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GOLD AND KITSCH: USES OF GOLD AND KITSCH IN REM KOOLHAAS' PRADA FOUNDATION IN MILAN, LEADING TO ANOTHER VISION ON PETER ZUMTHOR'S ARCHITECTURE

In this paper, kitsch is defined in its relation to imitation (mimesis) and affect rather than being considered in a negative sense as 'bad taste'. Situating this understanding based on Walter Benjamin's and Theodor Adorno's definitions of kitsch, as well as Clement Greenberg's definition of kitsch and avant-garde, the aim of this paper is to show that the use of gold in architecture can be perceived as kitsch after the avant-gardes (end of the 19th century). By discussing the work and theoretical positioning of Rem Koolhaas and Peter Zumthor, the paper shows that two different manifestations of kitsch are possible: a 'literal kitsch' in relation to Zumthor, and a 'critical use of kitsch' in relation to Koolhaas. The reflection focuses on some aspects of their work, and develops an unconventional positioning, distinct from major theories about Koolhaas, and even more distinct from theories about Zumthor.

Looking at Rem Koolhaas' Prada Foundation in Milan (2005), the use of gold leaf suggests a conscious understanding of kitsch. Freed of an obvious mimesis of nature, his architecture cannot be considered as kitsch in a 'literal way'. His consciousness of the issues of modernism as utopia or ideal, and how they appear as kitsch after the avant-gardes, enables him to play with kitsch characteristics in a controlled way. By using gold in excess and making clear reference to Salvador Dali, he overcomes oppositions between utopia and anti-utopia. He plays with the symbolic of gold associated with ideality and sacredness of the new status of museums (linked with places of consumption and entertainment centres). As this building is a landmark in the city, this use of gold produces a critical position on the sense of the building, of the neighbourhood, and even of Milan as city. This critical aspect creates a thinking device out of architecture, initiating a playful although deep critical thinking process in the spectator's mind.

In comparison, many aspects of Peter Zumthor's architecture can be defined as mimesis of nature, in the smooth homogeneity of its forms and materials. In high contrast, Zumthor emphasizes on 'desire' and 'feelings' to achieve 'depth' and 'richness'. According to Greenberg's theory, this contrast makes some of his work, like the coexistence of natural stone and blue filters in the Therme Vals, fall into 'literal kitsch'.

Beyond the analysis of the work of the two architects, two concepts, which can be useful to analyze the work of other architects are defined in this paper: 'literal kitsch' and 'critical use of kitsch'.

Introduction

On the base of a definition of 'kitsch' and the 'avant-garde' by Clement Greenberg, the aim of this paper is to show that the use of gold in architecture can be perceived as 'kitsch' after the 'avant-gardes' (end of the 19th century). The work and theoretical positioning of two well known contemporary architects, Rem Koolhaas and Peter Zumthor, have been chosen. Their works are not commonly considered as kitsch, and the objective is to develop an unconventional understanding of their architecture. In the case of Rem Koolhaas, the analysis is developed specifically on the use of gold in the Prada Foundation in Milan from 2015, and broader considerations are then developed on his work. Through this building's roots in postmodernist architectural culture (pop imagery, use of decoration patterns, etc.), it is more easily related to kitsch than for the work of Zumthor. The term 'kitsch' is not used usually to describe Peter Zumthor's architecture, and an alternate understanding of his work is developed through this analysis. The comparison with Koolhaas is useful to develop this understanding of Zumthor's work. This comparison, while it does not purely refer to a use of gold, explores the use of other natural materials such as wood or stone and in particular, shiny ones as glass and metal.

The aim of this paper is to show how kitsch aspect of gold is used consciously by Rem Koolhaas in the gold leafed building of the Prada Foundation. His consciousness of the issues of modernism as utopia or ideal, and how they appear as kitsch after the avant-gardes,¹ enables him to play with kitsch characteristics in a controlled way. Freed of obvious mimesis of nature, his architecture cannot be considered as kitsch in a literal way. He plays on the kitsch aspect of gold by gold leafing an entire building, but in a distanced way. Theoretically, the comparison between the work of both architects will show that two different manifestations of kitsch are possible: a 'literal kitsch' and a 'critical use of kitsch'.

