Formation of City-like Structures while Ilya Golosov’s Creative Process

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Abstract. It’s commonly recognized that Avant-garde creativity begins with almost complete negation and deconstruction of previous cultural background. But examination of architects’ creative work shows that such an act is preceded by their deep study of architectural history and form creation and derivation of their own sets of universal architectural forms and assemblage methods. The purpose of essay is to reconstruct the creative process of Avant-garde architect and to reveal the inclusion of forms, taken from architectural history and regarded as a cultural resource while city-like structures and architectural organisms becoming. The research uses a process approach to study architectural phenomena, interpreted as a further development of structuralism and post-structuralism methods, including analysis of an array of design data, modelling of dynamic structures and accounting the intrusions from alien contexts. Comparative analysis is also used to jointly consider borrowings from different historical contexts and avant-garde neologisms. As a result, it turns out that Golosov doesn’t break or deny, but mentally unscrews aggregate of historical forms to reintegrate the selected forms, in altered order, into the structure of new city-like complex. Hence, to harmonize his work he returns to composition and tectonics and refers to the historical contexts from where forms originated, and they evoke reminiscences.

Keywords: Russian Avant-garde, I.A. Golosov, activity methods, cultural recourse, spatial constructions, image formation, semantics

1 Introduction

It’s commonly recognized that avant-garde creativity begins with almost complete negation and deconstruction of previous cultural background. But examination of architects’ creative work shows that such an act is preceded by their deep study of architectural history and form creation and derivation of their own sets of universal architectural forms and assemblage methods. So the question arises, if it were possible to construct such a complicated spatial and semantic structures without incorporating layers of architects’ historical memory? And how does inheritance and succession occur at crucial moments in culture, architecture and urban planning? Golosov is committed to the traditional values of

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architectural compositional art and considers the innovations of avant-garde through the prism of professional thinking. He often formally uses an arsenal of avant-garde techniques (Plasticism, Constructivism, Rationalism), transfers them into the language of a quasi-academic composition, reconciles them with the traditional system and fits in it. Working in different styles and trends, changing his manner and creating the whole architectural structures would be impossible without a systematic study of historical forms and motives, a comprehension of formation laws and a clearly formulated theoretical platform.

Master’s credo is formulated and based on his own texts [1, 2, 3]. Materials on Theory of Architectural Organisms Formation, creative method, architectural practice and pedagogical heritage of Golosov were analysed in works by S.O. Khan-Magomedov [3, 4, 5], A.A. Shadrin [6], O.I. Adamov [7], F. Deo [8]. Noting the creation of a special educational studio at VKHUTEMAS – New Academy (together with K. S. Melnikov), Shadrin [9] and M. Meriggi [10] mentioned that he tried out there his design principles. Khan-Magomedov mentioned master's adherence to Constructivism stereotypes and his departure from them [11], Shadrin marked a search for his own path and deviation into tectonic structuralism, generated rather by classical reminiscences, and a dream of discovering a special architectural dialect – Language of Reinforced Concrete Parthenon [6, 12]. Yu.P. Volchok undertook reconstructions of the urban spaces of Moscow, served as prototypes for Golosov's city-like projects (as Melnikov's ones), and his being in a semantic context and in dialogue with the philosophical and engineering ideas of the time [13]. M. Meriggi treated the avant-gardists (I. Leonidov, K. Melnikov, I. Golosov) urban planning activities as closely related to Moscow landscapes and the concept of Ansambl’, with its basic structure-forming architectural objects, continuing traditions and sustainable over the centuries [14]. A. De Magistris, A. Vyazemtseva [15] and above-mentioned analysts noted parallels and resonances between the work of Golosov and his contemporaries (G. Terragni, E. Del Debbio, Bauhaus masters), [16, 10], a significant influence of his ideas on contemporary architects (R. Bofill, M. Botta, L. Krier) and also his anticipation of postmodernism architecture ideas [6, 18]. Scholars have pointed out similarities between the city-like structures of Golosov and A. Rossi, as based on assembling constructors from arbitrarily assigned universal forms [6, 12, 17].

2 Materials and Methods

The meanings and images of the master's spatial formations, the features of creative work and borrowing from historical contexts, the special consistency of components in city-like structures and architectural organisms could be explained as being integrated into his creative process. The purpose of essay is to reconstruct the creative process of Avant-garde architect and to reveal the inclusion of forms, taken from architectural history and regarded as a cultural resource while city-like structures and ‘architectural organisms’ becoming.

