The third formalism: A study on the Arter building in İstanbul

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Abstract

Two major formal approaches have governed architectural discourse over the last century: formal autonomy and formal engagement. While formal autonomy disengaged architecture from its social, political, cultural, and physical context, formal engagement of current architectural new-pragmatism hardly offered a critical evaluation of these contextual features. Another approach is possible, which we will name here as third formalism alluding to Anthony Vidler's seminal article "The Third Typology" (1998). This third formalism discusses the possibility of an architecture that realizes both the separation from and engagement with the external contextual conditions via the form. Without naming it as such, this alternative approach has been articulated by Pier Vittorio Aureli in his book The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture (2011). This paper aims at discussing this third alternative by analyzing the Arter building in İstanbul. Designed by Grimshaw Architects and opened in 2019, Arter's new building is located in Dolapdere, Beyoğlu, which witnesses a rapid urban transformation. Arter is a good example of the third formalism since its finite and definitive form neither directly follows the external forces of its urban surrounding nor disregards its context by solely focusing on the intrinsic formal elements of architecture.

Highlights

- The third typology and the third formalism in architecture
- Architectural autonomy and new architectural pragmatism
- Arter building in İstanbul as an example of absolute architecture

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Üçüncü biçimcilik: İstanbul'daki Arter binası üzerine bir inceleme

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Öz

Geçtiğimiz yüzyıl boyunca mimari söyleme iki ana biçimsel yaklaşım yön vermiştir: biçimsel özerklik ve biçimsel bağlılık. Biçimsel özerklik, mimarlığı sosyal, politik, kültürel ve fiziksel bağlamından koparırken, mevcut mimari yeni-pragmatizmin biçimsel bağlılığı, bu bağlamsal özelliklerin eleştirel değerlendirmesini nadiren sunabilmiştir. Anthony Vidler'in ufuk açıcı makalesi "Üçüncü Tipoloji"ye (1998) atıfta bulunarak bu makalede üçüncü biçimcilik olarak adlandıracağımız başka bir yaklaşım ise mümkündür. Bu üçüncü biçimcilik, biçim aracılığıyla dış bağlamsal koşullardan hem ayrılmayı hem de bunlarla ilişki kurmayı gerçekleştiren bir mimarinin olasılığını tartışır. Bu alternatif yaklaşım, Pier Vittorio Aureli tarafından The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture (2011) adlı kitabında farklı kavramlarla ifade edilmiştir. Bu makale, İstanbul'daki Arter binasını inceleyerek bu üçüncü alternatifi tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Grimshaw Architects tarafından tasarlanan ve 2019 yılında açılan Arter'in yeni binası, hızlı bir kentsel dönüşümün yaşandığı Beyoğlu, Dolapdere'de yer almaktadır. Arter, ne kentsel çevrenin dış güçlerini doğrudan takip eden ne de yalnızca mimarinin içkin biçimsel öğelerine odaklanarak bağlamını göz ardı eden sınırları tanımlı ve kati biçimi ile üçüncü biçimciliğe iyi bir örnektir.

Öne Çıkanlar

- Mimarlıkta üçüncü tipoloji ve üçüncü biçimcilik
- Mimari özerklik ve yeni mimari pragmatizm
- Mutlak mimari örneği olarak İstanbul'daki Arter binası

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INTRODUCTION

Anthony Vidler (1988) in his seminal article "The Third Typology", which was originally published in 1977, interprets previous modes of architectural production in reference to two recognized typologies: the primitive hut of Abbe Laugier and the mass production of architecture in Modern Movement as highly visible in Le Corbusier's architecture. Vidler (1988) traces the newly emerging third typology in the works of new Rationalists such as Aldo Rossi and the Krier brothers as a critical response to the first and second typologies. This third typology takes the city as the core of its reference rather than the abstract nature as in the case of Laugier or the technological utopia as exemplified by Le Corbusier (Vidler, 1988). While architecture was legitimized by external conditions in the first two typologies – namely the nature and the machine – the third typology validates itself through its own architectural and urban elements and their geometries (Vidler, 1988). Against the modernist city (or "the city in the park" as Colin Rowe (1978) named it), which is mainly characterized by freestanding objects on vast open grounds, this third typology identifies, selects, and transforms the typical forms of the city to cultivate its public life.

Type has been a significant concept in architecture since the Enlightenment and it "is interrelated with some specific issues such as the origin of architectural form, systematization and conceptualization of architectural knowledge and definition of creativity" (Bingöl, 2007, II). New rationalists identify type as the genetic code of architecture, which persists through time and; therefore, makes it possible to read and uncover the relationship between the individual buildings and the collective making of the cities. Vidler's text provides new insights into the relation between architecture and the city by identifying this new third position against the two preceding architectural approaches on type and typology. This article aims to make a similar reading by seeking the traces of third formalism since form is another generative concept in architecture, which have the capacity to react to the uneasy relationship between the buildings and the cities, between architecture and urbanization.

