

64

YU_topia. Balkan Architecture

**Enrico Prandi
Marina Tornatora,
Blagoja Bajkovski,
Ottavio Amaro**

The Architecture of the Balkans: Far From Where?
YU_topia. Balkan architecture

**Lorenzo Pignatti
Zoran Dukanović,
Nada Beretić
Luka Skansi,
Susanna Campeotto
Claudia Pirina
Stefania Gruosso,
Emina Zejnilović
Florina Jerliu
Viktorija Nikolić,
Tamara Marović
Marina Tornatora,
Blagoja Bajkovski
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Early modernism in Zagreb. Novakova street
In-betweenness as destiny. Paradigm shift in urban and architectural design
of post-World War II Belgrade
The different scales of relationality. Edvard Ravnikar and the Revolution
Square in Ljubljana
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- a) short essays between 12,000 and 14,000 characters (including spaces), which will be submitted directly to the double blind peer review procedure;
- b) long essays greater than 20,000 characters (including spaces) whose revision procedure is divided into two phases. The first phase involves sending an abstract of 5,000 characters (including spaces) of which the Direction will assess the relevance to the theme of the call. Subsequently, the authors of the selected abstracts will send the full paper which will be submitted to the double blind peer review procedure.

For the purposes of the assessment, the essays must be sent in Italian or English and the translation in the second language must be sent at the end of the assessment procedure.

In any case, for both types of essay, the evaluation by the experts is preceded by a minimum evaluation by the Direction and the Editorial Staff. This simply limits to verifying that the proposed work possesses the minimum requirements necessary for a publication like FAMagazine.

We also recall that, similarly to what happens in all international scientific journals, the opinion of the experts is fundamental but is of a consultative nature only and the publisher obviously assumes no formal obligation to accept the conclusions.

In addition to peer-reviewed essays, FAMagazine also accepts review proposals (scientific papers, exhibition catalogs, conference proceedings, etc., monographs, project collections, books on teaching, doctoral research, etc.). The reviews are not subject to peer review and are selected directly by the Management of the magazine that reserves the right to accept them or not and the possibility of suggesting any improvements.

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ARTICLES SUMMARY TABLE

64 april-june 2023

n.	Id Code	date	Type essay	Evaluation	Publication
1	972	giu-23	Long	Peer (A)	Yes
2	973	mag-23	Long	Peer (A)	Yes
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4	975	mag-23	Long	Peer (A)	Yes
5	1024	ott-23	Long	Peer (B)	Yes
6	1025	set-23	Long	Peer (A)	Yes
7	1026	set-23	Long	Peer (B)	Yes
8	1027	ott-23	Long	Peer (A)	Yes
9	1032	ott-23	Long	Peer (A)	Yes

NEXT ISSUE

65 july-august 2023.

Architecture and City of Community Health: From the Health House to the Community House

edited by Carlo Quintelli

What architectural project could provide answers to a new health question, particularly after Covid-19? This applies to decentralized healthcare services related to primary care, capable of establishing presidium structures that the population can easily access due to their settlement proximity and consequent familiarity with medical and nursing staff. New decentralized centers for primary care and treatment, transitioning from the designation of "Health Houses" (italian Case della Salute) to "Community Houses" (italian Case della Comunità) through Mission 6 "Health" of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (italian PNRR). This is not just a nominal variation, for which architectural design research can only develop an open and experimental disciplinary advancement, but also capable of providing concrete operational reference guidelines in terms of the quality of typological-morphological spaces and urban role. In this perspective, with the contribution of a PNRR research from the University of Parma, some contributions have been gathered for the next issue of FAM concerning a possible typological synoptic, the potential of decentralized urban integration, critical distinctions towards the hospital machine, historical roots of widespread care, medical management and logistical planning, and case-based comparisons both nationally and globally of Community Houses.

The design of public socio-health structures for primary care in various international contexts, including developing countries, demonstrates the effectiveness of primary healthcare both in terms of widespread health and the safeguarding of high-intensity care hospital centers. A healthcare facility



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system for the territory that each country names differently: from Maison de la Santé to Healthcare Centers, Health Community Centers, or Family Health Centers—all structures, nonetheless, united by being realities of medical and social assistance integrated into the life of communities.

64

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The Architecture of the Balkans: Far From Where?
YU_topia. Balkan architecture

**9
11**

**Lorenzo Pignatti
Zoran Dukanović,
Nada Beretić
Luka Skansi,
Susanna Campeotto
Claudia Pirina
Stefania Gruosso,
Emina Zejnilović
Florina Jerliu
Viktorija Nikolić,
Tamara Marović
Marina Tornatora,
Blagoja Bajkovski
Ottavio Amaro,
Francesca Schepis**

Early modernism in Zagreb. Novakova street **22**
In-betweenness as destiny. Paradigm shift in urban and architectural design **30**
of post-World War II Belgrade
The different scales of relationality. Edvard Ravnikar and the Revolution **38**
Square in Ljubljana
Between Archè and Techne. Subtle equilibriums in the work of Oton Jugovec **49**
The Socialist Sarajevo: between heritage and modernity **59**

Socialist Prishtina: The tale of unfinished urbanization **70**
Neglection of Modernism. Montenegrin coastal architecture **79**

Skopje: concrete vs fiction. From Internationalism towards ethnonationalism **86**

Spomenik. Architectures of sublime memory **99**

**Giovanni Comi
Pierpaolo Gallucci
Francesco Martinazzo
Alessandro Camiz**

Possible inventions from the ancient. Between architecture and archaeology **109**
The study of an architect **113**
For a "zero degree" of forms. Collage as a compositive methodology **115**
Rebuilding: where, how, when, for whom? **118**

Editorial 1

Enrico Prandi

The Architecture of the Balkans: Far From Where?

Abstract

This editorial explores the perception of distance in the Balkan territories despite their geographical proximity.

The self-definition process of these recently divided regions is analyzed as an architectural enrichment rather than impoverishment. Architectural diversity is viewed as synonymous with choice and freedom, serving as a testament to overlapping cultures over time. The articles, aim to redirect scholars' attention to a context often overlooked. With this issue, the FAM magazine seeks to pose questions rather than provide certainties, emphasizing the importance of continued exploration and understanding of Balkan architecture.

Keywords

Balkan architecture — Identity — Former Yugoslavia

Stricken by misfortune, a Jewish man had decided to flee. He had disposed of his few belongings, bid farewell to relatives and friends, and had gone to the rabbi to receive the final blessing and a word of comfort.

“So, your decision is made?” asked the kind rabbi. And after a moment, “And tell me, are you going far?”

“Far from where?” replied the Jewish man.

(Jewish anecdote)

There are territories that, despite being geographically close, appear so distant as to belong to a completely different world. This is the case with the former Yugoslavia and its architectures, which are the focus of this issue curated by Marina Tornatora, Blagoja Bajkovski, and Ottavio Amaro. Morphological reasons, such as the presence of the Adriatic as an isolating element, are not sufficient justification for this perception. The reality is that we are victims of our own cultural heritage, which steers us north rather than south and west rather than east. However, in response to this distance, we could pose the metaphor used as the title of Claudio Magris's book, *Far from where?*

As well illustrated by the curators, the liminal condition of being on the border between the West and the East has triggered a process of self-definition, both decisive and interesting, that has characterized the architecture of these territories. It's important to remember that these territories have recently undergone division.

When we reflect on a topic, we place ourselves at the center and measure the conceptual distance from a condition that constitutes our benchmark. If in the past, Yugoslavia struggled to emancipate itself from architectural

imperialism, one that imposed standards in the name of a political ideology, the division into autonomous entities only encourages an architectural diversity to be understood as enrichment rather than impoverishment. Multiplicity has always been synonymous with choice and freedom. Construction (architecture) is always a testament to culture, and the resulting city is a palimpsest of cultures that succeed one another over time.

Although focused on a specific historical period of the 20th century, the articles presented here reflect an attempt to draw the attention of architecture scholars to a context that is both unrecognized and close.

In an article published in this magazine a decade ago, I reflected on the concept of European architectural identity and, in particular, on the existence of a set of characteristics (or the prevalence of common characteristics) that better define architecture. I realize that a decade in this century, which seems to proceed at an accelerated pace compared to previous ones, is a sufficiently long period for many reflections to appear outdated or even anachronistic. I wondered then if it would be possible, by analogy, to apply the question to the Balkan region. In other words, is there a Balkan architecture, and if so, what are its prevalent characteristics?

We believe that the role of a magazine like FAM is to continue asking questions rather than providing certainties, and the issue on Balkan Architecture aligns precisely with this direction.

Enrico Prandi (Mantua, 1969) is an architect with a Ph.D. in Architectural and Urban Composition obtained from IUAV in Venice in 2003. Currently, he is an Associate Professor in Architectural and Urban Composition at the Department of Engineering and Architecture at the University of Parma. He serves as the director of the Parma Architecture Festival and is the founder-director of the international class A scientific journal "FAMagazine. Research and projects on architecture and the city" (ISSN 2039-0491). Prandi is the scientific coordinator for the Parma unit of the *ArcheA project - Architectural European Medium-Sized City Arrangement* (published by Routledge, Aión, and LetteraVentidue). Among his publications are "*Ignazio Gardella, Roberto Menghi, Luigi Vietti. Architectures for the Mediterranean*" (Electa, Milan 2023), "*The project of the Children's Center. Architectural experiments between teaching and research*" (Aión, Florence 2018), "*The architecture of the linear city*" (FrancoAngeli, Milan 2016), and "*Mantua. Essay on architecture*" (FAEdizioni, Parma 2005).

Editorial 2

Marina Tornatora, Blagoja Bajkovski, Ottavio Amaro
YU_topia. Balkan architecture*

Abstract

If there is a place where East and West touch, collide, and influence each other, it is the Balkan Peninsula. This diversity has often led to conflicts, hindering the visibility of artistic and architectural production on the global stage. This is due to the interpretative stereotype of the region being a political and cultural "in-between" (Mrduljash, 2012), and the perception of the Balkan Peninsula as the «semi-periphery» of an industrialized West, resulting in an underestimation of its architectural and urban uniqueness. *YU_topia. Balkan architecture* offers a journey through the cities of the former Yugoslavia to reflect on the modernization process that began after the Second World War. The various contributions aim to interpret the principles that continue to hold significance for contemporary cities today. In this regard, this publication serves as a tool for reevaluation and a platform for debate and in-depth analysis, particularly focusing on the architectural production of the 1960s and 1970s.

