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## **CHERNIVTSI AND VIENNA ENVIRONMENT AND SPACE AT THE TIMES OF FRIEDRICH KIESLER**

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**Abstract.** The article studies the peculiarities of urban and cultural environment of Chernivtsi and Vienna during the childhood and adolescence of Friedrich Kiesler as a determining factor for shaping the worldview of the architect's artistic personality.

**Key words:** architecture, environment.

### **1. Introduction**

It is absolutely natural question to ask: how did the phenomenon of F. Kiesler appear, in itself or via any special shaping factors and preconditions? We will try to find the answer to this question.

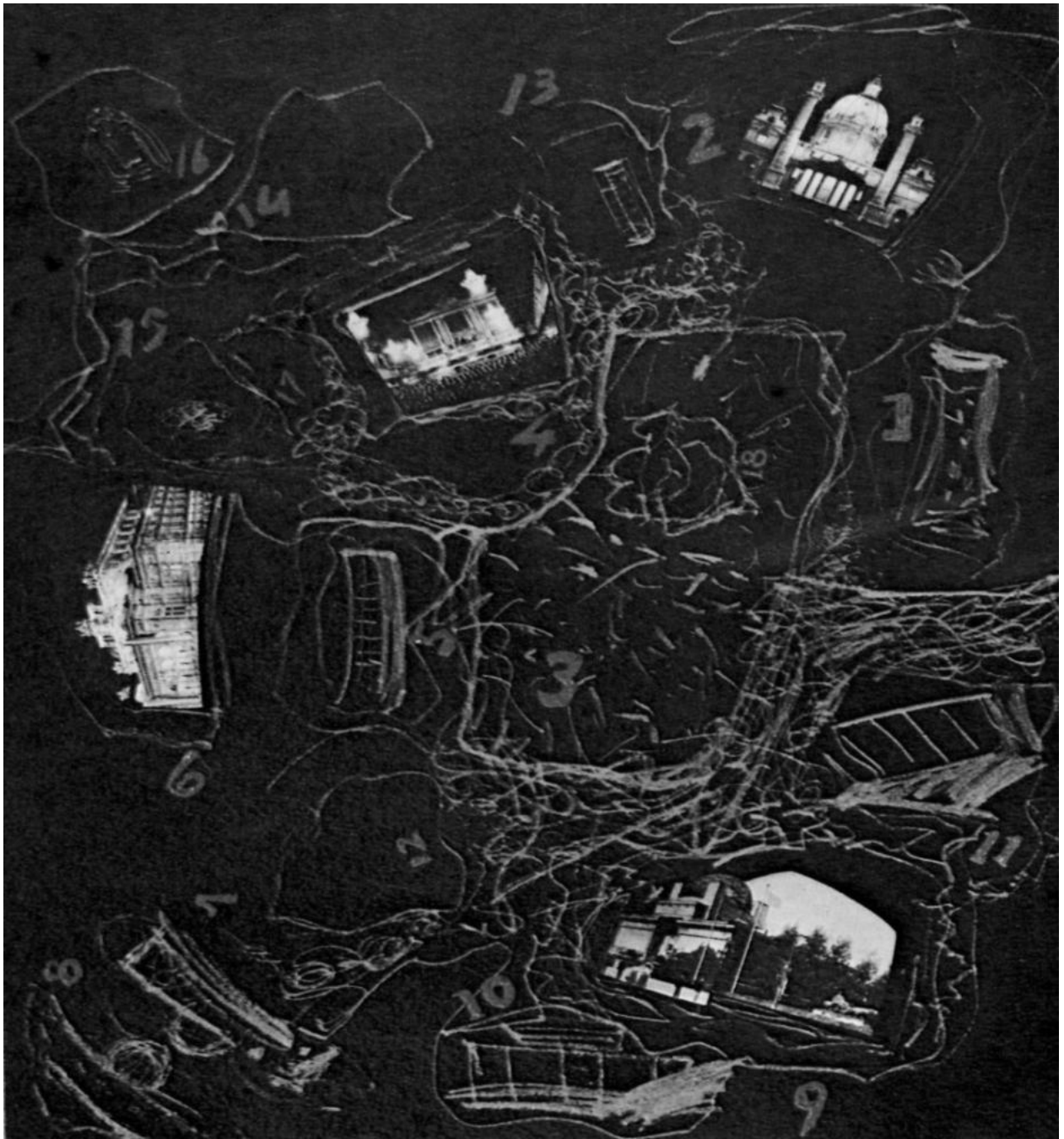
### **2. Basic Theory Part**

The city of Chernivtsi, where on September 22, 1890 Frederick Kiesler was born, was at that time a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A neat two-storied house with annexes and inner courtyard was situated in the very central part of the city at the address Carolinengasse, 5 (nowadays Marii Zankovetskoi str. [1]). There was an apartment rented by the family of a magistrate counsellor Julius Kiesler where, apart from him, his wife Rosa and their children lived. As is known, it was the period when the city and its central part, in particular, were turned into a construction site: the houses were springing up like mushrooms after the rain. The reason for such rapid economic growth was the construction in Chernivtsi during 1864-1882 of a grand complex of a Palace of Bukovina and Dalmatia metropolitans and Lviv-Chernivtsi-Iassy railway (1866-1870 German Lemberg-Czernowitz-Jassy-Eisenbahn, or LCJE). The Austro-Hungarian Empire private railway with a total length of 579,6 km linked the capitals of royal territories of Galicia and Bukovina with branches to Romania (Iassy) and the Russian Empire. At that time Chernivtsi became a significant transfer base for trade accompanied by the appearance of banks as well as various joint-stock companies and the prosperity of the "Gründerzeit".