Clement Greenberg about Kitsch and the Avant-garde

On the base of the definition given by the *Oxford Dictionary*, kitsch is "Art or a work of art characterised by worthless pretentiousness; the qualities associated with such art or artefacts."² This is a negative definition that will not be adhered to. The definition of kitsch by Clement Greenberg is more subtle and can help to emphasise two ways of considering kitsch. To understand 'kitsch' means first to understand imitation (mimesis) in architecture and secondly to understand the role of affect in the perception of architecture. To understand the first aspect, it is necessary to make a resumé of the shift of aesthetics during the avant-gardes. Amongst the main aesthetic theories existing before the avant-gardes, one considers architecture as mimesis of nature (a building is constructed with natural materials, and techniques or even shapes are inspired by natural characteristics). Clement Greenberg explains how the use of mimesis after the avant-gardes can be kitsch in his 1939 essay *Kitsch and avant-garde*.³ During the avant-garde, a radical critique of *mimesis* was developed, which led to abstraction from nature and even complete disconnection from nature in the design process. This is the case for the arts in general, especially for architecture. This paper does not elaborate on this shift, since its origin lies prior to the end of the 19th century. Through this shift, focus is on the process of architecture as well as 'architecture for architecture's sake'. *Mimesis* is then considered as belonging to the past (before the avant-gardes), and this is still the case today. Dealing with *mimesis* becomes challenging: it can be considered as good taste when it takes into account the shift of the avant-gardes, but it is considered as bad taste when it does not⁴. When emphasis is put on *mimesis*, and especially *mimesis* of nature, architecture takes a risk in being kitsch in a 'literal' way. This process explains why the use of gold, as ideal natural material, can potentially be seen as kitsch. When nature is represented or taken into account in an idealistic way, it can become even more kitsch. Ideality in general becomes kitsch. Gold has a sense of ideality because of its durability (in opposition to natural materials that would decompose themselves) and of its shiny aspect, as do precious stones. This sense of ideality,

linked with its qualities to reflect light, makes gold a material to symbolize 'religious'⁵ and 'spiritual values'⁶. Gold has been cherished in the history of architecture for these values. These characteristics can lead to the kitsch aspect of gold in architecture today.

The reflective quality of gold is emphasized and this emphasis affects its perception. According to Greenberg, by emphasising affects, kitsch emphasises the effects of art. It prefigures art for the spectator and spares the effort (because an understanding of design processes is more difficult than having a direct sensation of architecture).⁷ This extends to the idea that gold can lead to kitsch architecture. When the material is itself mimicked, like fake gold, the mimesis is even more radical and it becomes even more kitsch.



FIGURE 1 Rem Koolhaas Prada Foundation Milan- copyright Stefano Bertolotti - flickr creative commons

Rem Koolhaas' Critical Use of Kitsch

How can the use of kitsch (and especially gold) be defined in Rem Koolhaas' work? As a comparison, the use of gold in Josef Maria Olbrich's *Secession Building* from 1897 (*Art Nouveau* is a return to *mimesis* of nature) puts emphasis on sensation, but it could not be affirmed that this later example is kitsch (keeping in mind that the avant-garde era had not formally emerged in 1897). There is no doubt that a shift in perception had happened when Hans Hollein used gold in the *Vulcania* building in 2002, and of course when the *Hotel Lisboa* in Macau was designed by DLN Architects in 2008. The excess demonstrated in this type of building is diverted by Rem Koolhaas to become an ironic use of kitsch, just as Salvador Dali's use of gold as a kitsch element provides inspiration for the architect. The aim is to show how the use of kitsch (and of gold in particular) in Koolhaas' is critical, and also excessive. By being in excess, it is critical. Both are linked.

