

## THE MONUMENTAL ART OF MOSAIC AND THE CONTEXTUAL ARCHITECTURE

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### Abstract

*The Art of Mosaic gives a special meaning to the architectural city environment with which it relates. Both secular decorative and ecclesial art of spiritual meaning, considered as a whole - contribute to the citizens' increased comfort. The monumentally art-message can have an important decorative meaning, a cognitive one, a funeral-related one or it can act as a marker of important historical moments.*

**Key words:** *architecture, art-message, decorative, monumental art, mosaic, structures.*

Visual monumental Art is common to developed societies of all time. It's become a mirror of the era, reflecting the material and technical resources or the spiritual and artistic taste of the society in question.

Monumental art is created for people in urban settlements, being in close connection with the architecturally attributes.

According to E.E.Lansere (painter), monumental character means greatness, grandeur of expression, to emotional feelings. In its particular forms, the monumental character can be recognized in the architectural structures, the monumental sculpture or relief, in wall painting, stained glass, mosaic and the like. Its artistic message may refer to the funerary and memorial buildings with a decorative character, a cognitive one or marking an important historical moment. In this context, we can mention some monumental art characteristics: simplicity, clarity, unity, integration, grandeur, vastness.

Monumental art is linked to the whole architectural structure, having a purely decorative role (wall painting) or being overlapped as an underlying structure (mosaic). The effect of this art endeavour is the symbiosis between the fine art (wall painting or mosaic art) and architecture.

The relation between mosaic art and architecture gives birth to monumental art – a decorated space, an area including the medieval art of Byzantine mosaic.

The monumental wall painting includes a spectrum of types, such as: fresco, secco painting and the art of mosaic. All these types of art have some common features:

- a major social character;
- decorative qualities in shape;



*Image 1: Herculaneum, Italy, II-nd century A.D.  
The Dionysos and Amphitrite Gods ensemble.  
Wall mosaic art, polichromy with tesserae - small  
coloured glass pieces to reflect the vivid colours  
and the light*

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*Image 2: Herculaneum, Italy,  
II-nd century A.D.  
Contrapost, Amphitrite, detail*



*Image 3: Basilica La  
Martorana, Palermo, 1143.  
Interior. Ascendent  
perspective of the vaults*

- they operate with space arts specific principles.

There is also a crucial distinction between:

- the monumental works of art designed to create a cognitive and enduring architectural and spatial environment;
- the applied decorative art temporary shaping the environment, as a specific character of a holiday or an art-exhibition.

The artistic concept, methods and artistic expression of such art genres vary. So:

- for the temporary decoration of a space (in churches, exhibitions and the like), strong and expressive methods are required;
- the development of an enduring environment requires principles, methods and means allowing harmony, calm, quiet, a permanent communication intended in different (mostly spiritual) moments.

We notice the general criteria of all works of monumental art:

- permanent existence in the real environment of a company;
- the connection of the monumental art work;
- to the ideational complex of the era;
- to the architectural space and the specific environment.

Philosophically, the monumental art work could be the correlation between humanity and its environment.

The wall monumental art tradition includes techniques as: fresco, mosaic, sgraffito, egg tempera and, more recently, the acrylic and electronic technologies specific techniques. Each artist designs his monumental structures, in the area of secular or religious architecture of his time. The conceptual topics are accessed as aspects of the final transposition to the support of the project.

Transposition technologies and techniques imply appropriating traditional techniques of wall painting (Byzantine frescoes and mosaic, sgraffito, tempera on fixed/mobile supports and the like).

The techniques of representation in mosaic, predominantly two-dimensional, contain technological directions for achieving a specific monumental art composition.

In wall art, the colour is combined with drawing and composition, thus helping to enhance bi-and tri-dimensional art project, necessary to model a designed environment.

The composition in wall art requires knowledge of specific art techniques and creative abilities of the artist - the creator of original compositions, with aesthetic values.

Thus it shows the technical compatibility of theme composition with monumental architecture context.

The electronic Arts published by new media reconfigure the panoply arts, displaying forms of artistic expression such as: the art of light, Laser, Hologram-Ambient/ electronic environment, Video, Computer Art, Net Art, Communication Arts, Sky Art.

New media has found its purpose in architectural monumental interior and exterior structures with electronic aesthetic functions, but also providing information in line with the needs of the users of the communication area (halls of banks or hotels, conference halls, parks, stadiums, walls in the markets and the like). Digital image is processed using current graphics programmes (Corel Draw, Corel Print Office, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premiere, 3Dmax, and the like).