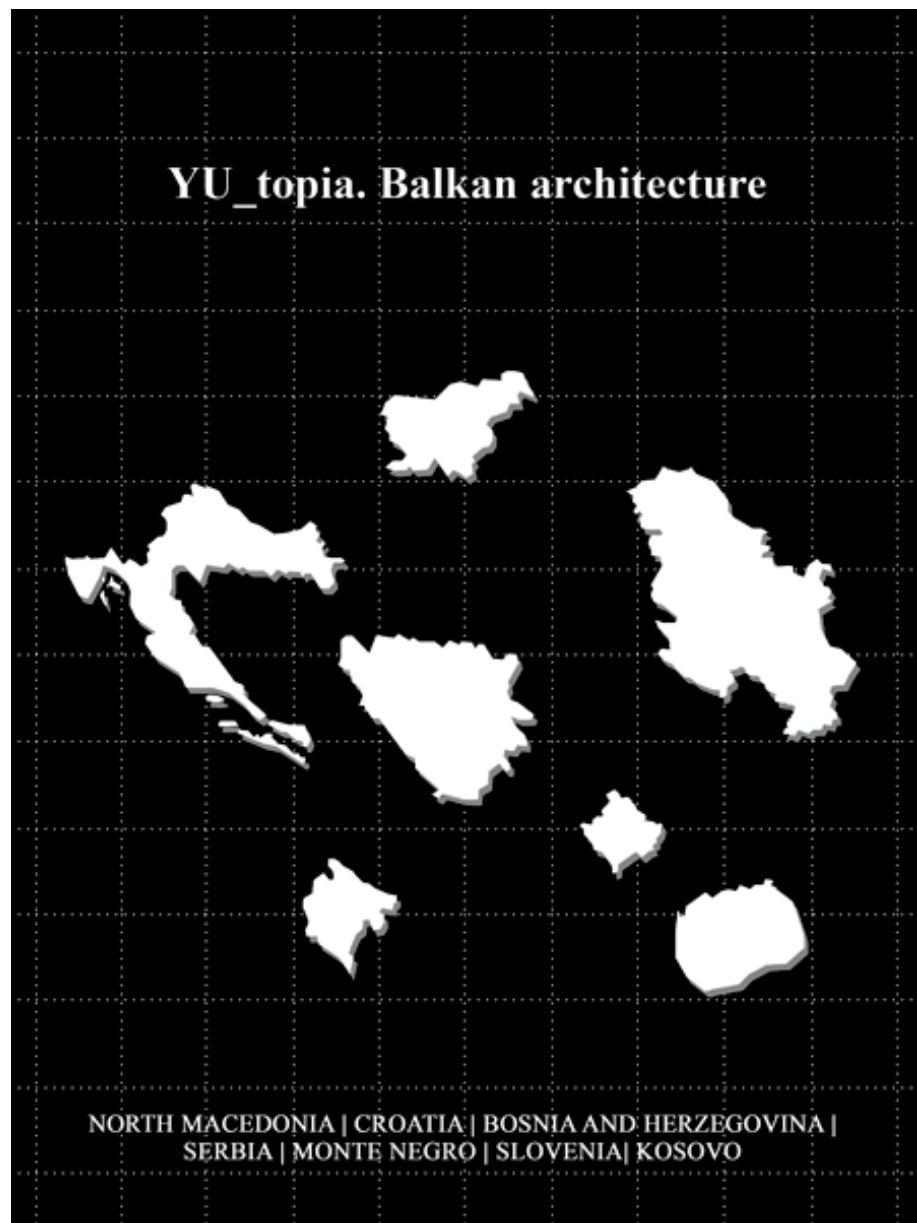
Keywords

Balkan — Brutalism — Yugoslavia — Concrete

If there is a place where East and West touch, collide, and influence each other, it is the Balkan Peninsula. Predrag Matvejević defines it as a «middle region [...] a confluence between East and West, a crossroads between East and West, a dividing line between Latinity and the Byzantine world, an area of Christian schism, and a frontier of Christianity with Islam». This diversity has often resulted in conflicts, serving as a significant obstacle to garnering global attention, both culturally and in terms of the visibility of artistic and architectural production. This is due, in part, to the interpretative stereotype of the Balkans as a political and cultural «in-between» (Mrduljash 2012) and the perception of the Balkan Peninsula as the «semi-periphery» of an industrialized West. Consequently, the architectural and urban uniqueness of the region has been consistently underestimated.

FAMagazine's monographic issue offers a reflection on the role and singularity of architectural production in the cities of the former Yugoslavia. The modernization process that began after the Second World War remains a largely unexplored chapter with its intricacies and specificities. While not claiming to provide a historical reconstruction, the various contributions aim to interpret the often-overlooked events and projects in Balkan cities that still hold significance for the contemporary condition today. In this regard, this work serves as a tool for repositioning the discourse and as an opportunity for debate and in-depth analysis, with a particular focus on the 1960s and 1970s.

This historical era has recently attracted growing attention from scholarly studies and research, introducing a new lens through which to view a wide-reaching cultural and theoretical phenomenon. It is intricately entwined with diverse national contexts, and its architectural output has fre-



quently been obscured by historiographical and political narratives, culminating in a negative portrayal and a prevailing sense of ‘disdain’ for these entities.

One of the early events that triggered a reevaluation of this period was the Brutalism symposium titled *Brutalism. Architecture of the Everyday. Culture, Poetry and Theory*. This symposium was organized by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and the Wüstenrot Stiftung and took place at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in 2012. It went beyond the typical historiographical approach of documenting the biographies of architects and their works. Instead, it set out to initiate a broader discussion on brutalist architecture as a manifestation of a «distinctive modernity». This unique form of modernity had the ability to capture and define, in an innovative manner, the ongoing transformations occurring in the Western world following the Second World War.

Around the same time, in Slovenia, the initiative *Unfinished modernizations, between utopia and pragmatism* commenced, marking the beginning of a series of seminars hosted at the Maribor Art Gallery. This undertaking unfolded over a two-year period, from 2011 to 2012, alongside an exhibition curated by Maroje Mrduljaš and Vladimir Kulić. This endeavor represented another pivotal phase in the ongoing exploration, with a spe-

cific focus on the architectural heritage of the former Yugoslav nations. It delved into the era spanning from the emergence of communism in 1945 to the eventual dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic in 1991. The architectural accomplishments of Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia were reevaluated through a fresh perspective, unburdened by the narratives of “socialist progress,” and reintegrated into the broader context of global architectural history.

In a parallel effort, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York embarked on its own exploration between 2018 and 2019 with the exhibition titled *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948-1980*. This groundbreaking exhibition, featuring a rich collection of over 400 drawings, models, photographs, and films, spotlighted the pivotal role played by brutalist architectural production in Yugoslavia on the international stage. It underscored its exceptional nature, not solely in terms of quality and quantity but also due to the distinct interplay between a shared history and a collective identity within a multi-ethnic state. This state was marked by the coexistence of divergent needs and influences.

Simultaneously, the exploration of Yugoslavia’s architectural heritage ran in tandem with the broader resurgence of Brutalism. This resurgence was exemplified by the exhibition *SOS Brutalism. Save the Concrete Monsters!*. This exhibition was supported by the German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt (DAM) and the Wüstenrot Foundation of Ludwigsburg. This initiative also gave birth to an *open-source* digital archive, now housing an impressive catalog of more than 1,600 architectural works. The archive’s mission extends beyond mere documentation, aiming to both showcase the vast expanse of brutalist architecture and raise awareness about the pressing need to preserve this colossal cultural legacy, presently endangered and facing severe degradation.

Even in the realm of social media, we are witnessing an increasingly prevalent trend in sharing photos and images of brutalist architecture. Modern communication tools have managed to accentuate previously unexplored aesthetic and formal values. The proliferation of Facebook pages, blogs, and hashtags — with approximately 481,000 Instagram posts featuring the hashtag #brutalism, along with tens of thousands of related variations — serves as tangible evidence of the renewed interest and evolving perception surrounding these architectural works. As Virginia McLeod contends in her work, the *Atlas of Brutalist Architecture*, she goes as far as to suggest that “Instagram will save the brutalist heritage”.

In 2018, *99Files* presented an exhibition and digital archive at the MoCa (*National Museum of Contemporary Art*) in Skopje. This initiative materialized through an international call, conceived by the *Landscape_in-Progress*¹ Laboratory at the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, functioning as an interdisciplinary observatory dedicated to preserving brutalist heritage. Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, which became closely associated with brutalist architectural culture during its post-1963 earthquake reconstruction, was chosen as a laboratory. The goal was to provide a fresh perspective on Balkan modernist and brutalist architecture, liberating them from the often negative connotations linked to ideological legacies while exploring alternative interpretive avenues for this crucial phase in architectural history.

The monographic issue *YU_topia: Balkan Architecture* contributes significantly to this ongoing discourse. It invites readers on a journey through the cities of the former Yugoslavia, a region marked by experimentation and

Fig. 1

Bogdan Bogdanović, Flower Monument, Jasenovac, Croatia, 1966. PH Alberto Campi.



endeavors at modernization. While these cities, including Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina, and Podgorica, no longer share a unified political reality, they still offer valuable insights into a historical phase deserving reconsideration within the international architectural dialogue.

In an effort to dispel the notion that this region lacks its architectural identity, the various contributions within this issue illuminate the rich cultural dynamism and the pivotal role that architectural projects have played in different national contexts. These projects have often succeeded in conveying a shared architectural language while introducing distinct and original interpretations.

Moreover, the increasing interest in this historical phase prompts a reflection on the contemporary role of preservation efforts for a heritage that is “in danger of extinction.” This perspective aligns with the ethical values of heritage preservation, not merely its aesthetic aspects. Such contemplation is essential, particularly in the Balkan context, where architectural and urban production is intrinsically tied to the historical and political events in the former Yugoslav countries. Here, architectural and urban developments serve as visible expressions of the «ruptures» (Kirn, 2014), interruptions, and subsequent re-beginnings.

This research is crucial not only to overcome the current state of neglect but also to highlight the unique aspects of this architectural production. In many cases, these aspects remain incomplete due to the often unrealistic objectives of self-managed socialist modernization programs and the challenging technical and economic conditions of a predominantly rural region heavily affected by war.

Tito’s visionary leadership played a pivotal role in accelerating architectural change. His push for an architecture liberated from the constraints of Soviet socialism aimed to identify Yugoslavia’s uniqueness within the new political and social landscape. Tito initiated an ambitious program of urbanization and industrialization founded on an egalitarian utopian vision. This vision was rooted in the ideals of self-management, where the working class played a central role in decision-making and production phases. Architects embarked on a new trajectory during this period, as exemplified by Vjenceslav Richter’s project for the Yugoslavian pavilion at the 1958 Brussels Universal Exhibition. This project showcased innovation through structural experimentation, signaling Yugoslavia’s new direction on the international stage.

The use of concrete became emblematic of the modernization efforts in the construction sector, characterizing the reconstruction and design of infrastructure and new cities. In this context, the ethics of «As found²», representing an attitude of embracing reality, took on a different dimension. Here, the rough and textured surfaces formed a recognizable lexicon, no longer merely an expression of a desire to establish a concrete relationship with reality but also to symbolize the egalitarian utopian vision of Yugoslavia’s *self-managed socialism*.

The cultural life of Yugoslav cities was vibrant and open to external influences, owing in part to the presence of young architects who, having received training abroad, brought back their experiences to shape the architectural landscape. Starting in the 1930s, this dynamic environment fostered a cultural climate that not only enriched architectural developments after the Second World War but also imbued the transformations with a strong connection to the local urban culture, firmly rooted in the international discourse.

This phenomenon was notably apparent in *Ljubljana*, where an architectural culture took root in the 1920s, forming what can be described as a “school” closely linked with Viennese universities. This academic circle revolved around the university founded by Ivan Vurnik (1884-1971) and Jože Plečnik (1872-1957).

The post-war reconstruction phase owed much to Edvard Ravnikar (1907-1993), a disciple of Plečnik. Ravnikar’s work left a lasting impression, as he skillfully merged his master’s classicist teachings with the brutalist influences of Le Corbusier, with whom he had collaborated during a stint in Paris.

The reevaluation of Revolution Square (1960-80), now known as Piazza della Repubblica, as discussed by Skansi and Campeotto, brings to light the unique nature of the Yugoslav experience, characterized by the interplay between modernity, urban layers, and regional culture. This complex square, characterized by its dynamism and permeability, establishes a strong connection with its surroundings through thoughtful ground construction, thereby reducing monumentality while still embracing international modernism.

This reveals a distinctive path taken by Slovenian architects, who draw inspiration from local traditions and reinterpret them using a modern architectural language. This approach is exemplified in the work of Oton Jugovec (1921-1987), marked by a delicate balance between modernity, rural and artistic heritage, and the region’s architectural traditions (Pirina). In *Sarajevo* (Gruosso, Zejnilović), a notable formalization emerged, blending egalitarian communist ideology with a “modernist” interpretation of the authenticity of local architecture. This transformation was largely attributed to a generation of architects who brought about a significant shift in the architectural landscape of the 1960s.

Bosnian architecture, influenced by Zagreb and Belgrade, found guidance in Juraj Neidhardt (1901-1979). He advocated for a «city on a human scale» and the establishment of a «Bosnian architecture hub», both rooted in a desire to reinterpret inherited architectural values through a fresh and modern lens. Neidhardt’s urban and architectural solutions reflect meticulous research developed over years with Dusan Gabrijan (1899-1952) on Ottoman architecture. They recognized qualities treated by Le Corbusier in his *Journey to the East*. The writings of these two architects, now translated, reveal a fusion of references and analogies between Bosnian historical heritage and Le Corbusier’s fascination with Ottoman and Islamic cities. For Neidhardt, who briefly worked in Le Corbusier’s studio, modern architecture in Bosnia represented a reinterpretation of roots and a connection with Le Corbusier’s ideas on urban and architectural principles.

The Sarajevo Olympic Games in 1984 played a pivotal role in the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The construction of entire sports facilities served as significant typological and architectural experiments, fostering expertise in environmental protection and tourism.

Zagreb (Pignatti) emerges as a vibrant city from economic, social, and cultural perspectives, where urban transformations and architectural innovations have mutually reinforced one another. Similar to Joze Plečnik’s influence in Ljubljana, Viktor Kovacic (1874–1924) and Ernest Weissmann (1903-1985) in Zagreb have played pivotal roles in ushering in a shift towards modernity. They have been joined by a significant number of other architects who embarked on their careers with projects and structures marked by distinct innovative approaches. Weissman’s involvement in CIAM led to collaborative studies on the city, laying the groundwork

for the modernization process and the *New Zagreb* Plan, inspired by Le Corbusier's principles.