Koolhaas plays with the sacred sense of gold⁸ in the *Prada Foundation*. In the contemporary era, and especially in occidental culture, even after the infamous announcement of the death of god by Nietzsche⁹, the use of gold in architecture keeps a profane sense of sacredness¹⁰. Museums have become places of worship. Koolhaas writes that shopping centres have become new places of devotion¹¹, as do theme parks (Koolhaas studied Disneyland). These ideas are more broadly shared by philosophers, from 19th century onwards. The *Prada foundation* is a mix of these three items, and the use of gold relates to these three senses of profane sacredness. The object of worship is also the Prada brand. Gold leafing at big scale gives the building the status of an object, and fetishizes architecture, as if the aura of Prada¹² would ‘turn things into gold’.¹³

But even if gold symbolises ideality, Koolhaas is clearly not playing seriously on the notion of authenticity. Gold is just a 0.2–0.3 µm thick fragile skin.¹⁴ It is just cosmetic, just a camouflage¹⁵. By covering the old building, it gives the impression of maintaining it in an ideal eternal state, but this idea shifts into nightmare when the spectator realizes that an old building remains underneath. Gold leaf is what makes this ‘zombie’ building look alive. This building has been defined as a ‘haunted house’¹⁶ by the architect. It can be taken for granted in the sense that has just been described. Through this unusual use of gold, in excess, on a whole building, boundaries between significations break: marvel and nightmare merge. The sense of gold from the castle of the princess and eternal life and beauty, is mixed with the castle of the witch or devil and its sense of death¹⁷. For Hermann Broch, “kitsch is the element of evil in the value system of art”¹⁸, and so is gold kitsch here. Koolhaas “intertwines poetry, vitality and death”¹⁹. He writes in *Junkspace*: “Some sections seem to be devoted to utter inertness, others in perpetual rhetorical turmoil: the deadliest resides next to the most hysterical”²⁰. In other words, the excessive use of gold (which is kitsch) leads to a critical point where usual symbols of gold merge with their opposite. This tendency is deeply grounded in Rem Koolhaas’ early work and in his theoretical positioning. However, it stands in opposition with the main characteristics of the *Prada Foundation*, which can more commonly be described as an elegant and minimalist architectural project, based on conceptual positioning about new hierarchies between rooms (mix of storage room and exhibition space for example). As a whole project, the *Prada Foundation* seems related to modernist architecture. The reflection of this paper focuses on a specific architectural feature of the project, which is the gold leafed building, and develops an unconventional positioning. This reflection is relevant if we consider Rem Koolhaas’ whole career and theoretical positioning.

The theoretical positioning about kitsch is at first in opposition with modernism, but the paradox is that the ideality of architectural modernism can be also kitsch, as seen in the introduction. An abstract building does not usually appear to be kitsch, because real matter and little defaults bring it back to reality. What appears as kitsch is a realisation of ideal modernity in its excess²¹. With erasure of differences, as excess, modernist utopia becomes kitsch.²² There is a theoretical explanation, for example by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer²³, of the short circuit between modernist rationality and irrationality. Koolhaas, even if he is not a philosopher, has understood that excess of rationalism in the explanation of the society through data leads to madness. It is in direct link with Adorno’s philosophy. Boundaries dissolve again: excess of idealistic modernism leads to kitsch. To play with this idea, Koolhaas uses kitsch (and gold) in excess²⁴, and this becomes a resistance to modernism. For Adorno²⁵, kitsch escapes the logic of the object and bleeds into an “economy of the senses”, a transformation that has radical implications for the critical and conceptual apparatuses of modernism²⁶. Affect becomes a tool of resistance against excessive abstractness²⁷. Through the intense sense of things, ‘kitsch’ is a resistance to radical modern architectural language.

Surrealism is the art movement for whom these boundaries shift, and this is why Koolhaas refers most preferably to surrealism when it comes to presence of the past.²⁸ Salvador Dali, and especially his use of gold, inspires him in the reach of ‘delirium’, ‘extasy’, and ‘sublime’²⁹, which lead to the ‘seduction of architecture’³⁰. It is in direct link in this case with the seduction of money, wealth, luxury through the use of gold³¹. The intense schizophrenia in Dali’s becomes point of erasure of differences. Kitsch is above any opposition between beauty and ugliness³², and is “beyond colour, texture, dulness” according to Fredric Jameson³³. At this stage of Koolhaas’ career, dichotomic opposition between modernism and anti-modernism through post-modernism are difficult to define. As Ian Buruma states, Koolhaas is constantly going through a ‘yes-no-yes’ process³⁴. After so many reversals of notions and styles in his architectural projects, dichotomy is difficult to define. Utopia is mixed with anti-utopia. He overcomes a schizophrenic situation of opposition between modernity and anti-modernity³⁵, by reaching a surrealist-like point of erasure of differences in some architectural features, and in our case with the use of gold.