Adrian Forty (2004, 149), in his well-known book *Words and Buildings*, claims that "there is in 'form' an inherent ambiguity, between its meaning 'shape' on the one hand, and on the other 'idea' or 'essence': one describes the property of things as they are known to the senses, the other as they are known to the mind." Therefore, form has a critical capacity as long as it is associated not solely with the perceived and experienced material fact but with the idea, the core concern of which can possibly address the social, cultural, and political purpose of architecture. In this framework, we

introduce the third formalism as a critical response to architectural autonomy and new architectural pragmatism, which are identified here as the two governing formalist approaches in contemporary architectural theory and practice. This third formalism, similar to Vidler's third typology, focuses on the relation between architecture and the city to reclaim the public and hence the political character of the city through well-defined architectural form. Without naming it as such, this alternative approach has been articulated by Pier Vittorio Aureli. In his book *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, Aureli (2011) frames the notion of absolute in reference to various examples to show the possibility of an architecture that realizes both the separation from and engagement with the city through a critical formal consciousness.

Today, it is necessary to discuss architectural form again to uncover its potential as an epistemological model and a pedagogical tool (Anay, 2012). Most of the contemporary architectural works oscillate between detached, isolated object-buildings as promoted by the protagonists of the autonomy debate and buildings that only absorb and reflect the external forces as suggested by the new architectural pragmatists. However, a more critical and alternative understanding of form is necessary to readdress a sharpened architectural position towards the city and the public life that it generates. In this regard, this paper first discusses the shortcomings of autonomy and new-pragmatism in architecture as the paradigms of first and second formalism. The paper then introduces Aureli's absolute architecture as an alternative third approach that offers a new critical understanding of form by neither ignoring its context nor being shaped directly by its immediate forces. The paper finally examines the Arter building in İstanbul to unfold the possible design strategies and architectural elements for third formalism.

ON ARCHITECTURAL AUTONOMY

The debates on autonomy in architecture – "the belief that architecture is a self-contained project with its own legible, meaningful forms" (Osman et al., 2002) - can be traced back to the 1930s in the writings of Emil Kaufmann. Kaufmann analyzed the architecture of the late 18th century through the works of Étienne-Louis Boullée and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux and emphasized their formal consciousness as revolutionary (Kaufmann, 1952). Among the two, Boullée aimed to implement the basic geometrical forms in architecture and separate formal elements from the totality of the design (Boullée, 1976). He addressed an architecture that creates a particular character through the use of formal and spatial features with specific ordering strategies, such as repetition, harmony, and symmetry. On the other hand, according to Kaufmann, Ledoux's interpretation of form was different from that of Boullée. Considering Ledoux as the inaugurator of architecture, Kaufmann conveyed that he searched for a new system of relations for architecture; and acknowledged that this new system requires distinct alternative formal approaches (Kaufmann, 1952). While Boullée primarily focused his design on the formal elements of architecture, Ledoux was concerned with the strategies of these formal attributions and their effects on the built environment. In contrast with the differences regarding their perspectives, both Boullée and Ledoux claimed form as an essential aspect of architecture, hence aimed for an autonomous understanding of the discipline that focuses on its intrinsic formal qualities. As Vidler (2002) asserts, Kaufmann's studies on Ledoux's architecture established the foundations of autonomy in architecture. In addition to Kaufmann, Vidler (2008) introduced Colin Rowe, Reyner Banham, and

Manfredo Tafuri as key figures in establishing architectural autonomy through their historical narratives of modernism.

Autonomy discussion has resurfaced in the 1970s with the writings of Peter Eisenman and K. Michael Hays since the notion of form has become a central theme in their works (Corbo, 2014). Eisenman's work excluded the fictions of architecture - such as representation, reason, and history - in the architectural form-finding process (Eisenman, 1984). Separating architecture from these fictions generates an approach towards design that is primarily focused on the grammar in-between architectural elements (Fausch, 1996). This separation of architecture from the outer forces of the social, cultural, political, and physical context results in an "unmotivation" that dismantles previous modes of legitimation and their repetition (Eisenman, 2000). Such an approach towards autonomy enables the discipline to be self-referential and self-critical (Eisenman, 2014). According to Eisenman (2008, viii), autonomous architecture also offers resistant forms since "any internally generated forms that are part of a critical system in one sense could be considered autonomous, independent of social or market forces, while still offering a critique of these forces".