The research uses a process approach [7, 19] to study architectural phenomena, interpreted as a further development of structuralism and post-structuralism methods, including analysis of an array of design data, modelling of dynamic structures and accounting the intrusions from alien contexts. Comparative analysis is also used to jointly consider borrowings from different historical contexts and avant-garde neologisms.

3 Results
3.1 Architectural forms and motives collection

Master begins his search as if it were playing child's wooden constructor: assembled toys, pyramids, bar castles or game of skittles. K.N. Afanasiev compared Golosov's architecture to *concrete suitcases with holes* stacked on top of one another and spoke also of the tectonic nature of imagery. Toy, child's town or suitcase architecture is seen as downsized, distant (micropsia) and generalised. Variety of historical forms studied is vast; it seems that master collects traditional architectural objects. Beloved monuments of world architecture (Egyptian Pyramid, Parthenon, Pantheon, San Marco Bell Tower, Italian Palazzo, Tower of Babel, Ascension Church, etc.) appear as repositories of universal forms and examples of their harmonious combination. He pays particular attention to the Tsar's Palace in Kolomenskoye village, regarded as a small town or 'mushroom family', assembled from individual timber huts with elaborate roof shapes and turrets, connected by passages and staircases. The main volumes here are compactly grouped, shifted, cramped, even densely 'piled up', and in this way resemble a city, a monastery or a castle. (Fig. 1)

![Fig. 1. The Origins of 'The Theory of Architectural Organisms Formation' by I.A. Golosov](image)

This is a kind of historical prototype of future Golosov's constructor – to be studied, to determine its constituent forms and their hierarchy, and then to be mentally disassembled into parts-blocks useful for future formations. In the sketches, the historical objects are extremely simplified – only large forms – cleared of details, monumentalised, reduced to a combination of simple geometric forms: cube, sphere (hemisphere), cylinder, cone, pyramid and parallelepiped. The derived volumetric forms are not treated as abstract and geometric, but rather as tectonic ones, generated by the development of construction affordances. They are not used singly, but in combinations, and such groupings define the role they play in the structure. Forms are divided into classes: 1) basic (*separately living forms*); 2) *finishing, complementary, adjunctive*; 3) *transitional and composite*. There are defined separately living volumes – *cube, sphere, cylinder, cone and pyramid* – in the organism of masses; they
must be applied once... Completely symmetrical and inherently independent. [6] Thus, he compiles a vocabulary of basic architectural elements, combining the qualities of simple geometric volumes (and possibility to use their combinations), tectonic construction, and also accounting intended effects of perception. To this set of properties he adds the function of process taking place in a volume. (A cylinder most often works as a vertical communication: staircase or lift). Master establishes the primary rules for combination of architectural elements, so he lays a foundation for his universal forms grammar. While the formations, the rules are supplemented, their variety is constantly widening, and the grammar is getting more complex.

3.2 Stages of Ilya Golosov’s creative process (Fig. 2)

Master's adherence to both the unwritten laws of the traditional composition art and the rules of universal forms grammar determines the semantics of his formations and the stages in processing the architectural forms. Because of this double interest, project discourse often moves from one semantic realm to another. The problem facing the architect is that each of the forms composing conglomerate or organism must show the full properties and meanings inherent in it and their combinations. They all offer opportunities for him to discover and use.

Fig. 2. Pre-world and Stages of I.A. Golosov’s Creative Process

General glance at the form. Revealing the structural primitive

The first glance is the most general, defining the desired architectural volume as a complex combination of volumes in the very first approximation. It is necessary to imagine the whole volume of designing structure and to grasp mentally its general idea. This first idea, written down by architectural means, is related to the task, future purpose of building. The main groups of volumes, center (or centers) of desired composition, general movement of volumes in the composition are designated in primitive. But it's accompanied by initial ambiguity, uncertainty in the choice of volumes and their combinations. They exist in different variations. Even unsuccessful assumptions are not excluded, that leads to changing such an initial architectural idea and implies substituting geometric volumes in
combinations and correcting the primitive. (See the numerous volumes change in sketches of the Palace of Labor in Moscow, 1922-1923).