Conceptualized by Vladimir Antolic as a linear extension of the existing city across the river, this expansion unfolded through an open system of infrastructures, enabling the free arrangement of buildings, towers, and green spaces.

In the case of *Belgrade* (Ducanović, Beretič), the capital of Yugoslavia, attention and debate were centered on the establishment of a new city, *Novi Beograd*. This new city was chosen to be built on a completely empty site, devoid of traces of the past, with the intention of creating a model for the "socialist city" based on innovative and egalitarian urban planning concepts. The post-war period in Yugoslavia saw a succession of proposals, starting with the more classical radial layout proposed by Dobrović and progressing to layouts inspired by Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*. These plans gradually moved away from monumentality and classical influences, embracing the use of reinforced concrete frames as guiding elements in building design. Chandigarh and Brasilia served as references for representative architecture, while the *residential blocks*, constructed from 1957 until the 1980s, adhered to the principles outlined in the Athens Charter. To achieve greater flexibility compared to the fixed reinforced concrete structural frame, prefabrication was adopted, significantly influencing the architectural language of the residential system.

Regarding the urban development of *Pristina* during the socialist era, there is limited documentation available. However, in recent years, the number of publications and awareness of the need for preservation have increased (Jerliu). Kosovo underwent a process of transformation and modernization aimed at positioning Yugoslavia differently from Soviet communism on the geopolitical stage. Nevertheless, interventions in the capital often lacked organic planning, and due to the compactness of the Ottoman city, these plans left scattered, incomplete pieces and, in some instances, erased vital parts of the historical fabric.

The most conspicuous legacy is the fragmentation, not only in urban layout but also in language. An example is the *National Library* (1982) in Pristina, designed by Croatian architect Andrija Mutnjakovic (1929), which stands as a surprising and majestic structure within an urban context that remains something of a large «urban wasteland» (Jacob, 2019). The Library's clear geometric volumes, marked by an external metal structure, lend it a majestic and visible presence from a distance, revealing a human scale within its interior.

Montenegro (Nikolić, Marović) also underwent a transformative process in shaping its national identity and societal dynamics during the era of the «Third Way» within the Cold War context (Stierli and Kulić, 2018). This period witnessed the introduction of "paid holidays for workers" and the promotion of tourism along the coast, leading to the construction of numerous hotels to meet the growing demand. Beginning in the 1960s, the architectural landscape started to feature compositions of multiple forms and increasingly intricate megastructures. These developments aimed to entice travelers to explore the entire coastal region of Yugoslavia as outlined in the Regional Territorial Plan for the Southern Adriatic, later known as "Jadran I." Architect Milan Popović played a pivotal role in shaping a distinctive architectural approach for Montenegrin coast hotels. His designs emphasized the harmonious interaction between architecture and nature, incorporating terraces, promenades, and green spaces adorned with indig-

enous vegetation. This architectural lexicon became a hallmark embraced by an entire generation of architects.

During this period of cultural resurgence, *Skopje* (Tornatora, Bajkovski) assumed a central role. Following the catastrophic 1963 earthquake that devastated the capital of North Macedonia, a national and international discourse on the city's reconstruction commenced. The objective was to manifest Yugoslavia's political, economic, and social aspirations, drawing inspiration from the experiences of *New Zagreb* (1930-1962) and *New Belgrade* (1929-1954). Indeed, Skopje, akin to Brasilia (1960) and Chandigarh (1953), offered a canvas in the 1960s for embodying the principles of modern architectural culture - a vision both ambitious and marked by contradictions.

Tange's Plan for the revitalization of Skopje presented a unique opportunity to showcase the model of Yugoslav socialism to the world. It transformed the city into an international laboratory for concrete reflection on the urban theories promoted by CIAM. The radical and futuristic vision put forth by the Japanese team, which emerged as the competition winner, embodied the ideals of post-earthquake reconstruction. This innovative approach to city planning drew inspiration from Japan's modernization model. Tange served as a bridge between the traditions of the Eastern world and the modern Western architectural language. His vision had the potential to project Yugoslavia onto the international stage by reestablishing *New Skopje* through a *monumental* infrastructural system, a concept previously experimented with in the Tokyo Bay Plan (1960).

The city is meticulously planned with a network of continuous vehicular and pedestrian connections. Within this framework, distinct architectural «new prototypes» (Tange 1965) are strategically integrated, serving as defining elements that underpin the urban design. Notable among these are the *City Wall* and the *City Gate*, alongside which a proliferation of exposed concrete structures gives rise to what can be described as a «bêton brut cityscape». (Lozanovska 2015)

Highlighting the *architectural diversity* within Yugoslavia, several women architects also played pivotal roles in city planning. Notably, figures such as Milica Šterić (1914-1998), Mimoza Tomić (1929), Olga Papesh (1930-2011), Svetlana Kana Radević (1937-2000), among others, brought a unique perspective to their designs, imbuing them with an “emotional” and “sensitive” quality. Their experiences gained abroad allowed them to infuse a certain fluidity into architectural and urban solutions.

While there's no denying the strong push for unifying Yugoslavia's national identity during the transformation processes of various cities, it often encountered local events, resulting not in a homogeneous and cohesive architecture, but rather a series of adaptations in different “centers.”

Amidst this intersection of languages and experiences, the constellation of *Spomenik*, a Serbo-Croatian term for monument, created between the 1950s and 1990s, serves as a unifying and overarching element that connects the diverse peoples of former Yugoslavia (Amaro, Schepis).

With nearly 14,000 memorials (the number is indefinite due to the lack of a real census), initially erected by Tito to commemorate the victims of the People's Liberation Struggle (1941-1945), scattered throughout the territories, they form a national network transcending differences and etching the imprints of memory onto the landscape. These memorials, spanning from mountainous regions to coastal areas, stand as dynamic features in the landscape, shaping communal spaces that link people, memories, and the narrative of the “New Yugoslavia.” This extensive construction of monu-

ments represents a profound testament to the nation's history.

There is no doubt that the comprehensive program of socialist Yugoslavia remains unfinished. The completed projects, still functional, continue to represent the foundational and identity framework of Slavic cities, bearing witness to profound social transformations and the subsequent principles of modernization. This mosaic of projects, marked by interruptions and incompleteness, boasts an exceptional quality and quantity. It bestows upon architecture the crucial role of materializing the intersection between a shared history and collective identity in a multi-ethnic state, characterized by the coexistence of diverse influences. With the collapse of socialism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, this multitude of works ceased to be perceived as a symbol of modernity but became emblematic of a past to be eradicated through various transformations and demolitions. Although a significant portion of this heritage is still in use today, the original concept of urban development for the greater public good has been all but erased by isolated and disparate interventions.

The utopian vision embodied by architecture has succumbed to the divisive forces among different nations. Many public buildings have been privatized, while numerous monuments have suffered acts of vandalism or outright demolition.

Nonetheless, this body of work serves as a poignant reminder of the pressing need for in-depth analysis to address a significant cognitive and historiographical gap. This gap is evident in the scarcity of publications available beyond Slavic languages. Moreover, it compels us to challenge prevailing cultural stereotypes, such as the one posited by Stierli (2018), asserting that «Viewed through the contemporary Western lens, the Balkan region, and more specifically, Yugoslavia, is scarcely considered a hub of cultural and architectural innovation.»

This position is supported by the historian Maria Todorova, who has attempted to demonstrate how, since the mid-19th century, Western culture has established a negative image of the Balkans. This negative perception created a clear distinction between the Balkans and Europe: Europe represented a positive image based on Enlightenment values, while the Balkans were cast in a negative light.

YU_topia. Balkan architecture aims to provoke reflection on several unresolved questions. Can we envision the architecture of Yugoslavia and, more broadly, the Balkans from a different perspective? Could the modernization process of its cities be seen as the «invention of tradition» (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1997)? Perhaps contemplating this geographical space means expanding research horizons, as suggested by Łukasz Stanek in *Architecture in Global Socialism*. This could involve exploring encounters between European socialist countries and those in Africa and Asia during the Cold War, when collaborative exchanges had an impact on architecture and urban planning. In conclusion, it is possible to reframe the Balkans, shedding the perception of isolation and marginality that twentieth-century architecture has imposed upon it. This can be achieved through a lateral perspective capable of inspiring new narratives and geographies. As Franco Cassano has demonstrated, this perspective reflects upon an ever-expanding Europe, burdened by models imposed by Nordic culture.

As the rhetoric of modernity faces its first significant challenges, and contemporary theoretical debates begin to delve into the postmodern era, the Mediterranean tran-

scends its exclusively negative configuration. It starts to evolve in meaning. The image of the Mediterranean undergoes a profound transformation: it is no longer a mere precursor to modernity or a degraded periphery, but rather a reshaped identity to be rediscovered and reinvented in connection with the present. It ceases to be an obstacle and instead becomes a valuable resource (Cassano, 2003).

Notes

¹ Landscape_inProgress is a research and design initiative, led by Marina Tornatora and Ottavio Amaro from the Department of Art. The initiative explores "Landscapes in Progress," which are landscapes undergoing transformation, often due to large-scale projects or significant events that alter, and sometimes completely redefine, their existing characteristics.

The Laboratory is designed as a multidisciplinary space that connects architecture, urban environments, and landscapes. It engages various professionals, including architects, landscape architects, agronomists, photographers, artists, and more, in the exploration and interpretation of these spaces.

The primary concept is to explore these territories through a dynamic perspective, simultaneously approaching and distancing from them. This approach allows for the recognition and documentation of the values and imagery within these complex and diverse landscapes. The Laboratory collaborates with both public institutions and non-profit organizations, conducting consulting and scientific research activities. This collaboration ensures an integrated and innovative approach to the study of cities and landscapes.

² "The As Found" concept originated during the Parallel of Life and Art exhibition in 1953 at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. This exhibition was curated by A. P. Smithson, E. Paolozzi, and N. Henderson. The collages featured in "As Found" present a unique juxtaposition of images, including archaeological fragments, ethnic masks, human body parts, X-ray scans, and microscope images.

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Lorenzo Pignatti
Early modernism in Zagreb. Novakova street

Abstract

Architectural modernism appeared in cities of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during the end of the twenties and beginning of the thirties of the XXth century with different manifestations but within a quite coherent cultural scenario. In those years, most of the Yugoslavian cities were transforming themselves and they were all searching for a new identity, where a new architectural “style” had a substantial importance. The cultural life in these cities was extremely rich and open to external influences, also due to the presence of young architects and academics that had studied abroad and were eager to bring in their own towns their personal experiences. Zagreb was certainly one of the most active cities from an economic, social and cultural point, a city where urban transformations and architectural innovation were reinforcing each other. The unique example of the residential development along Novakova street must be seen as a very early attempt of creating a modern identity, also in relationship to other important European experiences, first with the Weissenhof in Stuttgart.

Keywords

Zagreb — Modernization — Le Corbusier

Not much is known about the beginning and development of architectural modernism in cities of the western Balkan region. For a long while this region was considered an “in-between” area, a region that was not able to express its own identity since it was characterized by a diversity of social, religious, political and ethnical tensions. This essay intends to prove the opposite and claim that somehow there was a very interesting development of modern ideas related to architecture and urbanism in most of the cities of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during the early part of the XXth century. Belgrade, certainly the largest and most influential city of the region, went through a process of transformation from an Ottoman city into a European capital, following, first, Beaux Arts models and then, modernist ones; Ljubljana, much closer to Austria and central Europe, went through an amazing period with the architecture and urban projects by Plečnik; Zagreb saw a very interesting urban expansion with new developments in the Lower City that integrated experimental strategic architectural interventions of great value; Sarajevo transformed itself from an Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian city into a modernist city with significant projects that proposed a reinterpretation of vernacular models. Then there was the important but later case of Skopje, destroyed by a major earthquake in 1963 and reconstructed in the following years with a master plan by Kenzo Tange. Somehow all these cities followed their own path towards modernity, each of them with their own specificity given by local political and cultural conditions or by the presence of significant individuals, but eventually always open to absorb fresh ideas that were coming from other parts of Europe.

This essay intends to analyze the development of modern architecture in Zagreb, not the largest city in former Yugoslavia but one that could offer a completer and more layered picture of the development of modern architecture due both to a sophisticated internal cultural scene and to its openness to external influences.