When compared to Eisenman, Hays presented a more nuanced stance by supporting semi-autonomy (Hays, 1984). In his influential article "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form", Hays (1984) proposed architecture both as an autonomous entity and a cultural instrument. He introduced a more balanced relationship between culture and form by arguing that semi-autonomous architecture is critical since it resists the "conciliatory operations of a dominant culture" yet being "irreducible to a purely formal structure" (Hays, 1984). According to Hays, critical architecture resists commercial forces while engages with the world culture. To elaborate, Hays (1984) gives the works of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as epitomes of semi-autonomy since Mies' architecture engages with the worldly situation without submitting itself to the authority of the pre-existing circumstantial forces. Therefore, Hays' semi-autonomy is not solely self-referential and resistant as proposed by Eisenman but also engaged and situated.

In 2002, *Perspecta* journal published a special issue on architectural autonomy titled "Mining Autonomy". Among the contributors of the issue, Stanford Anderson, similar to Hays, proposed a more in-between position by coining the term quasi-autonomy. In his article titled "Quasi-Autonomy in Architecture: The Search for an 'In-between'", Anderson (2002, 30) proposes autonomy as "the only way to avoid submersion in the material conditions of one's time". In discussing his in-between position, Anderson compares two approaches in architecture as "problem-solving" and "problem-worrying". According to Anderson (2002), quasi-autonomous architectural knowledge can grow if it "worries the problem" rather than searching for perfect solutions to well-defined and articulated problems. While most of the authors in the issue unfold the diverse histories and approaches on architectural autonomy (such as Hubert Damisch's article on Ledoux, Anthony Vidler's article on Kaufmann, and Diane Y. Ghirardo's article on Tafuri), Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting's article titled "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism" confers an alternative position, which later will be associated with the new architectural pragmatism.

ON NEW ARCHITECTURAL PRAGMATISM

At the beginning of the 21st century, neo-pragmatist architects attacked autonomy in architecture for isolating the form from extrinsic conditions. The proponents of new architectural pragmatism, such as Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting (2002), questioned K. Michael Hays and Peter Eisenman's "critical project" since "disciplinarity is understood as autonomy (enabling critique, representation, and signification) but not as instrumentality (projection, performativity, and pragmatics)". Against Eisenman, Somol and Whiting (2002) introduced Koolhaas to support their alternative position as a shift from disciplinarity as "autonomy and process" to "force and effect". Somol and Whiting set forth architecture as an instrumental practice by moving away from the criticality of the 1970s and 1980s autonomy discussions. Thus, they framed a projective architectural practice, which is more responsive to its external forces, and it is no surprise that their article was later included in *A Harvard Design Magazine Reader's The New Architectural Pragmatism*, a milestone book on the theme.

Published in 2007, *The New Architectural Pragmatism* positions architecture as a projective practice through the writings of architects and theorists, among others, Alejandro Zaero-Polo, Stan Allen, and Reinhold Martin. As clearly put in the book, proponents of the new architectural pragmatism "assault on something called 'the critical' or 'critical architecture,' usually accompanied by a collateral assault on something called 'theory'" (Reinhold Martin, 2007). In fact, Eisenman's critical project had a great impact on the new architectural pragmatists. As George Baird (2007) states "so many of the protagonists of the currently proffered alternatives to 'criticality' are former protégés of Eisenman, or at least figures at the edge of his circle. Stan Allen, Robert Somol, and Sarah Whiting all fall into one or the other of these categories." Therefore, with the new millennium, the governing autonomy paradigm in architecture is attacked by well-known figures and replaced by an alternative position of pragmatism. It should be noted here that one of the earliest attempts in framing and disseminating the new architectural pragmatism was the pragmatism symposium at MOMA, which was organized by Joan Ockman and Terence Riley in 2000. The outcomes of the symposium were later published in a book titled *The Pragmatist Imagination: Thinking About Things in the Making.*

Among other contributors of the book *The New Architectural Pragmatism*, architectural theorist and educator Roemer van Toorn's (2007) article expands the definition of projective architecture. Toorn (2007) discusses projective architecture in reference to the works of contemporary Dutch architects under three categories: "projective autonomy", "projective mise-en-scéne", and "projective naturalization". In Toorn's classification, "projective autonomy" is rather a "conventional or limited projective practice" with its meticulous use of crafted forms and types in combination with economic and functional requirements that can be observed in the works of Claus & Kaan or Neutelings Riedijk (Toorn, 2007). "In the projective mise-en-scéne, the city is one huge datascape" and architects such as MVRDV choreograph this data nonjudgmentally in order to create the spectacular décor for the everyday spatial experience of its users (Toorn, 2007). According to Toorn (2007) "Projective naturalization"; on the other hand, "allow matter to be performative" through the use of digital technologies as the works of NOX Architekten exemplifies. What is common for all these projective practices is a dispassionate acceptance and integration of reality in the making and representation of architecture.