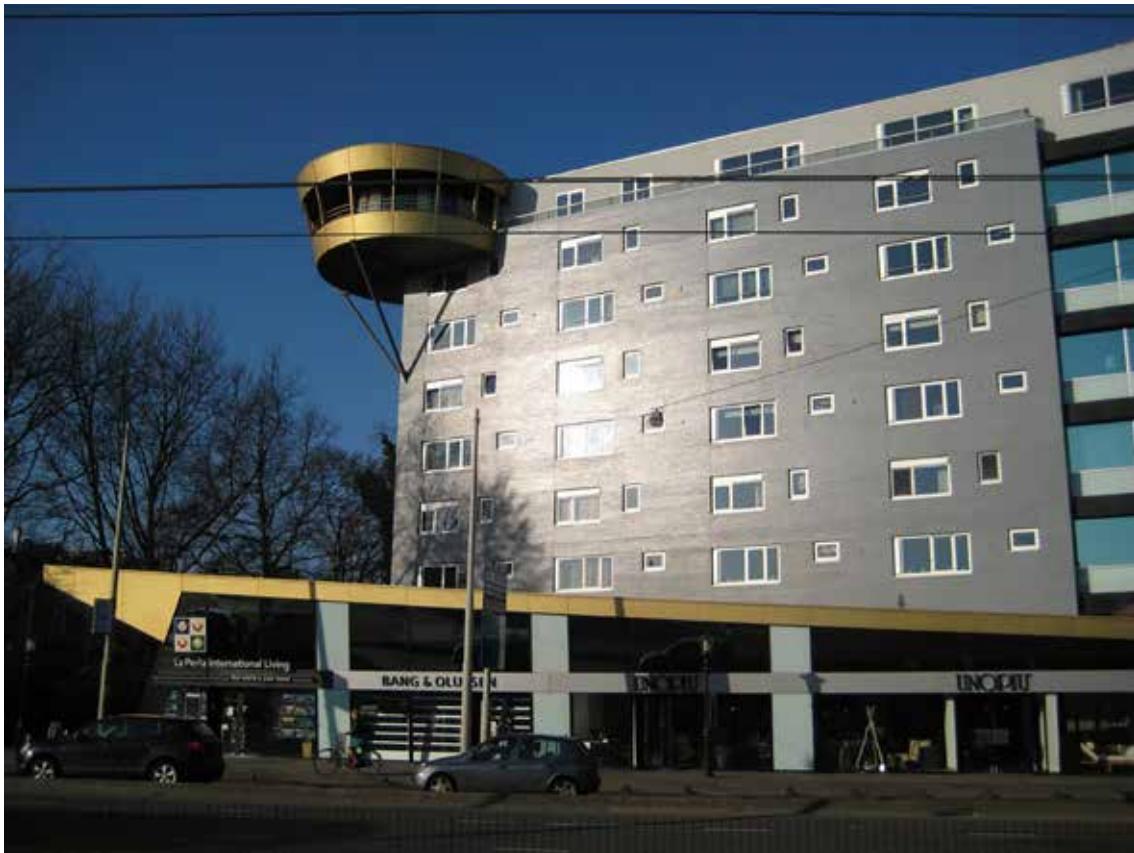


FIGURE 2 Rem Koolhaas Byzantium complex Amsterdam 1985-89 - copyright Rory Hyde - flickr creative commons

