image of Sant Antoni gate open within the medieval walls in the eighteenth century. It lies in the old area of Castell de Pilat town and was part of the Provincial Forum Tarraco structure built in the first century AD, it became a royal castle in the Middle Ages and today it is the National Museum of Archaeology.

He also made analogies with Porta Principalis, Roman Gates (Palatine Gates)(Fig.26) [30] of the City of Turin late 1<sup>st</sup> century (BC) and early first century, the period Augusta Taurinorum, near the Imperial Palace in the twelfth century. (Fig. 27)[31]



Figure 24 Santa Tecla Festival



Figure 25



Image 26.



Image 27.

b) continuation of the events memory by means of various honest architectural means: traversals, points of interest, suggestive discontinuities and overtones.

At the level of the functional level the focus is a matrix of the city gate, which on one hand is zonified holding the dual relation interior-exterior medieval fortress and on the other hand it is a guide to go through the site further. Bruno uses free space between the two buildings, the walls of the circus and medieval wall, a different contemporary Zwinger shaped by Bruno to create dynamic areas of connection (movement) and functional compensation spaces (colloquial hallway) of the monuments that allows accessibility control in the amphitheatre area. This architectural link has a minimalist morphology of metal and glass. ( Fig.28, 29.) [23]

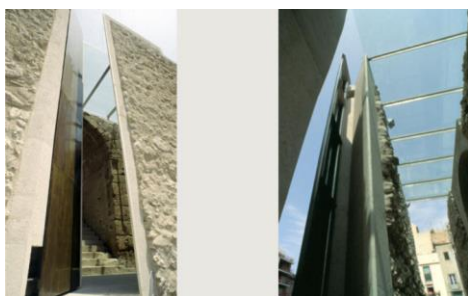


Figure 28, 29.

Like Carlo Scarpa he marks the areas where we can sharpen the original spaces and grasp alterations produced in their substance. Visitor's interaction with the original mass occurs as in a contemporary museum through a series of portals / gates of the spaces adjacent to the medieval wall setting a journey of discovery of the historical monument understood to be the bearer of the most valuable historical and artistic message.

- new relationships historic - architectural place / bordering area / town analyzing:

a) the role of the social field: The project arose from the desire of inhabitants of the city (competition) to convert the value of archaeological site of the place, namely of the archaeological site place in a cultural pole. Through debates it was possible to persuade the public and professionals to accept an alternative solution that allowed for the medieval parameter to be kept.

b) urban value of the area: the urban functional recovery that leads to a site of archaeological, monumental, cultural and tourist value. The project is designed to strengthen the monumental frame of the site by restoring the circus - the Roman amphitheatre in the city, in close connection with archaeological excavations and demolition of buildings recently built on the ruins of the Circus and the opening of a new door in wall-Muralla on the side of the corner tower during Carol V century.



Figure 30.

Site analysis led him to understand the value and difficulty of the urban fabric, dominant in the urban morphology of Tarragona town, realizing the need to strengthen and integrate its archaeological resources in everyday life of the historical city. (Fig. 30.)[35] Botta said that “Their recovery means instead understanding their characteristics and making them live in the present while the addition and transformation is always possible. “ [32] It is part of the trend according to which urban archaeology is perceived as a "social requirement ... which does not become the monopoly of economic policy [and] adapts to the dynamic development of the town” [33]

Bruno understood the importance of combined urban and archaeological conservation. This conservation must go hand in hand with sustainable urban development. [34] "In this way public opinion becomes receptive to the measures destined to safeguard the urban archaeological site.

He created in Tarragona a new content for the notions of artistic intent using the authenticity and value of context through differentiated actions. We are talking about architectural, urban and archaeological conservation, restoration of liberation, restoration with partial reconstruction, conservation of ruins or creative restoration ruins, all in one place. (Fig.31) [36]



Figure 31. Creativity - a path from origin to destiny.

## 6. Conclusions

Creativity is a solution, and Andrea Bruno's works prove it. The research result represents the identification of general principles of his concept of creatively using architecture, contrast and light for directions, tensions, architectural accents, continuing the memory of the events through morally assumed, functional and architectural creative extensions.

It is not a sterile question about old and new concepts but about the concepts of permanence and change, encompassing three values that define the quality of the restorer specialist: ability to acquire knowledge (scholarship), ability to relate / communicate and understanding that memory must have, paradoxically, a future.

It is the understanding of the monument as a reusable resource, of the "fragmented eloquence" [37] and it is the application of opposite concepts which must always be balanced by what Bruno calls "memory architecture", a path from origin to destiny.

The question already asked by Steven W. Semes, as he spoke about "Future past: ethics Conservation Architecture, Urban Planning, Conservation and History", How could conservation shift the focus or update its mission by a contemporary design redefined by architects and planners, by means of the recovery of the historical language in relation to traditional architecture and to the city? One answer could be Creativity.

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- [19] <http://space72.blogspot.ro/2009/05/briggittines-chapel.html> „...he uses high-tech methods to solve infrastructure problems; The new space called "Chapel" is a concrete structure seemingly perfectly finished. The new building set next to the church is a lightweight structure which perfectly reminds the general lines of masonry mass without opposition to it. This contrast, however, does not destroy the original identity of the church; on the contrary, strengthens and grows. It presents as a simplified picture, in which the fundamental building elements of the old building are references, reinterpreted in a contemporary language.
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