The new architectural pragmatists aimed at achieving an engaged practice by accepting the effects of various forces such as multiple actors, technical means, and material conditions. Pauline Lefebvre (2017) argues that new architectural pragmatism offers a unique perspective within the governing post-critical thought of the century since it does not only focus on the "effects" of architecture but also considers the physical, social, cultural, and environmental "consequences" of the buildings. However; while autonomy of form disengaged architecture from its social, cultural, and physical contexts, architectural neo-pragmatism's engagement of form hardly offered a solid position regarding these external factors. As the new architectural pragmatists guiding figure Koolhaas' "fuck context" statement and his contested practice in Beijing (i.e., CCTV Headquarters) show, external contextual concerns can easily be overlooked to operate value-freely against the distinct social, cultural, and political situations of diverse contexts (Komez Daglioglu, 2020). Therefore, against these two major formalist approaches that have governed contemporary architectural discourse, namely autonomy and the new pragmatism, a third alternative is necessary to achieve both a critical and engaged architectural practice.

ON ABSOLUTE ARCHITECTURE

The third formalism, as an alternative to the autonomy of critical architecture and the engagement of new-pragmatism, can be found in Aureli's theorization of absolute architecture. Aureli (2009) is critical of many contemporary architectural works for transforming Vitruvius' architectural trilogy of commodity, firmness, and delight into a new millennial understanding, which he associated with structural complexity, formal redundancy, and image. He also directly criticizes Somol, the protagonist of the millennial new pragmatism in architecture. Against Somol's preference for shape over form, which Aureli referred to as shape-fetishism, he insisted that architects "must concentrate on the idea of form" (Aureli, 2004, 36). Although Aureli (2011) does not clarify the position of absolute architecture directly in opposition to neo-pragmatist theories, the idea of absoluteness refers to a combination of both formal separation from and engagement with the city and its political, social, and cultural aspects while resisting the capitalist economic organization. In this regard, Aureli (2008) revisits the autonomy paradigm in architecture to uncover the potential of architecture within and against capitalism. To do so, Aureli specifically distinguishes the project from the design since the former could engender a generative architectural structure while the latter rather refers to the act of building and producing. In this regard, Aureli supports the autonomy of the project against the autonomy of design. To Aureli (2011), understanding architecture as a project has the potential to identify an alternative idea of the city.

Against this background, in his book *The Possibility of Absolute Architecture*, Aureli (2011) separates the political from the economic and aims to reclaim form in architectural discourse and its political agency. He seeks the idea of absolute architecture within historiographical analyses of different architects, such as Andrea Palladio, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Étienne-Louis Boullée, and Oswald Mathias Ungers. Each one of these architects provides a series of projects that Aureli frames as absolute architecture. What is common in all these projects is their critical response to the city through well-elaborated and distinguished formal articulation. Douglas Spencer (2016) criticized Aureli's separation of the political and the economic since they are indistinguishable under the current conditions of neoliberalism and its economic organization. Moreover, Spencer (2016, 289)

states that the examples given by Aureli might well be "mediated by economics, by managerialism, by governmentality." Although it is not completely possible to distinguish the political from the economic in the current state of capitalism, Aureli's argument is significant to highlight the political agency of architecture through form by uncovering its definition as an idea instead of shape.

Aureli (2011, 46) argues that "architecture must address the city even when the city has no goal for architecture." This proposal requires an architecture that responds to the political, social, and cultural conditions of the city not through formal engagement but through formal separation. This separation is not as exquisite as that of autonomous architecture, rather it distinguishes the architectural object from the existing context of the city since Aureli believes that a critical engagement is only possible via separation. Therefore, the third formalism, which we identify here in reference to Aureli, focuses on the notion of form as an instrument for reclaiming the idea of the city and its inherent public and political character. According to Aureli (2011), to achieve such an architecture, a form needs to be defined with certain boundaries and limits. In other words, the cultivation and manifestation of the political and public character of the city can only be achieved through rigorous formal consciousness. Although this position displays similarities with architectural (semi)autonomy, Aureli's position departs from the former formalist approaches since his preeminent aim is to revive the forgotten architectural project of the city (Aureli, 2013).