Defining the masses. Disassembly of previous forms aggregate. Schemes. Mutual positioning of masses

From the representation of whole structure he gradually moves on to the further idea deployment in architectural masses, the essence of situation with its masses should be grasped. The study should be carried out only in the plane of abstract representation. So the desired form is easily comparable with the monuments of the past, it’s possible to use and rework individual design schemes comprehended at abstract geometric level. Masses are the simplest geometric volumes, derived from historical monuments, taken as utterly neutral, universal and free from particular meaning. They form the basis and further holding the entire composition. Important is its position in space in relation to familiar masses. Being extracted from historic structure, masses retain the memory of entire relationships complexity in the past structure they were included, of their complex architectural elaboration, and such a design historical memory inherent in volumes returns. He doesn’t simply takes the simplest volumes in pure state from the past buildings, but often extracts them in combination with other masses – the whole groupings (blocks of architectural volumes). He disassembles the complex arrangement of a previous aggregate of forms and, having distinguished nodal combinations, volumetric units, transfers and reassembles them in his construction combining schemes made of simplest volumes derived from different contexts. He calls such montage without attention to semantic content – syntax of architecture and associates it with repetitiveness of architectural elements and necessary knowledge of architectural language. The volumes development and whole composition follows the path of individualisation, clarification, elaboration and subjective features acquisition. In groups of volumes he identifies the individual most significant, recognisable volumes, which constitute the core, the nucleus of composition he calls subjective masses – absolutely individual, non-repeating in their forms. There are also objective masses constituting the composition periphery, they are dependent on and subordinate to subjective masses and do not bear the burden of non-repetition. Subjective masses determine the movement of volumes in the architectural organism and define the direction of the composition vertically or horizontally. [3] The objective masses maintain and develop these general movements. In sketches for the Palace of Soviets subjective masses constitute elongated ring (limited horizontal development) and cylinder-campanile (visual vertical ascent), other masses are objective – surrounding and adjoining this individual core.

Revealing the forms. Primary combinations of forms

Master changes his vision of object treating it in terms of architectural forms substituting masses, associated with empathy to it and enriching its volumes with a specific content. Extracting forms from the masses shows that architectural composition is not reducible simply to the syntax of architecture, to a more or less competent combination of schemes and rules. Form inserts precise content into a building; it should be clear how it’s organised in general: how to enter, where exit is; how it’s divided into floors and levels. Building acquires a great number of details related to internal content expressed on the façades and the functional process taking place in it. There are appearing parts-details, supporting columns, brackets-cantilevers, overhangs, arches marking the passage, portico organising reception, large parallelepiped cut through by another, narrower and taller one, indicating
the auditorium and the stage, divided by a ramp. Volumes suggest the internal structure of rooms: enfilade, hall and staircase. Sculptural figures appear in the sketches, murals or reliefs on the walls take shape, and finishing is easily traced. Purely constructive forms are introduced into the composition, adding some new meaning to the building treated as a complicated technical device. Similar to the masses, Golosov theoretically divides both forms into objective and subjective. Objective form is expression of the general idea of the structure. The subjective form is an expression of the structure's individuality. The individual structure is the subjective form. The form expresses an internal process. [3]

Substitutions in combinations of forms. Constructor variations

The master has a full set of stable, often repeated combinations of forms. Such combinations are: ring (or its part – exedra) + tower-cylinder in the centre; parallelepipeds cut through by another flat parallelepiped; angular cylinder squeezed by parallelepipeds on both sides. But forms sustainability in groups is relative. Substitutions are also possible: a cylinder tower combined with a ring is replaced by a parallelepiped tower, or by pedestals with sculptures. There may be substitutions of entire groups of forms, when the composition in masses fixes only the location and approximate dimensions of future volumes and volumes themselves give way to their relatives, like figures on a chessboard. (Sketches for the Palace of Labour show such multiple substitutions). Another type of substitution, where one composition in the masses is used as the basic one for several projects, but the concrete forms solution, their stylistics, dimensions and proportional ratios differs (solution in Classical mood or in Constructivist forms). Depending on changes in the context and variations in the overall project idea, the individual forms in composition can be substituted and new images and details added. Porticoes, colonnades, pilasters, cornices, consoles, new window shapes are inserted. Master is seeking the most sustainable combination of volumes that meets both the universal laws of architecture and the urban context and time of its creation.