### **3. Result and Discussion**

As of 1 November 1873 in Chernivtsi it was founded higher state industrial school, which was the provider of architects and builders. The first who headed up Chernivtsi higher industrial school was a former professor of Industrial school of Grac Josef Wezel which five years later was substituted on this position by a professor of Brno Industrial School – Josef Leitzner [2, p. 347]. The historical centre of Chernivtsi was built up at a rapid pace thanks to the effort of Josef Leitzner and his colleagues and students such as Karl Peccara, Adalbert Mikulicz, Erich Kolbenheyer, Karl Romstorfer, Robert Joseph Witek, Johann Ribauer, Anton Gankevych, Rudolf Kole, Viktor Kark, Richard Pribram, a professor of Chernivtsi Industrial School Erich Kolbenheyer and an architect Julius Bohner. A 14-years old boy was fascinated by the building of Schiller Theatre in within 300 meters from his house, visits to Chernivtsi of European architecture luminaries Ferdinand Fellner on May 5, 1900 and Hermann Helmer on May 3, 1904 as well ceremonial completion of constructing

and opening the theatre which took place on October 3, 1905. What is more, it is necessary to note another event, significant for the city and for Friedrich's family – building of a grand Synagogue which was happening with a direct participation of his father – a magistrate counsellor Julius Kiesler – since he was granted the authorities of a treasurer of “Chernivtsi Jewish Synagogue community”, the statute of which was approved by Bukovina regional council as of year 1872. The windows of a house where the family lived were located almost opposite of this majestic building. Undoubtedly, it was the influence of family traditions, the nature of activity and social status of the father, all the surrounding creatively-permanent environment, which at that time was the city centre, eventually influenced the choice of future professions of Friedrich Kiesler.