Aureli's analysis throughout the book contains various works in diverse scales by different architects, each creating their perspective on architectural form and the possibilities that it generates. For instance, Palladio's ideal Renaissance villas are not just enclosed objects but specific interventions that reframe the geopolitical encounter with the city (Aureli, 2011). Piranesi's cartographic map of Rome Campo Marzio depicts the ruins to generate the city after its demolished architectural fragments; therefore, aims to establish the idea of Rome by using the very architectures that had been part of it throughout history. Boullée, on the other hand, uses the form as a critical element for his projects, such as the National Library. He covered the courtyard of the building in Paris to develop a sufficient space for the books and the public, thus the building is different from the rest of the city while maintaining its rigorous formal affinity. Finally, Ungers' project for Berlin as a Green Archipelago illustrates the idea of a city that is a collection of its architectural parts. With these works, Aureli emphasizes the idea of a project and a series of architectures that collaborate within the city. Only by establishing such architectures, it is possible for projects to participate in the city and to assert absoluteness via its form.

Aureli (2011, 37) exemplifies limited form through Mies van der Rohe's articulation of plinth in his architectural works such as the Seagram Building, the Barcelona Pavilion, and the New National Gallery in Berlin. The plinth in Mies' designs both separates and relates the building to the city. It organizes the relations not only on the plinth but also that are outside of it. Mies' use of plinth in architecture establishes a finite boundary within the very urban conditions of the city and creates a particular definition between architecture and its physical, social, and cultural environment. As a result, the notion of limit generates both isolation and engagement with the city. Consequently, the idea of limit becomes a precondition for the project through both separation and engagement, which eventually leads to absolute architecture. Mies' use of plinth is an exemplary case of deliberate elaboration of architectural form, the underlying concern of which is the city at large and its transformation. We argue that Arter in İstanbul could be a significant contemporary example to

discuss what Aureli suggests as absolute architecture and what we define as an alternative new approach to architectural formalism.

ON ARTER

Figure 1 - Arter from the Dolapdere Street (Photographed by the authors).

Arter was opened in 2010 as an art gallery in İstanbul's famous Istiklal Street and moved to its new building recently (Figure 1). Arter's new building is designed by Grimshaw Architects, a London-based studio, and opened in 2019 as the most anticipated contemporary art museum in İstanbul. The museum aims at contributing to the city culture through exhibitions, events, and programs (Özden, 2020). Kirsten Lees, the project's principal architect, defines Arter as a "vibrant cultural hub" that brings together public and contemporary artists (Pintos, 2020). Lees explains that the design and construction of the building was an interdisciplinary process since local specialists and consultants from İstanbul like Turgut Alton Architects were part of the team. The building includes performance halls, exhibition spaces, a library, a bookstore, and a café. Arter's main formal organization aspires to generate accessible public spaces in and around this new cultural hub of the city while offering a distinguished form (Pintos, 2020).

The new Arter building is located in the Dolapdere neighborhood of İstanbul. Dolapdere is part of the Beyoğlu district and very close to the Taksim square. This neighborhood mostly consists of housing units and shops with a small-scale traditional architectural characteristics. However, these houses are in a very poor condition today and the residents are mostly day laborers with low incomes (Akalın, 2003). People from diverse ethnic groups are living in the area and the population profile of the neighborhood is subject to change due to the vast migration to the city (Akalın, 2003). In addition to the poverty, and neglected buildings and infrastructures, residents and visitors find the area unsafe mainly because of the drug sellers (Baltacı & Karataş, 2021). However, Dolapdere has been rapidly transformed in recent years due to its strategic location in the city center. Many new art galleries such as Gaia Gallery, Pilevneli Gallery, and Evliyagil Museum are located in this neighborhood and transforming the area into a new art center. These museums and galleries intensify the process of gentrification which have both negative and positive impacts on the

residents (Ergün, 2022). Arter is located in this very complex site where old and new, public and private, contemporary and traditional meet with each other. Building's front façade faces Irmak Caddesi, the main street of the Dolapdere neighborhood (Figure 2). Irmak Caddesi has faced urban regeneration due to its very central position in the city and became a significant tourist attraction with new galleries, hotels, and shops. Now, each side of this street is occupied by both old and new buildings and creates a distinct heterogeneous urban fabric. While Arter's front façade is facing such a rapidly transforming urban axis in the city, the backside of the building is surrounded by small-scale housing units and shops in poor conditions (Figure 3).