Animation of organism. Lines of striving and motion

Golosov gives an example of a special empathy with the architectural volume, assigning certain properties to it. He begins to interpret form as a whole assembly of living organisms that exhibit the agility inherent in all living beings. Each individual organism has internal forces, its mass comes to life in front of eyes and as if it’s striving, stretching or visually spreading in a certain direction. Organisms strive towards each other, their entire community tends to spread out or gather in space. Organisms coexist and help each other (Golosov’s symbiosis of forms) to create a certain impression from the wholeness. They add up and multiply the efforts into one resulting community strive. He makes a special designation for the directions of forces in the community of forms – lines of striving. [3] In the community of architectural organisms are main, leading and subordinating ones, so they differ to the first-order and second-order lines. The ability of subordinates is to accumulate their own potential motion (tension) and transmit it to the main ones. The ability of the main or central organisms is to collect and distribute the visual motions of the subordinate organisms. He distinguishes an active or vertical line of striving and a passive or horizontal line of striving. In the projects of high-rise buildings for Moscow calm horizontal motion of stylobate is combined with bundle power lines gathered and strung on central vertical volume. Visual motions in multi-figure combinations are sometimes very complicated and varying, and master’s task is to bring them into a harmonious balanced
state, to find a clear and cohesive equilibrium of strivings. Golosov writes: To achieve harmony of the masses means to achieve harmony of entire motions, which must exist in every structure. [6] Sketches of the Palace of Labour show how disparate tensions of moving small forms of the numerous secondary volumes are accumulated on the spherical and therefore self-valuable volume of auditorium, as if rotating around its horizontal axis. He divides two kinds of motion in the volume: actual and imaginary. Visual strivings of forms constituting imaginary motion are combined with physical motion, the actual people movement in volume, going upstairs, lifting, people accumulation in lobby and dispersal from it. Both kinds of motion are inter-transitive. In Zuev Club, the actual ascent of the circular staircase placed in a glass cylinder is accompanied by the imaginary motion of façade volumes, converging diagonally to the building corner. And then people descent and virtual return.

Beginning of ordering the whole. Referring to prototypes. Dominant axes and motives. Start of contradictions

Master is faced with the task of ordering, fixing in a stable state what was found in the sketches and the further development of the composition. It works with the building volumetric structure and operates with whole blocks. Each of pure forms participating in the composition represents such a block with its own structure, which implies stuffing: function, geometric partitioning and organizing some spaces inside the form (according to M.G. Barkhin [6]). Whole volumetric blocks tied together to constitute a structure. Volumes essence nature and their combinations in the architectural organism should manifest itself. Volumes essence nature has been revealed in famous architectural monuments. Architect often refers to the most prominent forms in history as prototypes in the search for natural principles of organisation (Colosseum, with its oval arena and sectoral division; the Pantheon, concentrating ceremonial assemblies; cylindrical tower as vertical communication; enfilade as axis-passageway connecting the auditoriums, etc.). Like space station modules, the heterogeneous units must be fitted, docked and interlocked. The structural axes, partitioning and structural grids, docking units and transition bays must be co-ordinated and then the processes integrated. The Palace of Labour sketch is marked by two centres generating the volume division: the amphitheatre of the auditorium and the tower of the radio centre. The structures coordination generated by dominant volumes becomes possible by introducing an oblique-turned grid uniting entire forms. Spatial arrangement of the Synthetic Theatre in Sverdlovsk is similar to the structure of temple complex in Karnak: auditoriums divided by curtain walls are ‘shot through’ by the cinema projector ray. Golosov emphasizes the organizing and psychological power of the axis aids the masses co-subordination in whole. Design motives set by several volumes often conflict to each other and pose problems. Contradictions arise need to be resolved by architect in the subsequent design phases.