There are specific requirements for documentation on applied aesthetic concepts, proposals for presentation options (animation, virtual integration, digital collage, editing and digital processing and the like). Then, artists transpose the compositions in material. These works placed in public spaces complement the aesthetic achievement of a city environment.

In general, we consider that monumental art finds its expression in a significant place of a community; it is considered a source of power or, by its very presence, it may become a sacred site that you marked. The monumental art work can be assessed in an architectural framework of a city, or in the natural environment.

According to V.P.Tolstoi, the monumental art, as space art, can be schematically represented through successive positions – architecture, sculpture, painting, graphics, decorative and applied art and scenography. If architecture and scenography become adjacent, thus, both make the specific shaping space (the environment) to all the genera presented graphically.

The genres of space art can be divided into three sub-fields:

- area of easel art subject;
- monumental art;
- decorative art area, to cumulate both functions, artistic and utility.

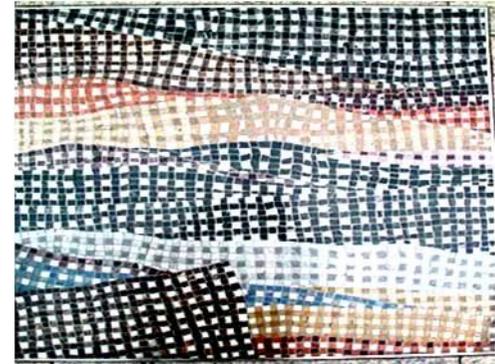
Monumental art takes over processes and collects from each of the above-mentioned genres, those characteristics that contribute to the imposition of its essential purpose, the artistic and plastic structure of the stable environment. If monumental art is intertwined with the genus pictorially, that generates sub-genres of their monumental arts of space, such as: wall painting (fresco, a secco), mosaic art and the like.

The monumental art work (a mosaic, fresco, architecture and the like) has a functional character, on different structures, but decorative easel works have mainly an aesthetic character.

Mosaic-art, as a sub-genre of monumental art, results in dint of practical art work, the monumental structure being overlapped on support. A result of this physical effect overlays recall strengthen and waterproofing of the structure.

In general, the mosaic-art project has a larger size and the drawing shows a certain flexibility within the given line.

If the picture is framed rectangularly, the frame sides appear in varying degrees of contrast to the fundament of the graph composition. The linear parallelism between the components increases the



*Image 4: Wall mosaic.  
Textile Trade Office, London,  
XX-th century, marble, detail*



*Image 5: Mosaic decorative wall.  
XX-th century, detail*

voltage graph-film, scoring composition as defining the static (predominantly parallel graphics) or the dynamic (primarily competing lines and curves).

The Christian mosaic art in the Byzantine monumental compositions results mainly in static images. Compositional-ichnographically describing the plan contains some parameters as you generate effects sequence, vector and rhythm voltage, creating a spiritual progressive suction effect by front-ascendant area of the Basilica. The exquisite gold mosaic gives a touch of unreal, amplifying its monumental character. For clarifying the term, we understand the mosaic as the entire composition of an image or a combination of elements - in varying degrees of compatibility - the sizes, location and the meaning get a monumental character.

Particularly, we can define the monumental mosaic as a decorative Visual art, achieved by joining some small pieces of pottery, glass or stone, arranged according to a project support. Tessera, (sing.; pl. tesserae) is a piece of individual mosaic, originally from the cubic stone, tinted glass or ceramics. The Original vogue-tesserae were stone used in ancient mosaic. We can find floor tile decoration (tesselate), wall art work or even objects and small furniture coated with mosaic, with elements of monumental nature (dimension, theme, colours, endurance and the like).

Technically, mosaic development stages are:

- to establish the theme and outlining its image trigger mode (canonical);
- the study of graphic expression;
- the implementation of the project or board containing technical information such as the location of the stones on the structural, chromatic palette and the like;
- layout parts (tesserae), on a colour model (draft), so compose a whole composite image in a coexistence of individuality-distinct-installing the tile, on the bi- or tri-dimensional support.

In conclusion, the patchwork city monumental character gives the architectural ambient, both - as decorative art and as art with spiritual meanings, as a whole, thus contributing to its citizens' increased comfort.

### **Images source**

- 1 <http://www.thejoyofshards.co.uk/history/romanwall.jpg>
- 2 <http://www.thejoyofshards.co.uk/history/romanwall.jpg>
- 3 <http://www.thejoyofshards.co.uk/visits/sicily/martorana/>
- 4 <http://www.thejoyofshards.co.uk/london/canary/textiles.jpg>
- 5 <http://www.thejoyofshards.co.uk/projects/pr2mirr.shtml>

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