

ARCHITECTURAL REFLECTIONS: AN AUTOCRITICAL ESSAY

We shape clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that holds whatever we want.

We hammer wood for a house,
but it is the inner space
that makes it livable.
(Passage of the Tao Te Ching, 11)

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Model houses made up of paper are the exciting objects that stick in my mind among the memories of my childhood. An image belonging to a model house made of pink paperboard for me by my father, the door and windows of which were carved carefully as it was hanged from its upright roof to the balcony with a help of rope... While the house turned around slowly in the wind, I kept an eye on it through its windows and gazed vacantly how the house began to be filled with life as the light moved around its walls and shadows grew longer. Afterwards, the warm, sincerity, unlimited possibilities of my buildings that I constructed and taped the walls, cut the windows, opened the shutters slightly, divided the rooms, and designed the interior decoration of which, having my finger prints provided more freedoms for my dreams compared to the games of toy houses made up of plastic in accordance with rules. Now, I can see that every space in which I could place my designs; cardboard boxes, wooden cases, empty shelves of commode functioned as a pot where I could install my dreams.

The Game

S.E. Rasmussen, in his book *Experiencing Architecture*, relation between people and architecture to their protection motives that can be seen apparently in the childhood and their needs to create a private space belonging to them: "Man's relation to implement can be broadly described thus: children begin by playing with blocks, balls and other things which they can grasp in their hands. As time goes on they demand better and better tools. At a certain stage most children have the desire to build some sort of shelter. It may be a real cave dug into a bank, or a primitive hut of rough boards. But often it is no more than a secret nook hidden among bushes, or a tent made with a rug draped over two chairs. This "cave game" can be varied in a thousand ways but common to them all is the enclosing of space for the child's own use... Man alone forms dwellings which vary according to requirements, climate and cultural pattern. The child's play is continued in the grown-up's creation".

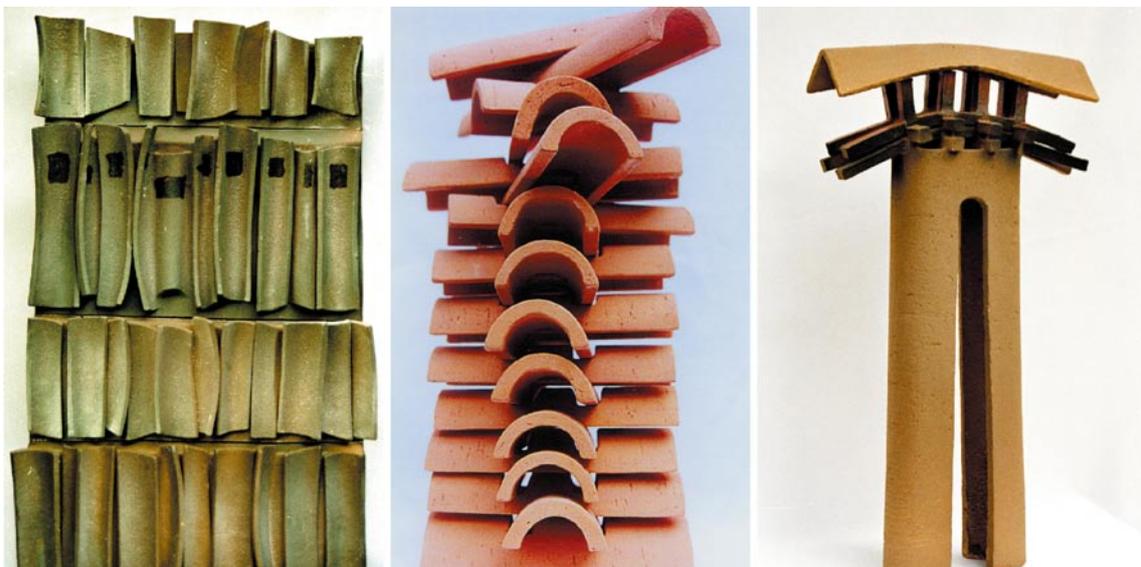
Also, I always think that a childish pleasure to play games is hidden in the relationship between an adult and clay. Moreover, acquaintance with soil is established in the childhood period in which people are satisfied with a sense of touch as much as possible as they began to be acquainted with the nature. We can see that every child, and even every adult, digs a pit slowly by hand while sitting on the beach. It is fun for a kid to scratch humid soil which is easy to dig. And, to begin construction by molding with cans after storing soil or humid sand dune on one side is a very common game for most children. As stated by Rasmussen, this game continues to exist in a branch of art that meets needs and creates emotional and aesthetical living spaces, namely architecture as called by adult people.



Architectures made of clay

Left: Adobe architecture. Part of reconstructed city wall of Hattusha, Turkey. (Dated at 16. century B.C.) Right: Adobe architecture. Draa Valley, Morocco

When I think about the beginning of my relation with ceramic, I remember that I have realized the fact that this forming style is not other than a construction of wall, regardless of function, special meaning, color or decoration of the design. For the phrase ‘ceramic is an art of creating volume’ that I have heard from my instructors during my workshop education in the school to gain a meaning occurred only after I started to create works having architectural effects. However, even a construction constructed with welding for metallic materials, casted from polyester, carved from marble or wood has a volume, and therefore what differentiates ceramic is only its raw material, soil. If it is due to technical reasons for the clay to be fired to have a certain thickness, does ‘this wall construction’ compared to other materials make ceramic art a technique having processes which is more difficult and needs rigor? The period having many question marks in which I get acquainted and live with the ceramic art gain a different speed with gaining a meaning of the emptiness created by a pot form.