There were some anticipations in Zagreb of a new vision with the presence of Viktor Kovacić and Drago Ibler. Kovacić, a pupil of Otto Wagner, was the author of the headquarters of the Central Bank of Croatia (1923-27), still a neo-classical building but certainly one that presented a simple and austere revision of classicity and one that certainly created a rupture with the predominant previous eclectic trend, a position not very different from Plečnik's work in Ljubljana. Ibler was an architect, theoretician and academic of a distinguished value in Zagreb in the early Twenties; he had studied in Dresden, was part of the architects that were in contact with Le Corbusier and then worked with Poelzig in Berlin. He founded the second Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb at the Academy of Fine Arts, an active school inspired to the ideals of modernism that created a consistent number of new graduates and gave origin to what will be called "the school of Zagreb". He also was a founding member of the group (and magazine) *Zemlja* (Earth) that operated in Zagreb from 1925 to 1935 as a progressive movement composed by architects, artists and sculptors that were proposing a shift towards modernity, advocating that «it is necessary to live in the spirit of our own time and create accordingly with it». These architects were not following a specific "style" and their work was not at all consistent; however, their architecture was certainly original and simple, anticipating a "purism" that will then generate the development of modernity.

General cultural context

Across Europe the Modern Movement was in fact already a reality during the late Twenties and the early Thirties of the XXth century, with different manifestations of a new architectural vision that was certainly influencing the different cities of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, including Zagreb.

After the First World War the National University Library in Zagreb received continuously journals and publications in major foreign languages, but mostly from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Because of the proximity with Vienna and Prague, the work of Adolf Loos with the Steiner house in Vienna (1910) or Muller house in Prague (1930) was certainly well known, mostly because several architects studied in those cities. The De Stijl movement had already developed in the Nederland and Stjepan Planić asked Theo Van Doesburg to write an article for the journal *The Croatian Review* and Planić himself wrote a unique monograph on the modern trends in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia entitled *Problems of Modern Architecture* where a large number of architects from Croatia and Serbia published their own work. The Croatian architect Ernest Weissmann, who collaborated with Adolf Loos (1926-27) and Le Corbusier (1927-28) and was part of the group *Zemlja*, was an active member of CIAM that had its first congress in 1928 in Switzerland.

Major references across Eastern Europe were the work of Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus in Dresden, the work of Mies van der Rohe with his villa Tugendhat (1929-30) in Brno and, finally, the work of Le Corbusier, with projects such as villa Stein 1927 and Ville Savoye 1929, considered all landmarks of the new modernity.

Main influences were coming also from other cities in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In Belgrade Milan Zloković, who studied in Graz and in the early Twenties, had followed some courses in Paris, has built for himself a villa in 1927-28 very similar to the work of Loos and other early modernists. The photographs of this villa were showed in 1929 in one of the first exhibition on modern architecture and received immediate interest. Zloković was also the author of another house in Belgrade, villa Šterić (1932), where the main volume is decomposed in several smaller parts all painted in different colors, recalling the work of the De Stijl movement. In Belgrade in 1929 a group of four architects, including Zloković, founded GAMM, that had as a primary scope the development of modern architecture in the current practice and, at the same time, the dismiss of the prevailing eclecticism of the time.

Certainly, the international exhibition of the Weissenhof in Stuttgart in 1927 organized by the Werkbund and coordinated by Mies van der Rohe, became the main international window on the social and architectural innovations proposed by the Modern Movement, where Behrens, Poelzig, Hilberseimer, Oud, Le Corbusier, Gropius and van der Rohe himself participated with original projects, main reference for all the countries in Europe, including Croatia.

At the same time, besides the major role played by important figures like Viktor Kovacić in Zagreb and Joze Plečnik in Ljubljana, there was a consistent number of other architects in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that started their own careers with projects and buildings of a clear innovative character, showing a shift towards modernity or, at least, towards an early purism that anticipated the Modern Movement. These architects were I. Vurnik, V. Subić, M. Fabiani in Slovenia; M. Zloković, B. Kojić, M. Belobrk and N. Dobrović in Serbia; D. Ibler, S. Planić, S. Löwy, J. Pičman, A. Albin and V. Antolić in Croatia and, finally, the Kadić brothers and a bit later D. Grabrijan and Neidhardt in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Some of these architects had studied abroad in Austria, Czechoslovakia or Hungary, had visited major international events such as the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925 that contained the *Esprit Nouveau Pavilion* by Le Corbusier and had worked in prestigious offices in Europe.

Zagreb

During the Thirties Zagreb went through an interesting period of urban planning that originated from the necessity of mediating between the Master Plan of 1923 and the development of the Lower City. One of the issues that needed to be resolved was the conciliation between the existing rural structure and the new layout of regular streets that had been already extended in the same years. The solution was innovative and consisted in the creation of large urban blocks that had external compact perimeters with new buildings aligned to the new street, enclosing internal areas that incorporated the rural network of paths as well as the existing agricultural buildings. This solution had the effect of creating almost two superimposed cities, one large with a regular layout that was following the modern needs of movement and a second one, internal to the urban blocks, that maintained its agricultural character.

In the office for the Master Plan, that was created for the realization of the new urban layout, there were young architects, many of which had returned from their studies in Berlin, Vienna or Prague and were eager to bring to

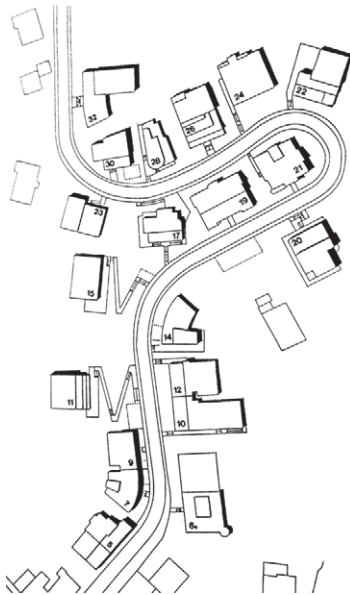
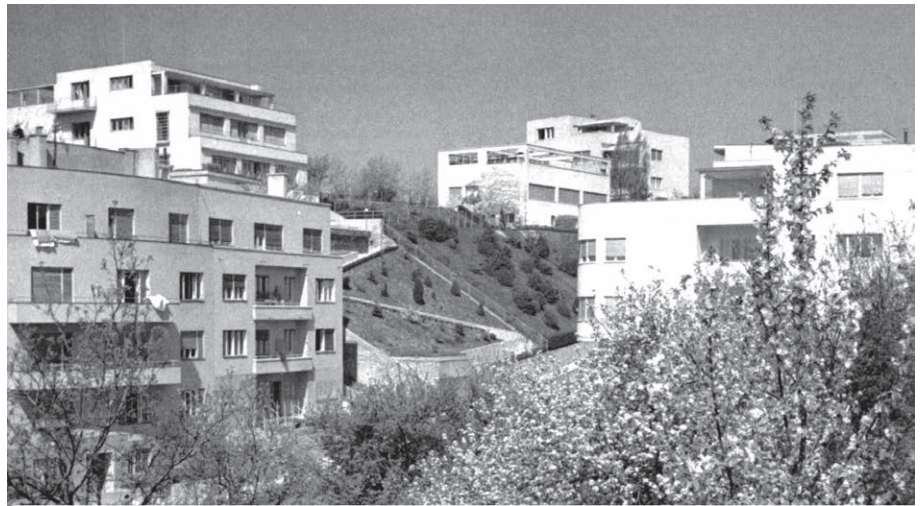


Fig. 1
Plan of Novakova street, Zagreb.

Fig. 2
Views of the buildings along Novakova street, Zagreb 1939 (from *Project Zagreb. Transition as Condition, Strategy, Practice*, Barcelona 2007).



their own city what they had learned abroad. Moreover, the city promoted a series of competitions for specific urban lots, trying to put together the needs of the private ownerships with the desire of creating innovative solutions coherent with the master plan. The result was that several architects proposed strategic interventions to reinforce this master plan either by connecting the new network of streets with the inner part of these blocks or by resolving specific urban conditions, such as urban corners. Among these we could list the ones designed by Drago Ibler (Wellisch Block, 1930), by Stephan Planić (Nepradak building, 1935), by S. Löwy (Radovan block, 1934), and the large and central Endowment Block (1930).

Novakova Street

However, this paper intends to present more in detail a similar example of a coherent urban intervention of the early Thirties represented by a residential development built on a hill just beside the cathedral, along Novakova street, connecting the lower town with Šalata Hill.

Novakova street consists of a series of projects done by different architects in Zagreb that included originally independent buildings of small dimensions aliened along the curvilinear and ascending path of Novakova street. Differently from the Weissenhof, Novakova was not conceived as a work-

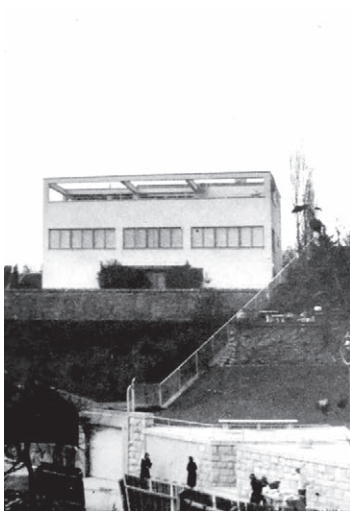
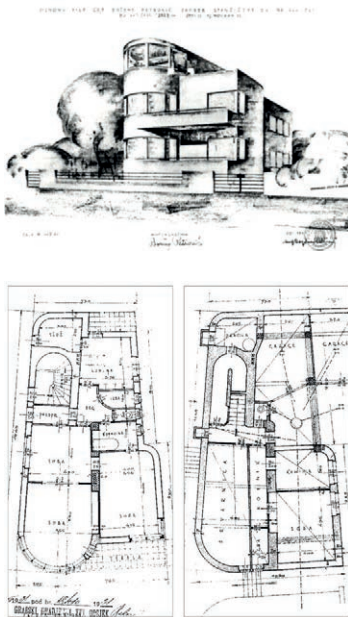


Fig. 3
S. Gomboš e M. Kauzlarić, Spitzer House Novakova street n. 15, Zagreb 1931-1932.



Fig. 4
S. Gomboš e M. Kauzlarić, Spitzer House Novakova street n. 15, present view, Zagreb 1931-1932.

ing-class district, but was rather for a higher and richer social class. It was neither state – nor city – sponsored, nor did it have any sort of official support. Given the critical economic crisis of the late Twenties/early Thirties in Croatia, people were reluctant to deposit their money in banks and preferred investments in the residential construction that could provide a steady income in rent money. Thus, private capital assumed the dominant role where private investors became the main clients who commissioned architectural designs. Most of them were architects, lawyers, doctors, industrials and merchants and their position in the society can be illustrated by the presence of a maid's room in most of the villas. Thus, in Zagreb the shift occurred from the construction of complex estates to small residential buildings and family houses. The owners of the parcels could choose their own architect and very often the same architects were owners, designers, structural engineers, and contractors. All the buildings had to follow specific regulations about density, height, and depth of construction and the only bureaucratic step was the approval from the Facade Commission that granted the homogeneous character to Novakova Street, insisting on the elimination of any sort of ornament in order to maintain a consistent formal vocabulary and control of the massing to ensure views between houses. Following the renewed cultural conditions above mentioned and the general demands, the built projects abandoned any sort of reference to the art nouveau decoration or neo-classical details and rather searched for simple compositions of volumes and regular solutions with simple and plane facades. Most of the buildings were constructed in reinforced concrete, following what had already been done by Loos, Le Corbusier, and others, had simple stereometric forms, had windows and openings without any sort of frames or moldings, had open balconies projecting out of the volumes, had flat roofs or open terraces at the top levels and most of them were painted in white color. All the villas followed the morphology of the site and adapted themselves to the changes in the level of the street, integrating themselves into the landscape.

**Fig. 5**

B. Petrović, Novakova street n. 28 perspective, 1932 (from *Bešlić T. Urban Villas in Novakova street in Zagreb by architect Bogdan Petrovic*, Zagreb 2010).

Fig. 6

B. Petrović, Novakova street n. 28 plan, 1932 (from *Bešlić T. Urban Villas in Novakova street in Zagreb by architect Bogdan Petrovic*, Zagreb 2010).

Fig. 7

B. Petrović, Novakova street n. 28, present view, Zagreb 1932.



Between 1931 and 1941 twenty villas were constructed, most of them, in the early period, single-family houses and later 3-4 storeys apartment buildings. There were fifteen Croatian architects that built the villas; among the total of twenty, three were designed by S. Gomboš and M. Kauzlarić and six were designed by Bogdan Petrović.

Villa Spitzer (Novakova 15), designed by S. Gomboš and M. Kauzlarić, is probably the most well-known of this beautiful street. Kauzlarić was a student of Drago Ibler and a member of *Zemlja* and, in the early twenties, the two started their own office with work both in Zagreb and Dubrovnik. Villa Spitzer is a single-family house built on three levels and composed by a very simple volume, built at a higher level in relation to the street and with open views towards the cathedral of Zagreb in the back. A family house with rooms for servants, an elevator that connected the kitchen to the dining room on the first floor, a strip of horizontal windows that allowed connection with the outside space.