Identifying and naming the nucleus of structure. Dynamo machine. Subordination

Idea of people flow in a set of architectural volumes is now leading his design discourse. Stuffing, the functional processes has been envisaged for the individual volumes, now is to be regulated as a whole. He identifies an active, fluid functional nucleus in the structure, accumulating not only people flows, but also concentrating the architectural and spatial idea. This functional nucleus with a central idea is understood as a kind of heart in the organism. [3] New type architectural objects (Club, the Palace of Labour, theatre of mass
action) are seen as ‘social life condensers’ (according to K.N. Afanasiev [6]). They must be suitable for congresses, meetings, rallies, plebiscites, gathering of demonstrators, public funerals, as well as for entertainment, concerts, lectures, cinema, etc. [3] Nucleus becomes the focal point of functional processes. It’s a starting point for most geometric structures (axes, grids) and unifying point for most architectural motives. Volume of core should also express in the exterior the building its semantic and multivalent content. In mass action theaters, a universal auditorium becomes the place of increased activity. Stage (understood as machine-tool for actors' play) is placed in the center to bring the actors as close as possible to the audience. The active nucleus gets a characteristic name – dynamo machine. Vivid metaphors – heart, core and nucleus – and an indicative analogue – dynamo machine – help to fix the emerging co-subordination and hierarchy of volumes in the whole structure.

Motion diagram in the building. Motion rhythms

Master constantly keeps in mind two types of motion in the building: actual and imaginary. He differentiates processes not only in space, but also in time. A kind of motion diagram in the building is produced, expressing the life process flowing. If a correspondence is set up between the internal content and the external design, so the directions of motion of the internal functional processes must somehow correspond to the directions of motion of the external volumes. Two types of motion can run parallel or opposite, creating a contrast of motions. Expression of motion in the volumes is rhythm, he defines as: Rhythm in architecture consists of alternating masses, elements of varying value in volume and in varying order. [3, 6] Rhythm is related to the specific speed of perception of the architectural volume, to the way the eye moves: Rhythm is an accelerated or decelerated movement. He extends the limits of the concept of rhythm placing architectural rhythm in a range of wave processes or vibrations: Rhythm is order. Rhythm is vibration. Rhythm is vibration order. He uses musical analogies and introduces the notions of beat, measure and interval into architecture. He is interested in the very structure of the musical construction, and tries to arrange and regulate the structure of the architectural work by analogy. [6] Rhythms combination of the building tiers shifted to each other is evident in the sketches of the Palace of Labour. Spots of individual windows from different tiers alternately shoot out at the viewer, setting visual beats of varying strength and duration. Starting with the rapid rhythms of auditorium surface, melody is finished with the smooth rises of radio-tower.

Filling and naming of voids and forms overlaying

In a complicated city-like structure different volumes, each with its own internal structure, are integrated. Often there occur places where the structures overlap or, on the contrary, spring up unoccupied, ‘no man's’ places, undefined in form, which fall out of whole. And they ought to be also resolved. They should be assigned functional content and given a special characteristic corresponding to their intermediate status. In the Palace of Labour one can find the techniques of adjusting the structures of the radial-concentric core of the hall and the oblique-turned rectangular grid of smaller volumes. Circular surface of the foyer exits onto the street at the point where the rectangular grid breaks. And it’s solved as a kind of screen composed of small corners-partitions running in an arc. It allows expressing both circular motion and oblique-turned directions. Places of intersection and overlapping of the two grids are resolved as some kind of irregular and complex shaped rooms. Master thinks through the functional purpose of volumes and nodes and gives them conventional names:
block-staircase, stair-lift unit, colonnade, cloakroom, screen wall, column (or pilaster)-completion of the wall, etc.

**Materialization of forms. Tectonic arrangement**

Master transfers his design mythology to materials and building structures. Materialization requires a careful attitude to traditional and new materials and involves a search for the material synthesis laws. Stone retains the laws of harmonious form. Glass expresses openness, lightness, and it’s able to represent internal processes in an external image. He dreams of language of the reinforced concrete Parthenon, striving to realize maximum opportunities of new robust and plastic material. Tectonic building arrangement is extremely important for Golosov. In solving the construction, he takes into consideration the tectonic properties of individual forms and combinations, introduces a metaphor—building anatomy—and models the conditions of mutual subsidence and support of building parts (throws some concrete suitcases with holes on top of others). Tectonic structure seems to grow organically out of ground and prompts a number of comparisons: rough, airy, fortress-like. He conveys a keen sense of tectonics in terms of ecological optics: edge of structure, ledges, shelf, contrast motif, openwork ends, base (beginning), and completion. [6] Impression is of a rocky landscape that must be climbed. Particular structures in a structure, support or redistribute loads, hang, create architectural frames, etc.