The use of kitsch by Koolhaas has become more and more critical during his career. At ease with artificiality through Dutch urban history, he has used kitsch in a humorous way in the '*Byzantium*' complex in Amsterdam from 1985-89³⁶, and thus escapes the literal aspect of kitsch. What could be seen as only one visible gold element in the '*Byzantium*' complex has a more complex sense in the *Prada Foundation*, where he plays more precisely with historical and aesthetic issues of kitsch. The main architectural tool he uses for that is a play with scale. Gold leaf is usually a practice at small scale. Big scale camouflage creates links with surroundings³⁷: the building becomes a landmark, and the sense of high value of gold gives it a potential of comparison with all surrounding buildings (in their value, status, sensitive characteristics in general). The play with scale in kitsch is a resistance to literal kitsch according to Walter Benjamin: "What we used to call art begins at a distance of 2m from the body. But now, in kitsch, the world of things advances on the human being."³⁸. Playing with big scale enables to escape the private sphere of the object (and personal affects related to the object), and makes architecture a common shared place again. To gold leaf a whole building lowers the strong affective aspect of the kitsch object. It could be seen as an application of Koolhaas' statement "enlargement=enrichment"³⁹. In his work, a pattern is often repeated to create a large surface, or an architectural element is treated at large size. The goal is to reach high spatial qualities through simple, radical and obvious choices. The analysis based on Walter Benjamin's essay shows how kitsch becomes less kitsch by enlargement. Let's note that this play on kitsch is also carried on through dialectics of materials. The gold leaf is set as contrast with old building materials⁴⁰, but also with the porous metal sheets of a new building. The extreme contrast between sharp metal or glass elements and porous green resin in Prada stores already a play on a wide range of strong sensations.



FIGURE 3 Rem Koolhaas - Detail of Prada Foundation Milan - copyright Stefano Bertolotti -flickr creative commons

The consequence of this use of kitsch gold on the display of works of art varies according to the art considered, and also according to the situation of the artwork in the *Prada Foundation*. An artwork situated inside the gold leafed pavilion or in visual contact with it would be directly affected by the choices of the architect. It is rare that literal kitsch artworks are exhibited in contemporary galleries like this one, but if it would be the case, it would appear in a more critical way. The critical use of kitsch in this building affects our perception, and the artworks appear as non literal in this environment. It means, on the contrary, that serious conceptual artworks for example could find their place less easily in the *Prada Foundation*. The gold leaf building also refers to the power of money and art markets today. An artwork that is not photogenic would have higher chance of becoming invisible in this environment. For some rare counterexamples, the artwork could appear on the contrary even stronger, as they resist the commercial and fashionable aspects of the *Prada Foundation* and its architecture. But this tension seems to be unlikely to happen.



FIGURE 4 Peter Zumthor Therme Vals - 1996 -copyright Trevor Patt - flickr creative commons

Revealing Kitsch Aspects of Peter Zumthor's Architecture

In comparison, many aspects of Swiss architect Peter Zumthor's architecture can be defined as *mimesis* of nature, in the smooth homogeneity of its forms and materials. His practice is commonly seen as based on authenticity of materials and shapes: "my building materials match the historically grown substance of the landscape"⁴¹. Emphasis is on materials taken directly from nature, like in the iconic *Therme Vals* from 1996. For Walter Benjamin, unicity creates aura⁴²: the aura of these baths attract people from all over the world to have the experience of it. Following the reflection of the introduction, this ideal of authenticity leads to kitsch (the 'authentic' is even part of *junkspace* according to Koolhaas⁴³). Peter Zumthor's architectural choices with regard to minimalism and abstraction relate to modern architectural history. More precisely, this minimalist architecture is led by the research of the 'factual'⁴⁴ and of simplicity, without using any superfluous useless elements. In a very contrasted way, Zumthor emphasizes 'desire' and 'feelings'⁴⁵ to achieve 'depth' and 'richness'⁴⁶. According to Greenberg's theory, this contrast makes some of his work, like the coexistence of natural stone and blue filters in the *Therme Vals*, fall into literal kitsch. Kitsch is not used in a conscientious and critical way, as no direct or indirect statement by Zumthor could show that is it made consciously. Zumthor has to deal publicly with these contradictions to defend the contemporaneity of his work (he might be conscious of the contradictions, but not of the historical and aesthetic issues of the tools he uses), especially during his Pritzker prize laureate speech. Remembering his most important architectural memories, he says during this speech: "Then I started to remember there were all these movie theatres in the streets, and they had a beautiful kind of feeling. They had a beautiful feeling when you got in. There was a really marvellous world of kitsch, really marvellous. And when you went down to the bathroom, the colours were yellow and black. And then all of a sudden, I realized there were this and that, and the balustrades, which had polka dots - polka dot kind of holes - and so on. So, I imagined that this must have been architecture. It was something special."⁴⁷ There is a gap between the fundamentals of his architecture and this statement made at such a decisive moment.



