

ABSTRACT

Adolf Loos. Views of luxury within architecture.

Author: Sergio Bruns

Tutor: José María Lozano Velasco

“Luxury” has always been a cause for debate throughout history. It was criticized by Plato and Aristotle and limited during the times of the old Roman Empire. However, luxury has now become a natural part of our lives. The change in the meaning of luxury represents the step from the ancient world to the modern world, and the step from feudalism to capitalism¹, becoming associated to new values:

01_ The value of the private sphere and the individual. The step from the ancient world to the modern world also entails the step from public luxury to private luxury.

02_ The emotional value of luxury. Our desires and imagination lead us towards new desires. As the value of something which is intangible.

03_ The value of the superfluous. This would be a luxury which does not provide any added value.

04_ The material value. The material value is closely linked to the emotional value of luxury, as it isn't so much about the cost of the material, but about the shapes and sensations which are obtained with it.

05_ The value of refinement. The qualitative value of luxury, which leads towards the evolution of societies.

06_ The value of innovation. Throughout history luxury has been the promoter of innovations. Technique has played a vital role in architecture, giving rise to new spatial possibilities.

The thesis looks into the values associated to luxury, identifying them in the architecture of Adolf Loos aiming to represent a modern vision of luxury.

The similarities in the biographies of Adolf Loos and Peter Zumthor (central European architects, both sons of artisan fathers, influences by their time spent in the United States,...) justify the choice the latter as a modern reference in the research, which establishes a link between said vision from the early 20th century and the architecture of the early 21st century. This proves how these values remain current even today, although logically their transfer to architecture is different.

Lastly comparing this modern vision of luxury with contemporary visions of luxury by means of different conversation. The aim is to move away from the prejudice associated to luxury to prove how architecture can go beyond what is necessary with the aim of improving the living conditions of the inhabitant.

¹ SOMBART, Werner. *Luxus und Kapitalismus*. München and Leipzig: Dunker & Humblot, 1922.