The plan is a simple rectangle with a very simple organization of the internal spaces, where the last floor is primarily an open terrace with a concrete structure that creates a canopy. The main façade is simply articulated with strip horizontal windows on the second floor and an open loggia at the last level. The villa embodies the famous “five points” of modern architecture established by Le Corbusier in 1926, having a free plan and free façade, strip windows and a roof garden, all features that create a direct parallel to the early work of the Swiss master.

Even if the villa went through significant changes that ruined its own original design, Villa Spitzer, for its own simplicity, its year of construction (1931) and for its evident references to the work of the big masters of the Modern Movement, must be recognized as a landmark of modern architecture in Zagreb and in the entire Croatia.

As mentioned, Bogdan Petrović was another of the main architects of the development of Novakova street, building six houses (Novakova 10, 11, 23, 26, 28 and 32), considering that House 28 was his own house. The projects by Petrović are simple and articulated; there is often the desire of combining simple rectangular volumes with circular projecting ones that offer to the building a strong dynamic quality. In House 28, the intersection between a three levels cylindrical volume and a series of smaller rectangu-



Fig. 8
Ante Grgić, Novakova street n. 20 present view, Zagreb.

Fig. 9
Ivo Kulišek and Ivan Senk, Novakov street n. 17 present view, Zagreb 1932.

Fig. 10
B. Petrović, Novakova street n. 32 present view, Zagreb 1938.



lar ones on the side becomes the main feature of the house, remembering projects done by Eric Mendelsohn or Alberto Sartoris.

The same happens to a lesser degree in House 10 where the building ends in one corner with a cantilevered circular volume with strip windows and a terrace on top. The overall composition is very effective and the final result indicates a very mature ability of combining different volumes and geometries and offering a dynamic quality. House 32 is purely a volume with a continuous curvilinear façade that follows the bend of the street. The different levels have linear balconies that offer a space of mediation between the interior and the exterior, offering open views given the high location of the house on the top of the hill. All Petrović's projects show consistent research towards modern models, somehow different from Villa Spitzer, thus showing a diversity in the architectural vocabulary in the buildings along Novakova street but a rather a strong consistency in dealing with modernism.

Conclusions

Besides the Weissenhof in Stuttgart or eventually the much larger White City built in Tel Aviv in the Thirties by German-Jews architects that returned to Israel, we are not aware of such a coherent urban development done in the early Thirties like Novakova street. In fact, it stands as a little-known example in architectural literature that originates in Zagreb from single individuals and investors that followed the culture of the moment and understood the economical and cultural benefits given by a shift towards modernism, both in architectural typology, language, technology as well as in entrepreneurship.



Fig. 11

Moses Lorber, Novakova street n. 21 present view, Zagreb 1935.

Fig. 12

S. Gomboš and M. Kauzlarić, Novakova street n. 24 present view, Zagreb 1935-36.

Fig. 13

S. Gomboš and M. Kauzlarić, Novakova street n. 24 present view, Zagreb 1935-36.



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Zoran Đukanović, Nada Beretić
In-betweenness as destiny.
**Paradigm shift in urban and architectural design of
post-World War II Belgrade**

Belgrade has undergone significant changes in its geopolitical position in the Balkans throughout history. Situated on the edge, Belgrade holds a unique position where cultures and civilizations converge, struggle, and interact over time. The city lacks continuity, both in its legislation and in its development. The only constant is its state of perpetual "in-betweenness" culturally, politically, and technologically. This "in-betweenness" serves as an architectural factor in post-WWII Belgrade, giving rise to spaces representing a radical political paradigm shift. These spaces transition from heroic ideological scenes to ordinary living spaces, where "in-betweenness" remains a daily destiny for the people of Belgrade.

Keywords

Belgrade — In-betweenness — Balkans

Introduction

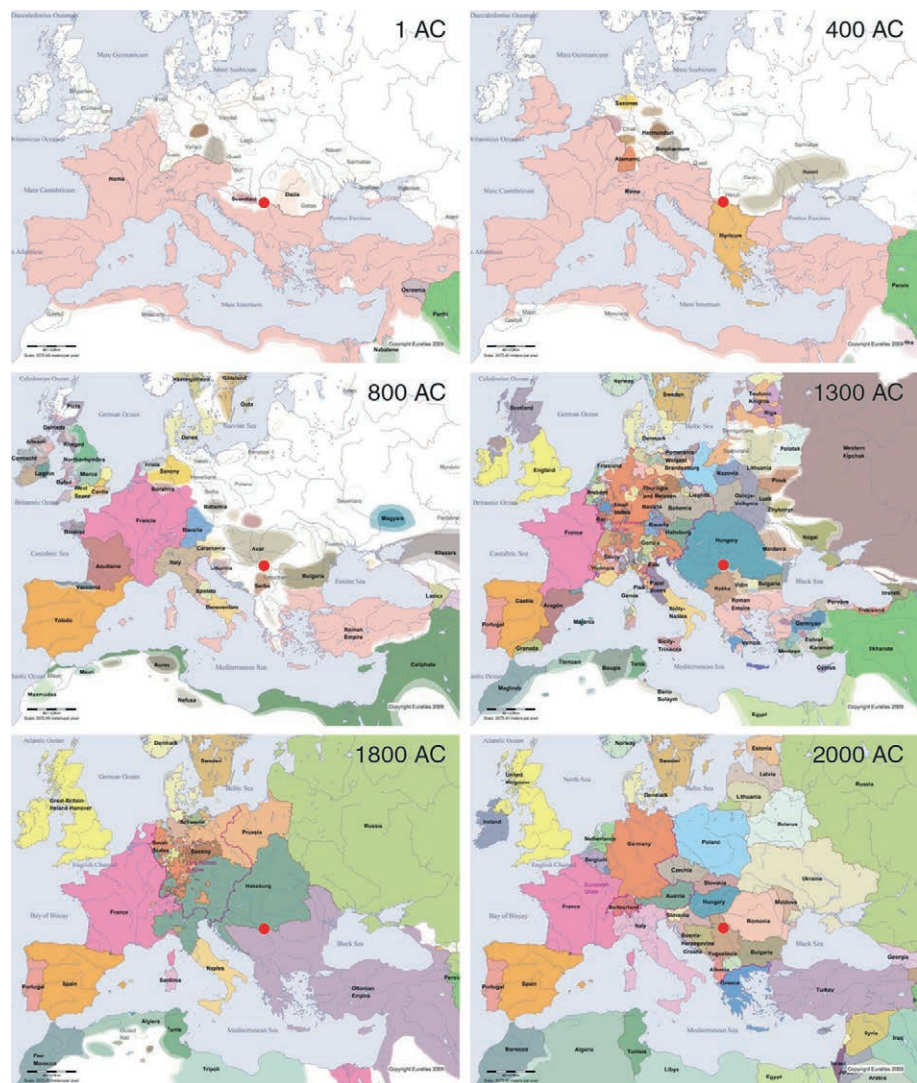
Over the past few decades, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, there has been a growing interest in the architecture and urbanism of the eastern, former socialist countries. Although Serbia was not part of the Warsaw bloc and remained a relatively open country, it has attracted significant research interest. The curiosity about architecture and urbanism in Serbia, particularly in Belgrade, intensified after the end of the wars that ravaged the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Belgrade, with over two thousand years of history, has predominantly existed on the fringes, positioned between different cultures, enduring their influences. This historical context has given rise to multiple interpretations of the same phenomena.

Today, while no longer situated at the edge of a state but on the northern boundary of the Balkan Peninsula, Belgrade remains in-between as the capital of Serbia. It is a small European country with uncertain territorial and population dimensions, undergoing a comprehensive, multilayered transition between the East and the West, autocracy and democracy, socialism and capitalism, collectivism and individualism, atheism and zealotry, isolation and globalization, and the contrast between "honey and blood." Belgrade represents a unique amalgamation, containing elements from the East, West, South, and North, all coexisting in the same place. Everything converges here: Belgrade with Zemun and New Belgrade; the densely populated city with the uninhabited Great War Island, its natural green heart; the rugged cliffs of the Belgrade ridge with the shimmering surface of the rivers and the vast plains of Vojvodina; modern glass high-rise buildings alongside bombed ruins; classicism and art nouveau next to traditional

Fig. 1

Belgrade the city on the edge - Belgrade marked with a red dot on each image.



Ottoman houses; trendy, fashionable individuals alongside the homeless; Sachertorte with baklava; kebabs with Wiener schnitzel; disco clubs with belly dance performances; cigarettes with hookahs; Porsches with horse-drawn carriages; noise blending with silence; and glory juxtaposed with defeat.

This eclectic mixture is evident not only in the etymological origins of the names of various city areas but also in the vocabulary of the Serbian language. Everything interlaces and overlays with everything else, not only on a spatial level but especially on a cultural and semiotic plane. To borrow from Calvino, discourse becomes secretive, rules appear absurd, perspectives become deceptive, and everything conceals something else. Due to its complexity, Belgrade consistently and effectively evades being fully grasped (Calvino, 1972).

To comprehend Belgrade, one cannot be a passive observer. It requires a deep engagement in a reciprocal process of sharing dreams and fears, a desire to partake in and relish the contemplative unity of the city. Throughout its history and continuing today, Belgrade has the ability to offer something for everyone, precisely because it has been shaped by everyone (Jacobs, 1961).

Between and betweenness

The complex betweenness in Belgrade is essential for understanding urban processes, city life, and the city's development. The permanent condition

of being “in-between” requires a clear definition of terms.

The Oxford dictionary defines the term “between” in-between (adverb) as a position in space (or time)—to be at, into, or across the space (or time) separating two objects or regions or two points in time. However, the term “in-betweenness” does not exist in that vocabulary.

The Collins dictionary defines the term “betweenness” (noun) as the condition of being between. Meanwhile, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the same “betweenness” (noun) as the quality or state of being between two others in an ordered mathematical set.

For us, betweenness is a process; it’s a relational state established among the subject and the two-surrounding otherness, which requires the investment of resources in the realization of those relations. In this context, the importance of establishing external relations exceeds the concern of realizing internal relational categories. Therefore, it involves compromise. Betweenness also means being in a condition where two others could fade or even cease, but the subject is still under the influence of both. Betweenness is a transitional/hybridizing state in which the subject is always in between the beginning and end, border and threshold, i.e., limes and limen. It’s a state of tension in which the gravitational forces of surrounding otherness shape the essence of what is between them. Betweenness means being far from the centers, on the periphery, or beyond the horizon — remaining far away from strong interest but not without any influence or interaction with the center (Beretić et al., 2022).

In the open call for the conference “In-betweenness: spaces, practices, and representations” (Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, May 29th, 2019), “in-betweenness” has been understood as a liminal space or state that implies dynamics of continuity, separation, transition, overlapping, and mobility. It involves issues related to territories, practices, and representations. This concept can be studied in a range of fields, including history, geography, sociology, anthropology, political science, geopolitics, linguistics, translation, literature, and different types of art.

New Belgrade

At the end of World War II, Yugoslavia was a devastated country, and its capital, Belgrade, was a city destroyed by multiple bombings and brutal acts of war. Yugoslavia emerged from the war as one of the victorious Allied countries, expanding its territory, abolishing the kingdom, declaring a socialist revolution, and organizing the state based on the Soviet model. Total nationalization followed, involving all resources on the entire state’s territory, except for private houses with minimal plots in villages (the so-called land minimum), thus becoming a socially-owned state. Reconstruction began quickly in the first months after liberation, adopting the Soviet development model of industrialization and urbanization defined by five-year development plans and centralized administration.

The reconstruction of the cities started instantly, and the significant migration of people from the countryside to the resurrected cities required the urgent, extensive construction of a large number of new apartments as well as technical and social infrastructure facilities. To meet these needs, all technical and social resources were engaged, but they were not enough for the rapid recovery of the country.

The destabilization of political factors in the environment caused by Yugoslavia’s refusal to fall under the strong influence of the Soviet Union further complicated the already difficult situation. Belgrade, as the capital

**Fig. 2**

Master Plan of the Greater Belgrade Area - Existing Condition (1949) by Nikola Dobrović, courtesy of The Urban Institute of Belgrade.

**Fig. 3**

Rudolf Perco, Erwin Ilz and Erwin Bock (1922) - Singidunum Novissima, second prize at the International Competition for the General Urban Plan of Belgrade.

of the new state, became a special focus of the new government.