FIGURE 5 Peter Zumthor Bruder Klaus Field chapel - Mechernich - 2007 - copyright Laurence Kimmel



FIGURE 6 Peter Zumthor Bruder Klaus Field chapel - Mechernich - 2007 - copyright seier+seier - flickr creative commons

In Zumthor's architecture, the use of metals in strong contrast with smooth minimal concrete (or even more with rough concrete) creates strong affects. Much of his architecture shows these contrasts: the bright rays of light in the area of the old St Columba church; also the contrast between rough concrete with imprints of wood beams and the brightness of the glass pearls in the *Bruder Klaus Field chapel* in Mechernich from 2007 (The floor is an ambiguous material also, playing with the brightness of lead, but in an impure way, creating dark to dirty aspects). Affect is created especially by tactile qualities of natural materials. But nature is paradoxically linked and hybridised with artificial aspects of kitsch, like glass pearls. The fascination with nature becomes a fascination with the dream of nature. This strong emphasis on affect, even if based on natural qualities, develops kitsch aspects even more.

There is a return to moral qualities in Zumthor's architecture, like straightforwardness and modesty. The notion of *mimesis* of nature is dominant, and creates higher moral values, like faithfulness to nature. But as morality has been criticized in modern philosophy (by Nietzsche⁴⁸ again), Zumthor must counterbalance this excess of morality when he did a RIBA lecture in a surprising way. Answering a question about authorship, he said: "I stopped doing theoretical, abstract lectures, so I don't get labelled: 'Oh, he is a bastard. He lives like a saint in the mountains. He doesn't have sex. He works all day and prays all night' - all these stupid things."⁴⁹

Seeking an archaic past and a mythical relation to nature leads to kitsch in a literal way. Adorno criticized Wagner because he did succeed to create what Hegel thought was not possible anymore for art, i.e. a religion. And Nietzsche did criticize drastically the kitsch character of this religion.⁵⁰ When architecture tends to be mythical again, it becomes kitsch. This is working as well for myths of circulating goods, or myths of gossip magazines: they are kitsch dreams, parodic dreams.⁵¹

Conclusion

Following Clement Greenberg's definition of kitsch (grounded in Walter Benjamin's and Theodor Adorno's theories) in its relation with nature, some buildings by Peter Zumthor can be considered in some aspects as kitsch. Many aspects of his architecture can be defined as *mimesis* of nature, in the smooth homogeneity of its forms and materials or in its tectonics, like in the *Therme Vals*. Also, he charges architectural matter with affect and makes architecture desirable, with enhances the kitsch aspect, still according to Greenberg.

Following Theodor Adorno, it seems hard to escape kitsch. In the same way as what he says about art, the history of architecture can be seen since the avant-garde era as the history of the 'correction of architecture', in order to escape kitsch:⁵² A critical distance is necessary to be maintained towards *mimesis* of nature on one side, and also modernism, idealism and utopia on the other side, to be able to escape 'negative kitsch' or 'literal kitsch'. The possibility to have a constructive architectural proposal today, between utopia and anti-utopia, relies in a thin in-between. Through a critical method like the one developed by Rem Koolhaas, and through a free play with kitsch characteristics, architects might consider utopia and ideals without being kitsch in a literal way. In Rem Koolhaas' golden leaf building for the *Prada Foundation* in Milan, the kitsch use of gold is led with control and consciousness of the architectural historical issues of kitsch. His consciousness of the issues of modernism as utopia or ideal, and how they appear as kitsch after the avant-gardes, enables him to play with kitsch materials in a controlled way. By using gold in excess and in reference to Dali, he overcomes oppositions between utopia and anti-utopia. He plays with the symbol of gold associated with ideality and sacredness of the new status of museums (linked with consumption places and attraction centres). As a landmark in the city, this use of gold creates a playful and deeply critical thought process also on the becoming of the building, the neighbourhood, and even Milan as city. This critical aspect can create architecture as thinking devices, initiating a thinking process in the spectator's mind.⁵³

(Endnotes)

- 1 Theodor W Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, [1970] 2013).
- 2 'Kitsch' first gained common usage in the jargon of Munich art dealers to designate 'cheap artistic stuff' in the 1860s and 1870s.
- 3 Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review*, 6, no. 5 (1939): 34-49.