Example pieces of the wooden architecture serie
Earthenware clay, handbuilt, 2000.

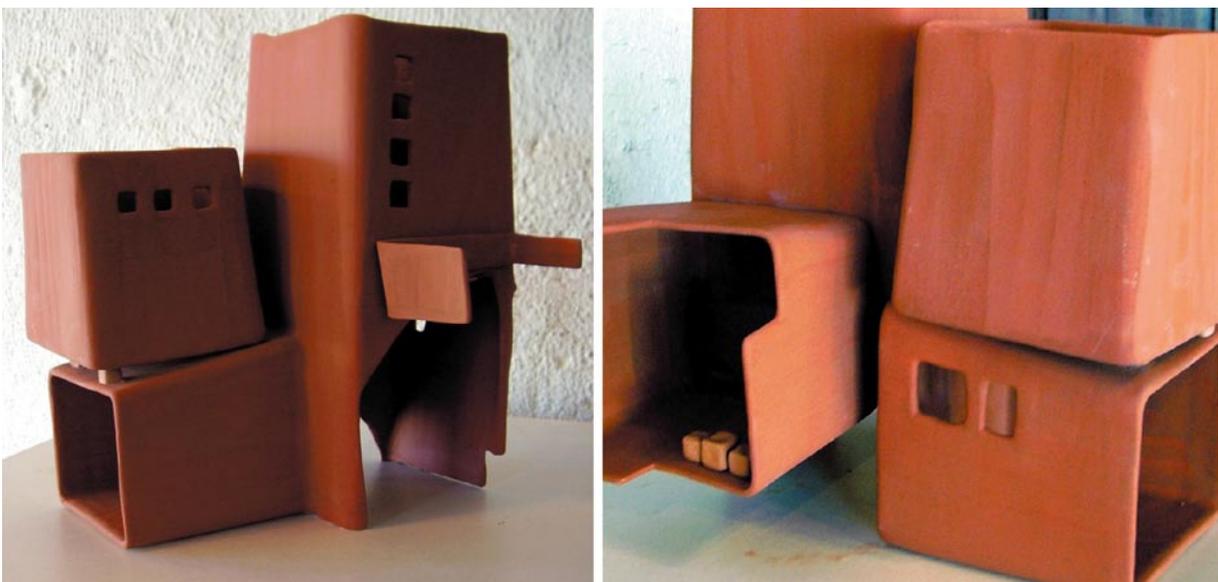
Architectural images

Considering local architectural qualifications which have been still preserved by theregions of Turkey having different climate conditions, there are examples for which wood;stone and adobe are used masterly. During my university years, I had many chances to seeexamples of traditional wooden architecture of Northern Anatolia, and then this let meexamine these construction systems with an artistic understanding and interpret it withceramic materials for my master thesis. The search on wooden architecture has turned out tobe a main exercise for me in my route that I have tried to catch in order to interpretarchitectural language with an understanding of ceramic.



Architecture of Cappadocia (Nevsehir, Turkey)

The effects reflected mostly to my ceramic works in the following years belong to thearchitectural structure of Cappadocia area thanks to my regular visits to Avanos which is aceramist town. This area which has experienced a geological structure and processes whichcannot be found anywhere hasa unique outlook. And, it is so exciting for the people who visitthis area for the first time to see this structure. This architectural image together withgeographical view that may become ordinary after a while for the people living here orvisiting here frequently hides many compositions for me which are always open fordiscovery.



“Avanos”

Slipcasted earthenware clay, 2007.

Lynch has written about looking at the town in the introduction of his book ‘the Image of the City’ as follows: “Looking at cities can give a special pleasure, however commonplace sight may be. Like a piece of architecture, the city is a construction in space, but one of vast scale, a thing perceived only in the course of long spans of time...At every instant there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored ” (p.1). The general pattern of Cappadocia area forming a mosaic along the hillside which is carved into the natural rocks of the region that can be easily worked up, the front sides of which are constructed by block stones, and which is seen as if they are meshed when looking from the outside... This pattern is a collage in which the terrace of a house is sometimes formed by the roof of another house, resembling a puzzle from a distance, and amaze with its complex and linked connections when it is seen from the inner side. For me, this image has been a pool of visual materials by which I can form my own collage by choosing the window, door, part of wall and a section that I want.



“Avanos 2”

Handbuilt earthenware clay, 2007.





Passages of the Architectural Collages Serie
Earthenware clay, handbuilt, 2010.

On The Way to Create Images

In relation to creating an image Lynch states that: “The environmental image is the result of a bidirectional process between the observer and his/her environment. Environment provides some differences and relations, and the observer – with clemency and in the light of his/her own goals – chooses, arranges what he/she observes, and gives a meaning to them. While the image that is formed in this way limits and highlights the thing which is seen, it is also tested against the perceptual information which is selected by filtering within the context of the process that has a perpetual effect. Therefore, an image belonging to a certain reality may be perceived differently by different observers” (p.6).

Sometimes, the shadow which is reflected to the wall from the window of my house, an arrangement of buildings in a street where I pass for the first time, an open volume of a house that is about to demolish as I see it while driving by, a wooden bridge in the village of Northern Anatolia, the blue skyscraper in Shanghai, a pueblo house in Mexico or adobe town walls of Hattusha before 16 thousand years can be reconstructed in my mind. The walls are formed by clay, and the inner space is filled with my own realities.



Example pieces of the Architectural Collages Serie
Earthenware clay, handbuilt, 2010.