The reconstruction of Belgrade aimed to build a new magnificent socialist capital for a new socialist state. This kind of representation was intended to show and celebrate the success of the achieved double victory over Nazism and capitalism. For this purpose, a monumental, wide, flat, almost completely empty, spatially luxurious scene—huge marshes on the opposite, left bank of the Sava river in the total volume between Belgrade and Zemun, framed on both sides by the Belgrade and Bežanja ridges and cut by a shining strip of the river flow—was chosen for construction (Fig. 2). With the task of planning a new city on the left bank of the Sava River, experts were gathered, led by architect Nikola Dobrović (Blagojević 2007). The experts were few but well-educated, having studied at the best foreign schools and offices in Prague, Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. Many of the employed architects had previously worked in Le Corbusier's office or were supporters and followers of his ideas (Pignatti 2019).

On the other hand, after breaking with the USSR, the ruling political oligarchy, with the adopted CIAM architectural model, additionally wanted to show a determined break with Stalin's political ideas. Moreover, it was expected that this model could be an appropriate tool for clearly expressing the will for a definitive break with the royal and clerical traditions of the previous state. In this regard, the CIAM declaration and Corbusier's ideas led to a successful meeting of professional aspirations and political will. Tito personally participated in these affairs by constantly monitoring and actively participating in decision-making (Pignatti 2019).

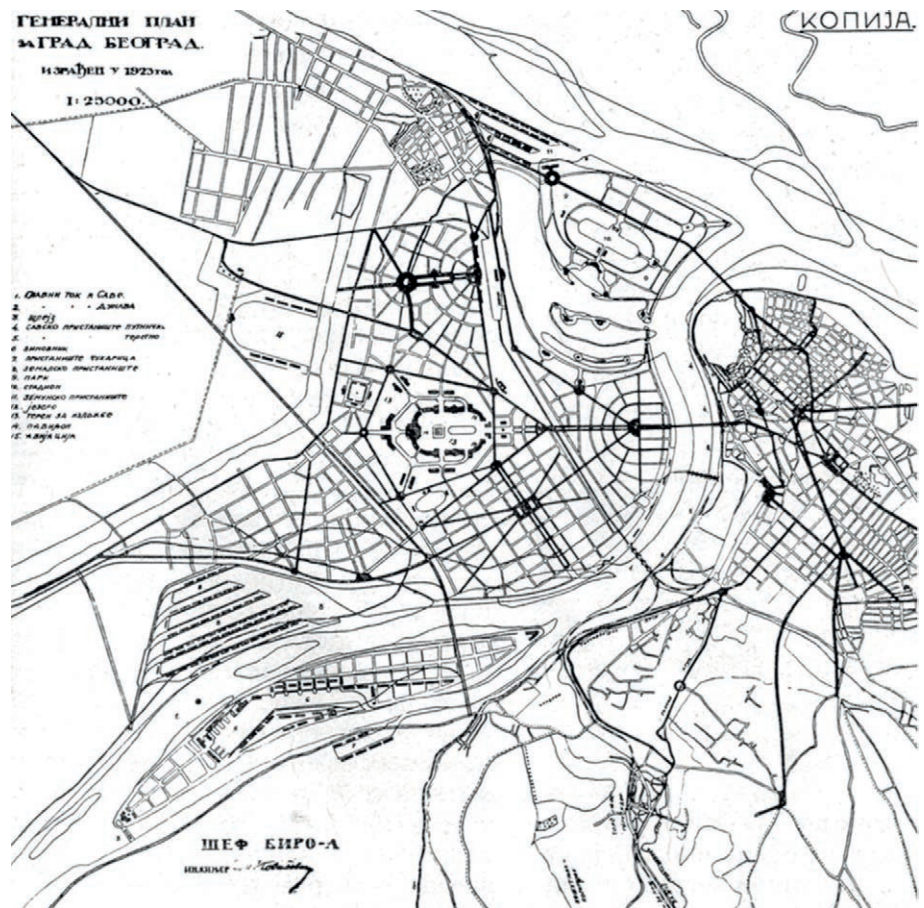
The idea of building a city on the left bank of the Sava was not entirely new. It appeared twenty years earlier, immediately after the unification of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, at the international competition for the General Urban Plan of Belgrade, realized in 1922. In the second award-winning work of the Viennese team of authors, extensive construction was proposed for the first time in the area where, decades later, New Belgrade would be created (fig. 3).

Although too ambitious and formal, this work left a strong mark because it immediately initiated further reflections on this topic. That initiation was already fruitful the following year in the General Plan of Belgrade (1923), which also foresaw the expansion of the city in this direction (Fig. 4). However, this idea also ended up only on paper.

For centuries, Belgrade has looked at this space with longing and a desire to enter it. Yet, the border, where the city was nestled, between the two

Fig. 4

Dorđe Kovaljevski (1923) - Illustrative plan of Belgrade on the Sava's left bank, General urban plan of Belgrade.



great world empires, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian, was an insurmountable obstacle to that historical undertaking. Finally, in 1937, four years before World War II starts, Belgrade Fair was built across from the city center, on the left bank of the Sava River.

Nevertheless, in the post-war period, carried by a strong wave of reconstruction and supported by the overall political, social, and economic resources of the state, this idea finally got a chance to be realized. The development of the new General Urban Plan of Belgrade began in 1945, with the preparation of studies and the first spatial sketches, already published in 1946. That year, Nikola Dobrović, the leader of the design and planning team, published his first sketch (Fig. 5).

The solutions proposed in this sketch are described as a garden-city with buildings immersed in protective greenery, well connected by roads and rails to other parts of the city. The complex is fully subordinated to the realization of the political program aimed at creating a monumental urban composition, the most significant in the future image of the whole of Belgrade. The composition was supposed to be a center of political power with prominent Government buildings, including a complex for 20 ministries and the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as the most eminent architectural unit of this urban composition. These compositional criteria were also part of the political decision expressed in an official document drawn up by the Ministry of Construction of the Republic of Serbia, which was in direct subordination to the state institutions of Yugoslavia, including President Tito himself.

Later, the ideas from Dobrović's sketch (1946) were elaborated and strongly criticized. Ultimately, his solution was completely rejected, and accordingly, he and his team created a new conceptual sketch, which became the iconic basis for further planning and construction of New Belgrade (Fig. 6).

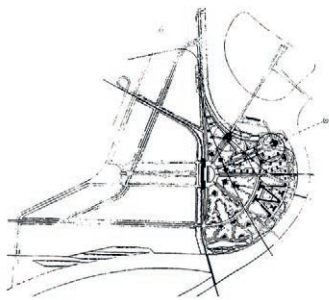


Fig. 5
Nikola Dobrović (1946) - Sketch of the regulation of Belgrade on the left bank of the Sava River.



Fig. 6
The Draft Master Design of the Greater Belgrade Area (1948) by Nikola Dobrović, courtesy of The Urban Institute of Belgrade.

Based on this sketch and further elaborations, in 1949, the final proposal for the Master Plan of Belgrade was presented to the President of the State, Josip Broz Tito (Fig. 7). After a positive opinion, the proposed plan entered further verification procedures. Finally, in 1950, the preparation of the Master Plan of Belgrade was finished, ending the phase of revolutionary enthusiasm to create New Belgrade as a new spatial and ideological model of Yugoslav socialist society. Verification of the Master Plan of Belgrade ended the era of innocence of urbanism in the Yugoslav socialist city.

Conclusions

We posit that the condition of betweenness possesses the potential to serve as a catalytic agent for instigating transformative processes. It functions as both an instigator and an incentive, as well as a mechanism for making choices that engender intricate relationships within the spatial context. Additionally, it can function as an instrument of control, as evidenced by the case of Belgrade and New Belgrade. Subsequently, the ensuing discourse endeavors to elucidate several plausible interpretations of betweenness and the intricate relational dynamics that can be established during the conceptualization, inhabitation, and comprehension of New Belgrade as an urban system.

Between external and internal:

A crucial characteristic of betweenness is the external relationship with the world. For instance, the relationship with the developed European countries had overflow effects on the internal social and spatial fields. There were only a few architects, and most of them were educated abroad, bringing back internationally gained experiences to Yugoslavia. Despite this noble idea of knowledge transfer, the process is beyond the control of architects. It depends on the cultural capacity of society, not solely on the knowledge and skills of architects. This process was often stuck between progressive cultural experiments and re-traditionalization.

Life between two discontinuities:

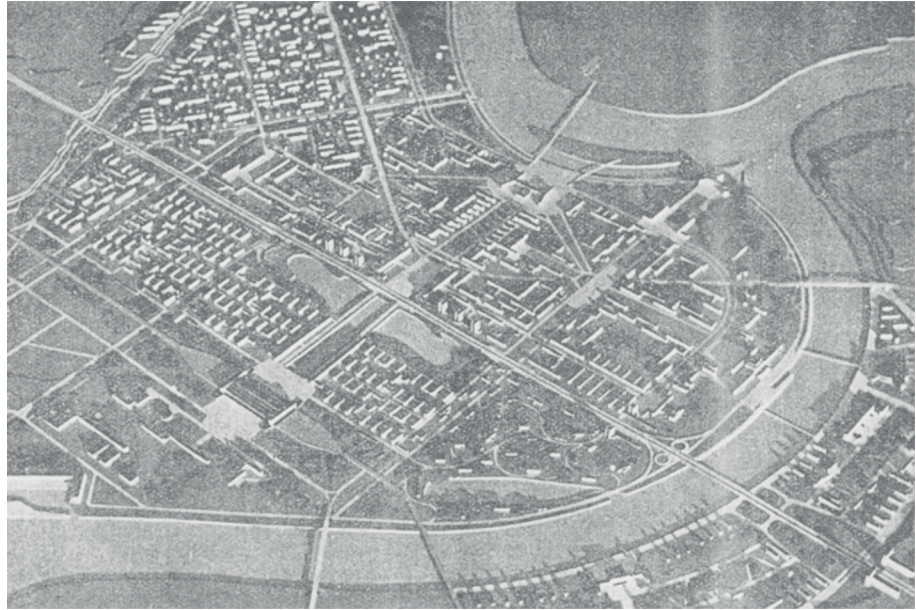
Belgrade, like the Balkans, is in a permanent state of discontinuity. Experiencing 115 wars (Nurden 2009) on its territory in two thousand years of history means that Belgrade and its citizens face a war every 17.5 years. In other words, for centuries, there has not been a single generation without a direct experience of war, at least once in their life. In the same period,

**Fig. 7**

Presentation of the final proposal for the General Urban Plan of Belgrade to the President of the State, Josip Broz Tito (1949).

Fig. 8

Nikola Dobrović, Milorad Macura (1948) - The competition for the urban plan of New Belgrade.



Belgrade was razed to ashes 44 times (Nurden 2009), implying that every 45 years, we rebuilt our beloved city almost from scratch. In this lens, New Belgrade is not such a significant undertaking to construct.

Between to have and to be:

Betweenness enables the emancipation of choice in which the state, as the owner of social property, has rights over all resources. It ensures, or at least tries to ensure, equality in the distribution of those resources. Among the best examples of how that principle works is the production of apartments by society, social ownership of the housing stock, and the distribution of apartments based on the criteria of equality. Another example is the inalienable right to use the apartment, but not to privatize it because a flat is a social good. New Belgrade was conceived and built as a socially-owned city (Blagojević 2007). Another possible reading: Between top and down. This implies establishing relationships along the vertical lines of social organization and hierarchy, but also between an individual and the community—the establishment of social and spatial relations horizontally.

Between Utopia and Pragmatism:

Socialist architecture in Yugoslavia, as a pragmatic field, between Corbusier and Marx, existed between utopian, ideological, and dogmatic fields, with Tito as a mediator (Pignatti 2019). The position of the architect, in this case, could take on the role of interpreter and articulator of all four fields (pragmatic, ideological, dogmatic, and utopian), leading to the dangerous demiurge position of the supreme priest of the new order who knows what people need better than themselves. Even Dobrić could not resist this challenge, neither could Corbusier, but Tito did.

Life between the rigid centers of political power and the vibrancy of everyday life: A life between real needs and the ability to satisfy them.

The heroic environment is not suitable for the average person's life. In a heroic setting, the nearest kindergarten or supermarket is often located in another part of the city or on the other side of the river. This was the danger of the original idea in New Belgrade. However, private initiatives quickly intervened, furnishing the basic necessities of life, and the weak technical potential of the construction industry to complete heroic ideas. "Ambitious plans to create a new city on the left bank of the Sava were not accompanied by adequate technical equipment," while "construction

based on craft production was unprepared for such high goals and expectations” (Đukanović 2015). When, over time, the technical potential grew to the limit of realizing the heroic idea, the city was already finished, the war began, and the state-investor dissolved.