The architecture of Arter can exemplify possible architectural strategies of third formalism. The overall form of the building looks like a detached box that contrasts with its surrounding. However, a detailed analysis of its formal configuration shows that it indeed responds to the various aspects of its context and the city at large while also creating a clear boundary with its finite form. The urban context that surrounds the building becomes the essential aspect of the design, which Arter celebrates through its architectural features and distinguished limits of its form. The building connects to its urban surrounding with a fluid and adaptive continuation of outdoor and indoor public spaces while also separating itself with its definitive boundaries.
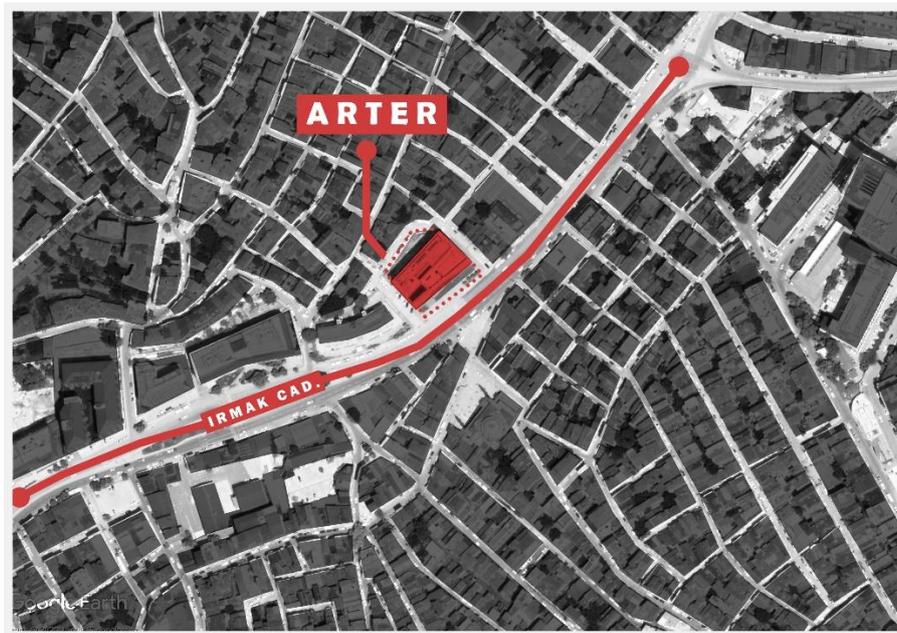

Figure 2 - Map showing Arter and its urban context (Developed by the authors).

The overall form of Arter consists of three interrelated blocks: the base block that allows the physical and visual access between inside and outside, the upper-middle block that consists of the main programmatic elements within its enclosed prismatic volume, and the upper terrace that opens the building to its surrounding urban context (Figure 4). These three blocks are the result of Arter's fragmented form, which destructs the perceived "white box" into distinguished parts. While the entrance block is where the building engages with its surrounding through the continuation of the outer public space as an interior street within the building, the definitive closed white upper block contradicts its surrounding. On the top, the terrace block starts to dismantle into smaller

parts; thus, creating new visual and experiential relations with the city. This fragmentation of blocks responds to the external forces of the city and its physical aspects (such as the building sizes, vistas, and access routes) while simultaneously being separated from them. In fact, these blocks do not have clearly marked boundaries in the interior organization of the building. There is rather a continuous flow and movement between the layers and the spaces. However, the destruction of the white box through the fragmentation of the blocks can directly be perceived from the outside and affects the experience of the building volume. The size of the front façade fits its neighboring buildings since the terrace block recedes at the top whereas the building height increases at the back and creates a sharp rupture with the scale of the surrounding fabric.

The distinction between these three blocks is further elaborated by the use of different materials in the façade. The entrance block is covered with glass and solid ceramic cladding to emphasize the institutional character of the building. The upper block is covered with white 3D glass reinforced concrete panels. Parts of these panels in the front façade are permeable in order to provide light and controlled visual access by turning into a filigree-shading screen. Offices at the terrace block are covered with a glass façade. The most distinguished element of the building is its panel claddings since it creates a textured surface in the building's envelope. These panels create almost blank surfaces on the side and rear façades while creating a playful visual experience at the front façade both from the interior and exterior. Therefore, the engagement of the building with its surrounding is well-articulated in the front façade whereas the rear façade creates a clear boundary with its height and degree of enclosure.

Figure 3 - Front façade of Arter and its relation with the surrounding (Photographed by the authors).
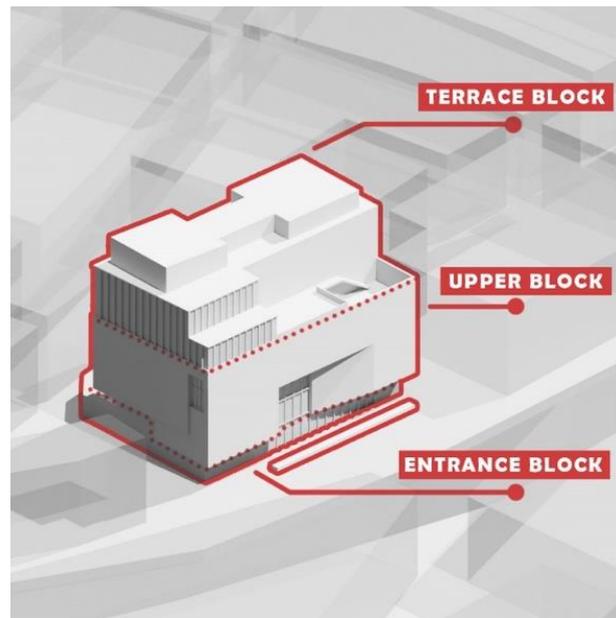
Figure 4 - Analysis showing the blocks of Arter (Developed by the authors).