- 4 A painting of the Matterhorn before the avant-garde is not considered as kitsch (and the word didn't exist), but a painting of the Matterhorn after the avant-garde is considered as kitsch because nothing can equal the beauty of nature.
Hermann Broch, "Kitsch" (1933), in Gillo Dorfles ed., *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste* (New York: Universe Books, 1968). See also Hermann Broch, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch" (1950), in Dorfles, *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste*. According to Adorno, "The hardly esoteric judgment that paintings of the Matterhorn and purple heather are kitsch has a scope reaching far beyond the displayed subject matter: What is innervated in the response is, unequivocally, that natural beauty cannot be copied." See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*.
- 5 The reflection of light has a symbolical link to divinity in various religions. It is unconventional symbolising the golden light of the sun.
- 6 The shiny aspect of metal links it to the spiritual, as defined in Hegel's *Aesthetics*. See GWF Hegel, *Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 7 "Kitsch is synthetic art: it imitates the effects of art." See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*.
- 8 Koolhaas has a special ability to think his projects in historical terms, in its dialectic between obsolescence and renewal as it prevails in occidental architecture. See Okwui Enzewor, "Terminal modernity : Rem Koolhaas's discourse on entropy", *Considering Rem Koolhaas and the OMA* (Rotterdam : NAI Publishers, 2003), 115. This play with references from the past is not only visible in Rem Koolhaas' architecture, but more broadly in the postmodernist movement.
- 9 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1882] 2001).
- 10 Mircea Eliade, *The sacred and the profane: the nature of religion* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, [1957] 1987).
- 11 Rem Koolhaas, Hal Foster et al., *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping / Harvard Design School Project on the City 2* (Cologne: Taschen, 2002).
- 12 "Prada has aura without obligation. It is not burdened by one inflexible image." See Rem Koolhaas, "Glossary," *Prada* (Milan : Fondazione Prada edizioni, 2001). On "quasi religious environment", see Rem Koolhaas, *Unveiling the Prada Foundation* (Milan: Progetto Prada Arte, 2008), 30, 46.
- 13 Ian Buruma says humorously that the 'dutchness' of Rem Koolhaas makes him "turn mud into gold". See Ian Buruma, "The sky's the limit", *Considering Rem Koolhaas and the OMA* (Rotterdam : NAI Publishers, 2003), 60. For "Old has to be revitalised by new", see Buruma, "The sky's the limit", 70.
- 14 These membranes made out of nothing, 'covered' with gold, are against the principle of *firma*, as the bone structure disappears. Cf: Francois Chaslin, *Deux conversations avec Rem Koolhaas* (Paris: Sens & Tonka, 2001), 149. As Rem Koolhaas theorises it himself: "hold together by skin, like a bubble", junkspace features "only partitions, shimmering membranes frequently covered in mirror or gold". See Rem Koolhaas, *Junkspace*, October: *Obsolescence*, 100 (Spring, 2002): 175-90. He adds that junkspace would be "13% Roman, 8% Bauhaus, 7%Disney, 3% Art Nouveau and Mayan".
- 15 "The cosmetic is the new cosmic." See Koolhaas, *Junkspace*.
- 16 With "changing wallpapers and other interior design devices, generating a transformable 'domestic' setting for specific works." See Koolhaas, *Unveiling the Prada Foundation*, 54.
- 17 Francois Chaslin uses the words 'mephistophelic' and 'satanism' in Chaslin, *Deux conversations avec Rem Koolhaas*, 29, 88.
- 18 Broch, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch".
- 19 Matthew Stadler, "The story of K", *Considering Rem Koolhaas and the OMA* (Rotterdam : NAI Publishers, 2003), 129.
- 20 Koolhaas, *Junkspace*.
- 21 Like , for example, the grid of Superstudio.
- 22 "In its relation to art, idealism's eternity is unmasked as kitsch, to which he who clings to idealism's inalienable categories is consigned." See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*.
- 23 Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, [1944] 2007).
- 24 According to Fredric Jameson, "Rem Koolhaas delights himself from his own excess (and from the one of his world)". See Fredric Jameson, "Future city," *New Left Review*, 21 (May-June 2003): 73-7.
- 25 Theodor W. Adorno, "Kitsch," *Essays on Music* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).
- 26 Monica Kjellman-Chapin (ed.), *Kitsch: History, Theory, Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 18.
- 27 More generally a critique of capitalism in Benjamin's writings: "as the dream has decayed and failed with capitalism, we try to find a last dreamy aspect in objects". See Walter Benjamin, "Dream kitsch," *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility, and other writings on media* (Cambridge, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008 (original edition: 1925)).
- 28 Charles Jencks and Rem Koolhaas, *Radical Post-modernism and Content* (Cambridge: Academy Press, 2011).
- 29 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