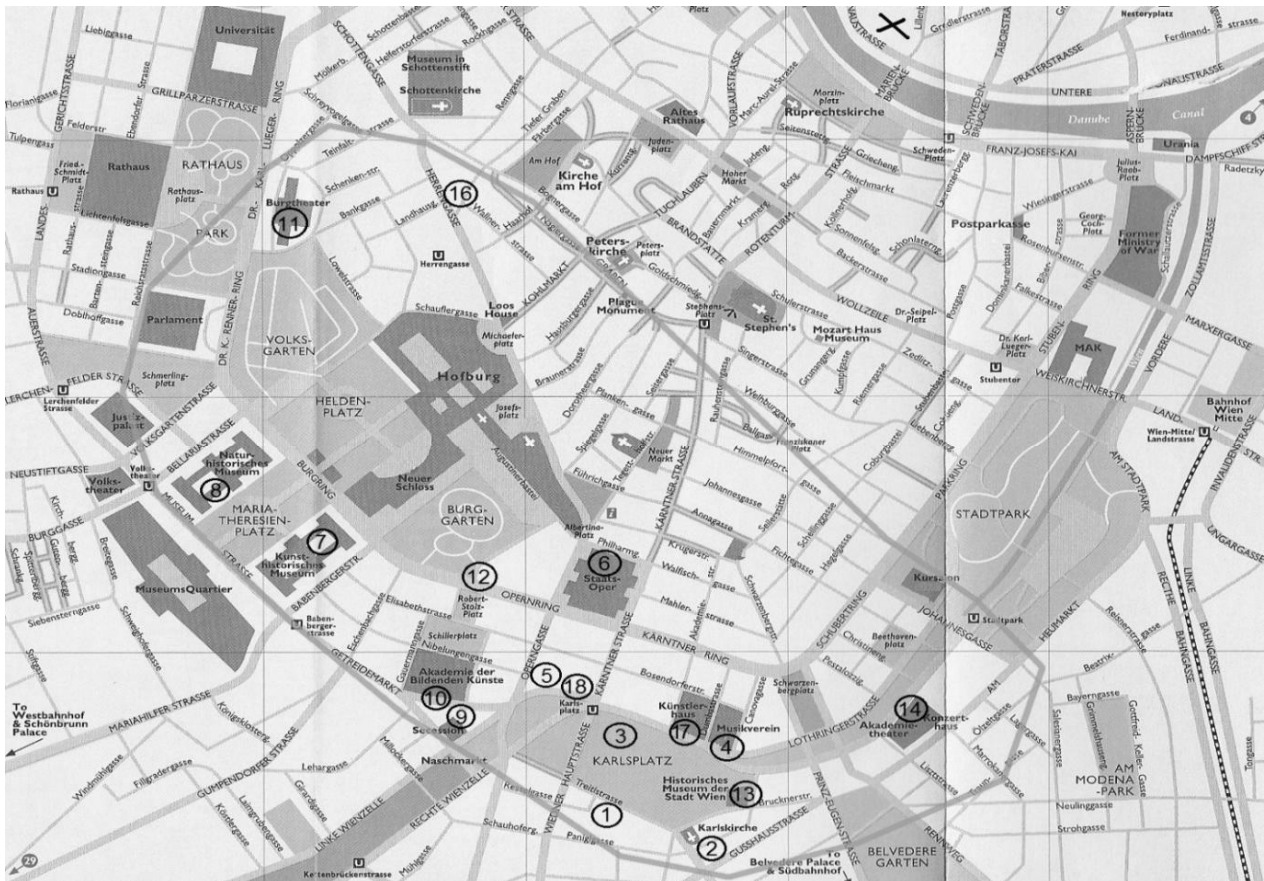


**Fig. 1.** Collage of Kiesler, 1961, where in 35 years he would present “Vienna environment for talent growing”. 1. Technische Universität 2. Karlskirche 3. Karlsplatz 4. The building of a musical union Musikverein 5. Café Museum (interior of Loos) 6. Wiener Staatsoper 7. Kunstmuseum 8. Naturhistorisches Museum 9. Secession (J. M. Olbrich) 10. Akademie der bildenden Künste 11. Vienna theatre 12. Goethe monument 13. Vienna Museum (1<sup>st</sup> project of Wagner) 14. Concert hall 15. Café Kremser (J. Hofmann) 16. Café Central 17. Künstlerhaus (house of the painters) 18. Metro (Otto Wagner) [3]

In 1908, at the age of 18 Friedrich leaves family nest and appears to be in the centre of European cultural and economic life – he starts to conquer Vienna where formation of his worldview philosophy will take place. Vienna of that epoch was a huge melting pot where various artistic and socially-political ideas were generated.

The art of Empire capital was soaked with traces of rebellious secession. The faces of anti-academism were such personalities as Gustav Klimt, Maximilian Franz Kurzweil, Josef Hofmann. Joseph Olbrich, who was entrusted to create the project of pavilion for the First exhibition, appeared to be the voice of the time and style. The expression by Ludwig Heuze: “To every age its art, to every art its freedom” was the motto of Secession.