The podium on the ground level of the building provides both formal engagement and separation of Arter. The building creates a public space in front by receding from the Irmak Street. This wide open space is significant since the surrounding buildings along the Irmak street leave a very narrow space for the sidewalks. Therefore, this open space in front of the building could work as a significant node that can be transformed into a vivid public square. Thus, similar to Mies van der Rohe's articulation of the plinth in his projects, the building of Arter introduces its podium, which consists of the frontal and rear parts of the project, as a single plinth that surrounds the building. With the podium, the building realizes a unity on the ground level between the city and the interior of the building (Figure 5). The limits of the podium also create restrictions that obstruct the accessibility of the building due to the decorative pool that stretches along the front façade (Figure 6). However, the pool also contributes to the vividness of the public space in front since not only the visitors but also the passersby sit and rest on the banks along with the pool (Figure 7). Therefore, the border of the podium, namely the edge of the pool, turns this space into a real public square where diverse people gather and experience the surrounding urban fabric. When the density of the city of İstanbul and the scarcity of the city's public spaces are considered, the articulation of the front podium creates a significant stopping place in this dense neighborhood.

On the other hand, the rear side of the podium, which directly faces the housing units around the building, does not allow physical interaction between the building and its surrounding, and thus alienates Arter from the rest of the existing urban fabric (Figure 8). The bushes and the fences create a clear boundary where both the visual and physical access to the street has been blocked. Therefore, the large open space created at the back of the building as the continuation of the café just turns into an empty space with very limited use. It is necessary here to remind the difference between the border and boundary as the urban sociologist Richard Sennett articulates in his Open City argument. Sennett (2019, p. 127) claims that "the boundary is an edge where things end; the border is an edge where different groups interact." In this regard, the front podium of Arter works

like a border whereas the rear podium is a boundary where there is no possibility for any kind of interaction. To sum, the podium does not equally operate on the front and rear sides of the building. While the front part of the podium both unites and separates the building and the city with a similar strategy to Mies' plinth, which was introduced by Aureli as a prominent example of an absolute architecture, the rear part of the podium separates the building from its surrounding without the intention of integration.
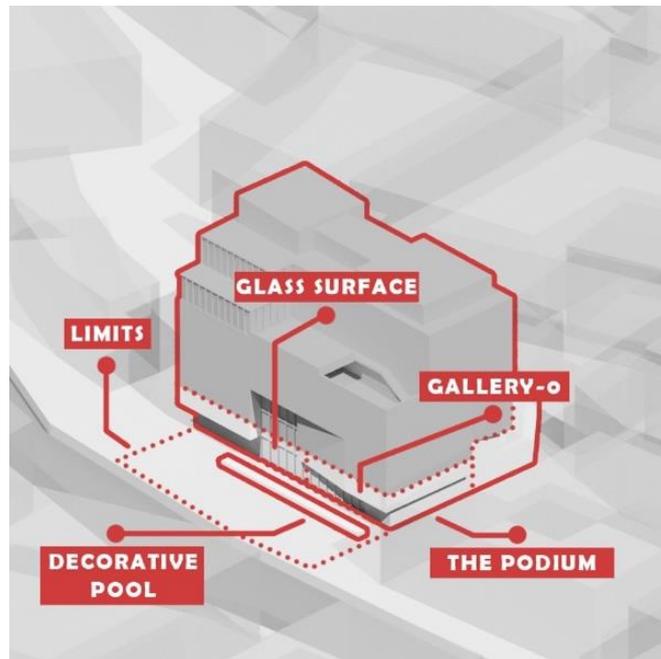

Figure 5 - Analysis showing the podium of Arter and its surrounding elements (Developed by the authors).

Figure 6 - The limits of the podium of Arter (Photographed by the authors).

Figure 7 - The front podium of Arter turned into a public space (Photographed by the authors).

Figure 8 - The limits between the surrounding urban context and the rear part of the podium of Arter (Photographed by the authors).