Between modernization (as a process) and modernity (as a goal): That is, architecture between modernism and modernization. Discussions about contested modernism (Blagojević 2007) and unfinished modernization (Mrduljaš, Kulić 2012) show that modernism was not the ultimate goal, and modernization was realized only to the extent that local society was ready to modernize.

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Luka Skansi, Susanna Campeotto
The different scales of relationality.
Edvard Ravnikar and the Revolution Square in Ljubljana

Abstract

Revolution Square (today known as Republic Square) is a large-scale multifunctional complex of high symbolic and urban value, located by the historical center of Ljubljana. As a result of a long design process (1960-74), the complex designed by Edvard Ravnikar and his collaborators can be considered as one of the most extraordinary and at the same time peculiar examples of socialist “capitols”. Its uniqueness derives from its capacity to interlace through its various volumes a multiplicity of spatial and linguistic relationships with, on the one hand, the different scales of the city and, on the other, with its historical stratifications. The balance between the parts and between the elements of the project is managed over time, using precise tools of spatial composition that, far from rigid monumentalism, can project the work into a living, changing reality. The essay aims to bring to light the main strategies and techniques of relationality that characterize Ravnikar’s work.

Keywords

Relationality — Space — Edvard Ravnikar

Introduction

Edvard Ravnikar’s Ljubljana Revolution Square¹ has been read so far, predominantly, and consistently, through the lens of the relationship between politics and architecture in the years of Yugoslav socialism². However, the realized project, as we know it today, is the result of a long process characterized by several volumetric and functional reconfigurations. Although originally born from an idea to build, on this site, a temple of socialism, over time the project is enriched with a whole series of activities, architectures and spaces, transforming it from a memorial of the Revolution to a complex urban, economic, social, and obviously political-administrative centrality. In this sense, one might speculate how Revolution Square represents, rather than a particular example of a socialist capitol, a project that speaks to the uniqueness of the Yugoslav experience. An experience that, to be described and understood, requires a reformulation of the canonical definitions of the relationships between politics and architectural culture, between aspiration to modernity, architectural history, and the stratification of the city.

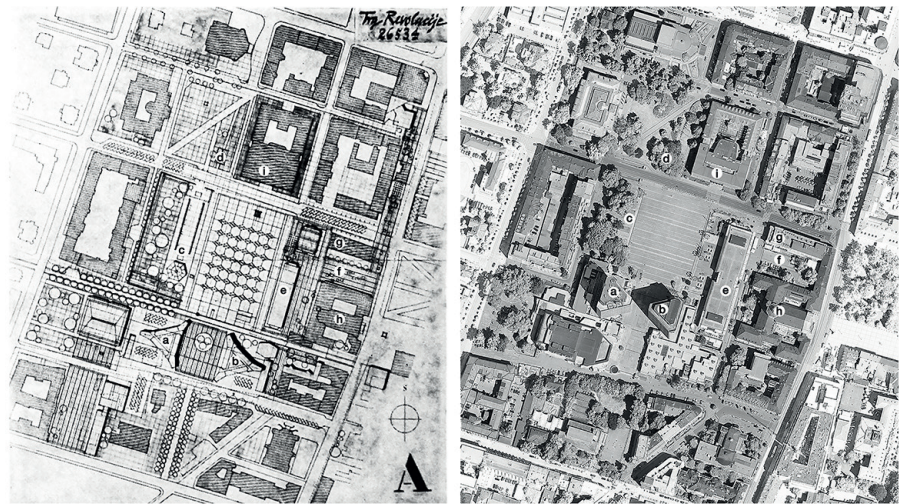
The project as a process

The 1959 competition asked invited professionals to redesign the garden area of the Ursuline Nunnery. The new square would have been overlooked by the People’s Assembly Building, and nearby were the most important public buildings dating back to the 19th century, such as the Opera House and the National Museum. The rich and grand monument to the Revolution was to be the symbolic focus of the entire composition.

Edvard Ravnikar’s winning proposal initially envisioned an empty space,

Fig. 1

Comparison between the plan of the intervention published after the competition (from *Arhitekt* 4, 1960) and the area as it appears today. a. Tr3 tower; b. Tr2 tower; c. Monument to the Revolution; d. Monument to the Heroes of Ljubljana; e. Emona building / then Maximarket; f. Plečnik square; g. Plečnik gymnasium; h. Church of the Ursuline nuns; i. People's Assembly / Parliament building.



as wide as the entire block and without elevation jumps, characterized by the presence of two twenty-story triangular prismatic towers – which would house the institutions – on the southern front, and the Revolution Monument on the western side. Here dense vegetation concluded the space and formed a green belt in continuity with Heroes Park, counterpointing the green foliage of Rožnik and Ljubljana Castle, visible on the opposite side. The building on the northwest side of Congress Square was to be demolished and, through selective demolition of a portion of the convent, a system of smaller squares toward the historic city was created to the east, an ideal continuation of Zvezda Park. In terms of size, this area corresponded to the Baroque block, which, however, is not directly included in the central space of the new Revolution Square: a low-rise building³ and a separate small head block interposed between the new intervention and the preserved portions of the preexisting building, rebating their lengths. The entire complex was excluded from vehicular traffic, and parking spaces were laid out flush along the closed access roads.

This first project, which already had all the elements of the final one (square, towers, monument, completion of the Baroque block), was in an important hinge position between the ancient and the modern city and was part of a programmatic operation aimed at giving Ljubljana the character of a national capital. To meet this goal, special emphasis was placed on the character of the space in the north-south direction, and the size of the surrounding blocks established the zoning of the new intervention. Along one and the same axis were the towers, the emptiness of the square, and the Palace of Assembly. The monument was placed near the towers, in such a position that it could not be spared from «formal and dimensional competition» (Ravnikar 1962a) with the architecture of the square.

The connection of the complex with neighboring urban areas, to be achieved through the creation of a series of new spaces, did not appear to have been fully elaborated at this stage, and the commission itself had commented upon the winning design by suggesting that the solution presented should be considered «mainly as a basic urban program idea, rather than as a precise planning proposal»⁴ (M. Š. 1960).

Revolution Square in its final layout keeps the same basic elements, what changes (besides the functions dictated by contingencies) is their spatial configuration⁵.

The square is enlarged, axialities are lost, and the new intervention moves

Fig. 2

Some fragments of the 1974 article published in the "Sinteza" magazine. The article was accompanied by photographs describing the plastic relationship of the new figures in the natural environment, the relationship with the historic city, the spatial configurations. Digital collage by the authors.



out of the geometric division dictated by the surrounding blocks. It becomes a completely pedestrian place, and cars are placed in a basement level of parking. It shifts from an empty and strictly aseptic plaza to a space that can be walked through on multiple levels, whose primary value is given by perspective movement, distance, proximity, closeness, and separation between objects.

The prismatic volumes of the two towers are rotated and scaled in height, and although both towers have 12 stories, the silhouettes are unequal due to the irregular and various roof treatments. This variation on the theme avoids the potential cold monumentalism of symmetry, allowing the mass of the new intervention to be brought closer to the larger urban landscape. How central this theme was to Ravnikar is shown in his first presentation of the project in a trade magazine, where he includes the image of the two buildings in views of the Baroque city, from the bridge by Jurij Zaninovič and Josef Melan⁶, and from Jože Plečnik's spaces.

The monument to the Revolution is still located along the western boundary of the square, but rests on a system of platforms featured by small gradients and is set apart from the towers, thus achieving a «shift away from the monument's axial, immobile vision» in favor of «proportions closer to modern man» (Ravnikar 1962a).

To the east, toward the historic city, the space is filled with many different elements, whereas in the previous version the old-new relationship was resolved with the emptiness of two small squares. A key role is played by the low, long parallelepiped of today's Maximarket, the length of which is increased to almost touch the extension of the Plečnik Gymnasium. The building, through its apparently elemental geometry, plays a crucial role, namely that of uniting a series of irregular volumes and spaces that are autonomous from each other (internal facades of the Baroque building block

**Fig. 3**

The Ursuline church with Tr2 in the background seen from Congress square (*Kongresni trg*). © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.

**Fig. 4**

Plečnik Square and the expansion of the gymnasium. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.

and secondary spaces of the nuns' complex): the obtained spatial unity becomes, as will be seen below, the basis of the transformation of the functional content of Revolution Square.

The variation process, which lasted until 1982 and occurred even when the project seemed to have reached its own completeness, shows its gradual inner enrichment from a concept that, as Ravnikař puts it, «was nothing but an unknown», with the goal of «finding an architectural language that, on a psychological level, becomes very differentiated, rich and exciting» (Ravnikař 1974). A key to this place characterized by a strong multiscale-arity and the composition of space aimed at overlapping visual planes is provided by Edvard Ravnikař himself in the article published by the magazine «Sinteza» in September 1974. The text comes with 32 photographs taken by the author, accompanied by their captions, which describe the intervention starting from its plastic relationship with the context – territorial and urban – and then and then goes on, with continuous jumps in scale, to the signification of details.

To gain a deeper understanding of the specific spatial and linguistic relations that the Revolution Square complex weaves with the city's scales and its historical layers, and the compositional reasons aimed at achieving balance among the project's parts, it is worth analyzing the individual basic elements that constitute it: the square, the towers, the completion of the Baroque block and the Maximarket Emona, the monument.

The square

Already in the design submitted for the competition, the layout of the complex centered around a large central void. It was a concrete floor characterized by a geometric paving pattern, which went to configure an accomplished space, almost a carpet of monumental size surrounded by the buildings that housed the highest authorities of the time. The garden of the Ursuline nuns was indeed the only urban space that could dimensionally accommodate this expansion of the city, but if at an early stage it was necessary to allude to an «afunctional functionality» (Ravnikař 1974) in order to meet the demands of the call, in the course of the design process, the task assumed by the architect is to transform an aseptic political space into a place of life, capable of relating the new dimensions of the city.

Placing institutions in the groove of ancient History and giving Ljubljana a scale and image that the city had never had – the scale of 19th century city: monumental and multifunctional (Vodopivec 2000) – was, at a time of full reconstruction, an important operation to give it the symbolic character of a national capital. Plečnik himself had tried, through his many projects, to



Fig. 5
The passage between Plečnik square and Revolution square (now Republic square). © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.



Fig. 6
The first view of the towers coming out of the passage that crosses the Emona building. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.

base the city's image on a character of continuity – even freely interpreted – with the past. Notable in this regard are the series of urban projects for Ljubljana, some realized others remaining at the conceptual level, between the 1930s and the 1950s: the Market to the arrangement of Ljubljana, the axis of Vegova ulica and the National Library, the ecclesiastical architecture to the garden of All Saints in Žale, the design of the new parliament, the arrangement of the castle.

In the layout proposed for the competition, the memory of the Roman settlement was emphatically evoked by the empty space between the two towers, the monumental conclusion of the wide tree-lined boulevard that was to connect – again along the direction of the *cardo* – Gregorčičeva ulica with Erjavčeva cesta. The two prisms, symmetrical to the side, formed a portal in the north-south direction that framed the People's Assembly Building. The reciprocal position of the buildings and with respect to the emptiness of the square, implied a static visual perception and a one-way relationality of a monumental nature, associated more with the tradition of socialist realism than with Plečnik's complex spatial relations.

In the design process that marks Edvard Ravnikar's entire oeuvre, symmetry is often made imperfect and axuality is deflected. Revolution Square is no exception, and through progressive accent changes, the space acquires multi-directionality, and thus life. The emptiness of the square is resized, thus becoming wider and shorter, and thus the geometric divisions determined by the blocks are negated. The towers, consequently, are shifted westward, and this alteration of the weights along the longitudinal axis causes them to lose their axuality, in favor of a more complex triangulation between the towers, the government building, and the Tomb of Heroes.

Having lost the single directrix of the *cardo*, the entire lower, built-up margin is placed exactly on the site of the northern wall of the Emona *castrum*: the trace of history – as in many of Plečnik's projects for Ljubljana, above all the intervention on Vegova ulica – is placed at the foundation of the construction of the new, as a manifestation of the human and urban stratification of the city⁷.

But it is the construction of a large parking lot completely underground that leads to a fundamental change: the square loses its perimeter defined by level parking lots in favor of a unique, walkable, multi-level social environment. All its fronts are accessible by overcoming slight elevation changes. Stairs, ramps, and small passages guide movement through the space, and an urban gallery, a place of metropolitan life on a human scale, follows at the underground level the progression of the Emona building. What used to be a linear margin thus gradually becomes «a belt with opportunities to shop, to meet without disturbance, to relax and observe; a

Fig. 7

Emona building. Detail of the facade cladding. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.



belt without cars, even if they are close by; a multipurpose belt with surprises, open to wind and rain, cold and heat» (Ravnikar 1974).