He proposes a tiered construction for the complexes. Rules for the volume tectonic organization (especially in stone) are to lighten tiers upwards, to thicken the tiers downwards and to adjust the decor to the wall thickness. He often uses in projects a strong stylobate (podium – platform, artificial ground), which takes the tectonic load and restrains the possible volume sprawl.

**Inserting external details. Coding**

Developed sets of geometric forms are transferred to a colossal scale, starts to be seen as huge (macropsia). A fragment can replace the whole (pars pro toto), be incorporated into a wall like a precious relic (ancient Italian tradition), referring to a great construction in the past, making memory work and triggering overstatement effects. While elaborating on the volume two classes of detail are distinguished: organic and inorganic details. Organic details: columns, pilasters, balconies, bays windows, plinths, cornices. Such details (originally masses) are born by structure, grow out of it naturally and participate in the building tectonic structure and inseparable from it, connected with the function and general sense of the building (Massive, low columns for the Moscow Metro). Inorganic details are not derived from the building structural or functional need, but serve to decorate its structure, to finish it off, and also for the visual information and psychological impact, and to tell the viewer something else. Tasks of the inorganic details are to relieve or reduce the visual stress of the construction (bracket); to express in an artistic form the latent forces of the construction (camelure) or a decorative expression of its elasticity, massiveness (rustication, texture); to clarify the architect's idea, to correct or completely hide the inexpressiveness of a mathematically calculated construction (rustication and false rustication). [6] The external details include informative inscriptions on the façade (VOENTORG, UNIVERMAG, AZNEFT) designed like architectural volumetric forms.

*Organic* and *inorganic details* play the role of peculiar signs in coding information about the tectonic structure, building purpose and arrangement to be perceived by a viewer.
Influence of city-like structure. Involving in harmony

Entire variety of architectural and external images and meanings should be harmonized by architect in created city-like structure. This inner harmony must be, if not literally read or transcribed, then somehow perceived and experienced by the viewer, the building visitor. This process of perception is an act of synthesis – bringing entire constituent parts into one whole. First level of perception (City scale) is from a great distance, in an urban context, when the viewer is influenced by the overall volume, determined by overall positioning of its masses in the other buildings group. Structure silhouette, volume general character (grace or power) and direction of large mass striving, as well as volume interaction with the rhythms of surrounding life, are important. Second level of perception is from a closer distance (Street scale), with the focusing on its large parts and architectural masses, comprehension of their tectonic co-subordination, first assumptions about some volumes functional purpose and processes taking place in the building. When coming up to a building, the observer should keenly sense the contrast between the motion of people in it and the visible strivings of its single volumes. Third level of perception (Man scale) is from an even closer distance, when separate details, building materials, technical devices fall into the observer's attention zone. These level elements, unlike the relatively universal volumes of previous two levels, are more individualized, since they are linked to some individual perception and depend on a particular society.

Golosov poses the task of learning how to consciously draw a person's attention to an architectural object being created, how to skilfully direct his attention and thereby introduce the viewer to the harmony found in a city-like structure

4 Discussion

Analysts have accumulated a lot of materials, but they are often fragmentary and cover separate aspects of master's creativity. Present stage of the Avant-garde studies is marked by a transition from the primary collecting the materials to the comprehension of its way of self-reproduction and cultivation of special research methods appropriate for its interpretation. Our study is focused on the introduction of creative process dynamics into the treatment of master's spatial constructions, tracing the way in which a complete composition and city-like structure are created using Golosov's constructor and widening the circle of involved meanings and images. Special attention is paid to Avant-garde architect’s addressing to historical architectural realms, to the inclusion of architectural prototypes; historical forms while his creative process and their significant influence on the formation of architectural organisms. Major idea represented by the building appearance collecting and providing the basis for listed images and meanings is a spatial idea. Complicated city-like structure is designed to be perceived on three different levels and in a process of gradual transition from one level to the next.

5 Conclusion

As a result, it turns out that Avant-garde architect doesn’t break or deny, but mentally unscrews aggregate of historical forms to reintegrate the selected forms, in altered order, into the structure of new city-like complex. Hence, to harmonize his work architect returns to composition and tectonics and refers to the historical contexts from where forms originated, and they evoke reminiscences.
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