The idea of an absolute architecture, which seeks integration and engagement with the city through its separation from it, is clearly visible in Arter's use of frames in its form. Arter provides three frames in its envelope in order to create a physical, visual, and perceptual interaction with its urban surrounding (Figure 9). These three primary frames are on the podium, the exhibition spaces, and the terrace. Each one of these frames responds to distinct conditions in the project. For instance, the podium frame and the exhibition frames illustrate how the city infuses into the interior of the building through big transparent surfaces. The roof terrace, on the contrary, presents a different articulation of the idea of the frame (Figure 10). Rather than being shaped horizontally as it does in the podium and the exhibition spaces, it extends vertically towards the exterior. The terrace

becomes an elevated recreation space within the building through this vertical frame. As a result, this terrace frame enables the visitors to observe and experience the city from the top and creates a visual and experiential connection between the city and the building.

The way that Arter develops its formal qualities resonates with the approaches of Boullée and Ledoux as discussed above in reference to Kaufmann. Even though the form of the project does not imitate the approaches of the "revolutionaries" by using symmetry and repetition as the main principle for design, the building creates a formal unity of its distinctly articulated architectural elements. Moreover, the form of Arter simultaneously resists and absorbs external forces and thus contrasts with the paradigms of new architectural pragmatism and architectural autonomy. While the totality of the form of Arter is divided into three blocks and provides fragmentation and connection, the podium creates both separation and continuation between the building and the city. Frames create both a transparent boundary but also enable visual access. In. consequence, with these blocks, podium, and frames as its primary formal features, Arter becomes a project in Aureli's use of the term. As a project, the building provides a generative architectural structure that reclaims the idea of the city and its public life through its well-defined bounded form. With its rigorous formal articulation, Arter shows the aspects of both autonomy and engagement and thence, represents the possibility of a third hybrid alternative approach.
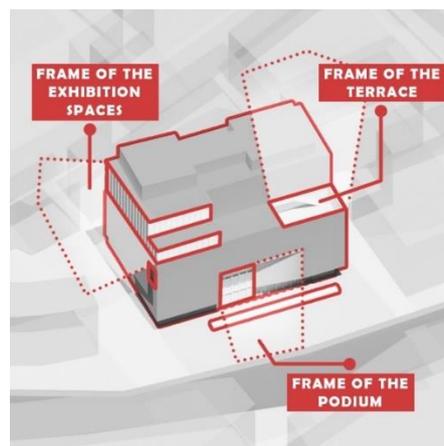

Figure 9 - Analysis showing the frames of the building (Developed by the authors).

Figure 10 - The view from the terrace frame (Photographed by the authors).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although Arter's total form is perceived as a "white box" that ignores its urban surrounding by creating a clear contrast, the building, in reality, reinterprets and transforms the external forces acting upon it. It critically responds to its site conditions and to the city at large. Therefore, Arter is an appropriate example of the third formalism since its finite and definitive form neither directly follows the external forces of its urban surrounding nor disregards its context by solely focusing on the intrinsic formal elements of architecture. Its form both separates itself from and engages with the city through the articulation of architectural elements such as the fragmented blocks, the podium that surrounds the building, and the transparent frames. As Aureli suggested, form is a precondition for both separation and integration. Therefore, Arter offers another possibility in architecture to reclaim form without submitting itself to disciplinary autonomy or the neo-pragmatist thought. The building becomes a project for the city with these qualities and represents what we suggest here as the third formalism. In this regard, it supports the possibility of absolute architecture by simultaneously being critical and engaged even though some of its strategies fail such as the inaccessible rear part of the podium.

Third formalism, as discussed through the theories of Pier Vittorio Aureli and analyzed in reference to the architecture of Arter in İstanbul, offers new insights into an architectural form by offering a hybrid position between autonomy and new pragmatism. On the one hand, this third formalism differentiates itself from the formalism of autonomous architecture, which solely focuses on the intrinsic formal relations of architectural elements, and the formalism of new architectural pragmatism, which absorbs external factors in its form without a critical political and social consideration. On the other hand, third formalism is both critical, like autonomous architecture, and engaged, similar to new architectural pragmatism. Moreover, the ultimate significance of the formal consciousness of this third formalism lies in its immanent search for reclaiming the idea of the city and its original political character. In this regard, it is highly analogous to Vidler's categorization of the third typology, proponents of which also aimed at cultivating the political and the public life of the city by reinventing its typical architectural and urban elements. We believe that rearticulating Vidler's ideas on third typology 45 years after with a fresh new discussion on an architectural form would open many novel perspectives on the relation between architecture, its form, and the city.

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A. Fikir / Idea, Concept	B. Çalışma Tasarısı, Yöntemi / Study Design, Methodology	C. Literatür Taraması / Literature Review
D. Danışmanlık / Supervision	E. Malzeme, Kaynak Sağlama / Material, Resource Supply	F. Veri Toplama, İşleme / Data Collection, Processing
G. Analiz, Yorum / Analyses, Interpretation	H. Metin Yazma / Writing Text	I. Eleştirel İnceleme / Critical Review

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