Kiesler got the first professional education in the Art Academy in Vienna where he attended the painting school of Rudolf Bacher. In 1911 he received the Theres-Dessauer award, in 1912 – Franz-Joseph artistic scholarship. F. Kiesler himself would describe his feelings and impressions of Vienna life period in the best way. Being already lived in the USA in one of the conversations with the editor of an American magazine “Progressive architecture” Friedrich Kiesler sketched the scheme of the part of Vienna historical center (Fig. 2). The story of Kiesler confirms tight connections of architecture profession with the Academy of Arts, the School of artistic crafts, with other institutions and informal communities of art world. “Tom, imagine a simple open space – partially park, partially a pedestrian square, around which there is a line of the most significant cultural centers of the capital and the whole Europe. The square had a name Karlsplatz and the buildings around it were, if I remember correctly: Secession, built by Olbricht (according to Reit, this building influenced his architecture crucially) and Künstlerhaus, official art centre of fashionable painters. At the same square there was spacious lengthy MTI building (Mein Technische Universität, where I studied) and most respected Carnegie hall, the building of Music society, two blocks further in two directions there were the Academy of Arts (Wagner) and Opera.



**Fig. 2.** Vienna historical centre interpretation of F. Kiesler’s sketch by the author of the article; presented on the collage by F. Kiesler (“territory of talent growing”) with his numeration of objects – “catalyzers” of intellectual life (pic. 1). 1. Technische Universität 2. Karlskirche 3. Karlsplatz 4. The building of a musical union Musikverein 5. Café Museum (interior of Loos) 6. Wiener Staatsoper 7. Kunstmuseum 8. Naturhistorisches Museum 9. Secession (J. M. Olbricht) 10. Akademie der bildenden Künste 11. Vienna theatre 12. Goethe monument 13. Vienna Museum (1<sup>st</sup> project of Wagner) 14. Concert hall 15. Café Kremser (J. Hofmann) 16. Café Central 17. Künstlerhaus (house of the painters) 18. Metro (Otto Wagner) [3]

However, the following were even more important in setting favourable climate for growing the artists: a café Museum (designed by Loos), “Kremser” designed by Hofmann, Imperial and a little further to the north a café Central where famous champions and amateurs had chess competition every day (a few years earlier there was V.I. Lenin, at that time it was Freud’s follower Adler and a writer Robert Musil). Different groups gathered in different places in Vienna. Karl Kraus (a sharp satirist and critic) appeared in “Imperial”. Among the others together with him every day there were: Adolf Loos, Oskar Kokoschka, there was often Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg and Anton von Webern. In a café “Museum” I recollect in the end of a hall a long table was hugging the whole mirror wall and in the afternoon the following composers united there: Franz Lehar, Oscar Strauss and others. “Museum” was a café for all of us, young painters and architects. Hofmann with the professors from Artistic crafts schools presided in “Kremser” at the Ring. Intensive meetings of a group including Franz Werfel, Kafka and Albert Einstein took place in the house of a writer Fritz Lampl.

That’s what, my dear Tom, is missing nowadays – certain hideaways for artists growing their ideas [3, p. 8, 9].

In 1926 Frederick and Stefi Kiesler set off on a far journey to New York with over 40 boxes of exhibits for “International theatrical exhibition”. At this point a European period of Friedrich Kiesler’s life is finishing.

#### 4. Conclusions

The 20<sup>th</sup> century created the phenomenon of mass architecture when the artistic element of architecture profession was almost completely lost. In the society which identified itself as “industrial”, “technocratic”, cultivated the theories of “mass consumption”, there was unfavorable atmosphere for supporting a traditional role of an architect. W. Gropius spoke about it in 1955 in his speech at the opening of the Higher school of forming in Ulm “At our time of science an artist is often forgotten, even mocked, his real role is humiliated, he looks like a redundant member of society, he is only put up with for the reason of luxury... by overpractical people, amazed by victorious flow of logical knowledge [4, p. 250]”.

Frederick Kiesler, who formed as an artist and creative personality in the atmosphere of artistic search for human and environment harmony in Chernivtsi and Vienna, never shared the opinions on architecture as on “mechanized essence”. His whole professional philosophy was soaked with the idea of synthesis of traditional art theories and architecture. During his lifetime he was looking for the perfect interaction between the things and the space, in particular.

F. Kiesler was one of the original in modern history of architecture who interpreted space not as perceptible but extremely significant component in the creation of modern urbanized environment.

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#### **СЕРЕДОВИЩЕ І ПРОСТІР ЧЕРНІВЦІВ І ВІДНЯ ЗА ЧАСІВ АРХІТЕКТОРА ФРІДРІХА КІЗЛЕРА**

*Анотація.* Висвітлено особливості урбаністичного і культурного середовища Чернівців і Відня дитинства та юності Фрідріха Кізлера, як вирішального фактора формування світогляду творчої особистості архітектора.

*Ключові слова:* архітектура, середовище.