- 30 Jean Attali, *Le plan et le détail – une philosophie de l'architecture et de la ville* (Nîmes: Jacqueline Chambon, 2001), 101-2.
- 31 As Koolhaas develops it in *Delirious New York*, the link with Salvador Dali is about the use of paranoid critic method to analyse the world, a city (Milan), a brand (Prada), the question of the museum and the private collection. It might all be mixed. “Junkspace’s modules are dimensioned to carry brands”. See Koolhaas, *Junkspace*.
- 32 Buruma, “The sky’s the limit”, 64.
- 33 Jameson, “Future city”, 73-7.
- 34 Buruma, “The sky’s the limit”, 63.
- 35 Chaslin, *Deux conversations avec Rem Koolhaas*, 37.
- 36 Koolhaas mentions Japanese kitsch. See Rem Koolhaas, *El croquis OMA/Rem Koolhaas 1987-1998* (Madrid: El Croquis Editorial, 1998), 51.
- 37 Neil Leach, “C<AMO>UFLAG”, *Considering Rem Koolhaas and the OMA*, 64.
- 38 Benjamin, “Dream kitsch”.
- 39 Koolhaas, *Prada*.
- 40 Carol Vogel, “The Prada Foundation’s New Arts Complex in Milan,” *The New York Times online*, 22 April 2015, accessed 19 May 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/26/arts/design/the-prada-foundations-new-arts-complex-in-milan.html?_r=0
- 41 Peter Zumthor, *Thinking architecture* (Basel: Boston, Mass.: Birkhäuser, 1998), 99.
- 42 Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.
- 43 Koolhaas, *Junkspace*. He talks also about a “simulation of virtual vigour” in reality, as “cyberspace has become the great outdoors”. A kind of aura is created through the simulation of cyberspace.
- 44 *Sachverhalt* in German.
- 45 Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*, 21.
- 46 Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres* (Basel, Boston: Birkhäuser, 2006). He mentions also in *Atmospheres* “a piercing radiance of tone colour” (page 19), mentioning “velvet, silk, all around me”, “a body that can touch me” (page 23), and in reference to Nietzsche, talks about “object’s bodily existence” (page 41) to be “a diva” (page 49).
- 47 Peter Zumthor, *Pritzker Prize Ceremony acceptance speech*, 2009, accessed 19 May 2016, http://www.pritzkerprize.com/2009/ceremony_speech1.
- 48 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 (original edition: 1887)).
- 49 Peter Zumthor, “Interview by Rob Gregory”, *The Architectural Review*, 225 (May 2009).
- 50 Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *Inesthetique & mimesis* (Fécamp: Lignes, 2010), 37.
- 51 “La musique en a fini radicalement avec toute forme de mythologie. Les ‘mythes’ de la circulation marchande, de la presse people, nous le savons, sont des mythes kitsch, des mythes parodiques. Tout ça se tient.” (Music got radically over any form of mythology. ‘Myths’ of circulation of merchandises and of gossip magazines are as we know kitsch dreams, parodic dreams. Everything holds together).
- Kacem, *Inesthetique & mimesis*, 39.
- 52 “The revolt of art against its a priori affinity with kitsch was one of the essential laws of development in its recent history, and it participates in the destruction of works. What once was art can later become kitsch. Perhaps this history of collapse is the history of the correction of art, its true progress.” See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*.
- 53 “A cryptogram of the new is the image of collapse; only by virtue of the absolute negativity of collapse does art enunciate the unspeakable: utopia” See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*.