These principles followed the most innovative reflections in the context of international debate, especially those that arose from the 1951⁸ CIAM and flowed in various forms into the work of Team X members. Nodal was the issue of pedestrianization, and in a broader context of rethinking urban centralities, which had been strongly challenged by the constant enlargement of city boundaries and wartime destruction, which had led to the redefinition of the planning theories of previous years.

The towers

The towers, unlike the initial proposal, are rotated 90° in a position that is not perfectly symmetrical to the square. Such an operation evokes the tension given by the two reliefs (Grajski hrib and Šišenski hrib) that grip the city, integrating the new figures into the topography of the place, and completely changes the nature of the space between them, characterized now by forces no longer axial and parallel, but converging in two points, in favor of direct involvement of the human being within the celebratory space.

Tall buildings are built according to a “tree-like” structural scheme, with a central load-bearing core, cantilevered floors, and free-standing facades clad in thin slabs of Pohorje marble.

The basements, emptied, reveal the construction of the building, and fit into the two tower access podiums. To the east, the headquarters of Ljubljanska Banka (TR2) has the same marble slab cladding in its lower volume, while to the west, at the foot of the Iskra Company’s office tower, (TR3) face brick is used. This choice is driven by the fact that this is an architecture that houses a different function: the University’s technical library. The uses are thus separated, linguistically as well as functionally, while maintaining, albeit with different materials, the same dynamic character of the outer skin.

In his treatment of hanging facades, Ravnikar adheres to Semperian theories, filtered through the experience of Wagner and Plečnik: the curtain wall, consisting of a tight alternation of paired slabs and slats, when perceived in the distance becomes a stone pleating capable of vibrating in the atmosphere, yet without dematerializing the volumes. The modern theme

**Fig. 8**

The space between the Tr2 tower and the Emona building with the sculpture by Slavko Tihec, 1972. In the background, the Parliament building. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.

**Fig. 9**

The Emona building and the bell tower of the Ursuline church, the only element of the ancient city to emerge from the new built horizon. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.

of the brise soleil as a generator of light and shadow is declined here for the entire height, using a simple module consisting of two slabs of local marble screwed together: a wider one perpendicular to the facade shows its thin thickness, a narrower one is mounted at an angle. The result of this texture, perceived from the passages leading from the historic city toward Revolution Square, is that of a «tactile space as a space of complete intimacy, without width, and therefore violently vertical, without horizon» (Ravnikar 1974). Such a simple detail in terms of construction allows facades to be three-dimensional, despite their large surface area. It also makes the visual relationship with the towers a constant kinetic experience: as the observer walks, the two objects keep changing both in the textures of the elevations (sometimes open, sometimes half-open, sometimes completely closed) and in their changing relationship given by the triangular – and therefore never static – form of the prisms.

The two roofs maintain the same vertical warp in the folds of the cladding, but the different heights and irregular treatment allow the towers to be perceived as similar but not identical, denying their symmetry. When viewed from the space inside the square, these devices allude to the steeple spire of the Ursuline Church, but when facing the church, «the incongruity between the new tower facade and the classicist facade is masked by the same copper roof of the tower and the addition of Building 2» (Ravnikar 1974).

The completion of the Baroque block and the Emona building⁹

The relationship between the historic city and the new intervention is made clear in the solution adopted for the attachment to the Baroque block and in the Maximarket / Emona, a key building for the entire complex. The long parallelepiped, accentuated horizontally compared to the first competition version, simultaneously connects and delimits the area of the former monastery courtyard (now Plečnik Square) and the platform of Revolution Square. This is a “dialectical” delimitation: the building can relate to both voids, and both scales – both with the “baroque” square, according to practically pre-19th century measures, and with the modern, monumental one. The transition between the two is represented by an underpass, joining the two spaces, without affecting their respective integrity.

The Emona building, like the towers, has a central supporting structure. This allows for the creation of a set back and transparent ground floor (which lends itself well to the commercial function), with a passageway that invites those coming from the historic center to cross Plečnik Square proceeding in a slightly oblique direction, toward the extension of the gymnasium, and to subsequently discover Revolution Square offering a

**Fig. 10**

The Tr3 tower and the cantilevered ceiling of the Tr2 tower. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.

Fig. 11

The monument to the Revolution, created in 1962 by the sculptor Drago Tršar together with the architect Vladimir Braco Mušic. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.



non-frontal perspective rich in expressive details.

The suspended two-story volume is entirely clad in marble slabs, and the façade, interrupted only in the middle by a large window at the escalators, is articulated with a vertical rhythm given by a series of ripples that evoke, in form and function, the “pilasters” of Albini’s *Rinascence*, or the solution applied to cover the facilities’ pipes.

It is no coincidence that shopping center is called Emona, and bears on the stringcourses as the only decorative element the “e” logo. This letter is a reminder, even in the event of any functional changes, of the intimately archaeological nature of the place: quoting the ancient, the real vital heart of the building is its public gallery located below ground level. This is a covered space overlooked by stores, lit by numerous skylights and two patios full of greenery. From below, new glimpses of the towers open up to visitors.

The long shopping arcade ends in two open spaces: to the north an open space with stairs leads back to the level of the square, while to the south is the entrance to the foyer of the Cankarjev Dom, at the ancient Roman wall. The Emona building is conceptually similar to the solution adopted by Plečnik between 1931 and 1939 for the Central Market, along Ljubljana. Again, a long-built margin allows selected views of some notable portions of the city toward the Castle, while the basement is entirely traversable, opening with small breaks toward the river, welcoming visitors to its public spaces below ground level; above all, it reorganizes a series of spaces behind the medieval building curtain, giving it unity and scale.

In this sense, toward the old city, the small square dedicated to the Slovenian master is a striking space overlooked by the Baroque Ursuline building, made permeable on the ground floor, and Plečnik’s gymnasium with its headboard expanded by Ravnikar, toward Revolution Square. Here, three isolated columns are met according to the principle of «condensation of space at the conjunctions of large sides of the built environment, where individual parts of space flow into others, and things in this passage announce them by their attractiveness» (Ravnikar 1974).

The monument

The monument to the Revolution, in its first location, occupied the entire area to the west thus ideally extending the green belt, beyond Šubičeva cesta. The work itself, yet to be defined, was perfectly aligned – and the relationship is underscored by two parallel walls that isolate the space from the rest of the square – with the already present Ljubljana Heroes’ Monument, created in the square of the same name by architect Edo Mihevc with sculptor Boris Kalin in 1950.



Fig. 12

The configuration of space as a perspective movement, with its constituent elements: the towers, the square, the Emona building and the underground shopping gallery. «A game of distance and proximity or closeness and separation» (Ravnikar, 1974). © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.

Fig. 13

The underground shopping gallery and life inside this space during a working day. © Susanna Campeotto, 2023.



It will be necessary to wait until 1962 to see the plastic outcomes of the competition for the Revolution Monument: the first prize is awarded to the work proposed by the sculptor Drago Tršar together with the architect Vladimir Braco Mušic, who had designed the water basin and the system of plates on which the monument would rest, altering, again, the rigid axialities.

The figurative solution, as found by Ravnikar himself in reference to the submitted projects, follows the «dominant tone of thought characterized by a decided departure from the statuesque conception of the monumental task» and is expressed through a different plastic language that «appeals to other human capacities and perceptions» (Ravnikar 1962a).

Its new location, now distinctly independent of the building mass of buildings, surrounded by a green backdrop and visible over a much wider field – from the entrances in the proximity of the ancient city – «suggests the possibility of a broad and complete form, with greater symbolic power and more direct and essential expressiveness» (Ravnikar 1962a) in relation to the contemporary architectural context.

Conclusions

The design evolution of Revolution Square provides a deeper understanding of the transition to a post-statuary – and, in architectural terms, post-monumental – phase that characterizes a unique season of Yugoslav architecture. A methodology that can be applied to the plastic arts, as well as to spatial and tectonic composition, in search of a complex and layered relationality between parts, between scales, between elements. The particular design underlying the construction of each element of Revolution Square thus allows, for the entire complex, both the continuous perceptive leap between context, figure, and detail, and the permeability of the volumes in ground attachment, in order to transform a single-axial and political space into a multifunctional and sensory place of pedestrian movement. In between, more than two decades of modifications and changes of principalship have involved variations, decentralizations, new relationships according to an «inner growth that cannot be understood by the sequence of facts, for it is a process whose initial starting points may be the consequence of erroneous assumptions that, while being tested, still teach us much» (Ravnikar 1974).

* The paragraphs: *Introduction*; *The square*; *The completion of the Baroque block and the Emona building*; are written by Luka Skansi. The paragraphs: *The project as a process*, *The towers*, *The monument*; *Conclusions*; are written by Susanna Campeotto.

Notes

¹ Since 1991: Republic Square.

² In preparing this article, both the recent bibliography that has dealt with a more political treatment of the events related to Revolution Square (Stierli, Kulić 2018), (Kulić 2013;2014), (Cibic 2018), and the more historiographical, predominantly Slovenian (Zupan 2003), (Žnidaršič 2004), (Koselj 2005), (Hočevár, 2018). The latter publication, in which Rok Žnidaršič's thesis was incorporated, although it gives comprehensive information about the reasons for the project, it does not specify in detail the compositional and tectonic strategies fundamental to the Authors in Ravníkar's work. Also noteworthy is the performance *For our Economy and Culture* (Venice Biennale 2013) by Jasmina Cibic.

³ Reference is made to the building that would later become the Emona shopping center, but at this stage its function was not defined.

⁴ All quotations from Slovenian in the text are given in Italian with translation by the authors.

⁵ On the economic and administrative reasons leading to the functional redefinition of the project, see (Žnidaršič 2004), (Zupan 2003).

⁶ Jurij Zaninović and Josef Melan were the architect (a pupil of Otto Wagner) and engineer, respectively, who built the Dragon Bridge in Ljubljana between 1900 and 1901.

⁷ Fragments of the Roman walls emerge in the park facing Erjavčeva cesta in front of the Presidential Palace and close to the southern edge of the former Ursuline Convent, where it is necessary to approach them in order to observe them and then gaze out towards the ancient city.

⁸ In this context, the critical positions of what later became Team X in the years between 1954 and 1959 are particularly relevant. See: (Tyrwhitt 1952) and (Zuccari Marchi 2020).

⁹ The building will only later be called Maximarket.

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Claudia Pirina
Between Archè and Techne.
Subtle equilibriums in the work of Oton Jugovec

Abstract

Some works by the Slovenian architect Oton Jugovec are used to investigate his figurative and architectural research more generally, in which the definition of form can only be understood as the result of a synthesis of relationships between “construction” and “place”. The evolution of his thought manifests a gradual move away from the modes of international standardization, with the aim of developing an architecture capable of extracting and abstracting principles and forms derived from the study of previous epochs and tradition. Attention to places and memory of local identities, combined with formal and structural invention from traditional materials are the elements that distinguish his work and still constitute a topical element.

Keywords

Oton Jugovec — Tradition — Construction

Modernity versus genius loci

If we listen with attention to the writers and thinkers of the twentieth century when they express themselves on the concept of modernity and compare them their opposite numbers of the previous century, we are made aware of a radical lowering of perspective and a drop in imaginative potential (Berman, cited by Nicolín 1989, p.5).

At the end of the 1990s, Pierluigi Nicolín began the editorial of issue 64 of the magazine “Lotus” with some words by the American philosopher Marshall Berman who, in his texts of those years, proposed a series of reflections on the experience of modernity, starting from a reading of the work of certain masters and their special cultural relationship with certain cities. The issue of “Lotus”, titled *The Other Urbanism*, is introduced by an interesting essay by Manuel de Solà Morales in which the Catalan architect rereads, in the key of an “other” tradition, a series of contemporary urban projects by «planners of the ‘other modern’, at one and the same time enthusiasts for and enemies of modern life, [who] have been able to grasp its ambiguities and contradictions without renouncing the attempt to go beyond them» (Nicolín 1989, p.5). The re-examination of the origins of certain phenomena contemporary to him had the sense of focusing on the work of certain figures of planners interested in identifying a method capable of interpreting modernity in the sign of complexity and superimposition on the pre-existing city «and for that very reason determined to seek its most rigorous transformation» (De Solà Morales 1989, p.7), far from the abstractions and absolutisms of that current of modernity that arose, according to De Solà Morales, after the Ciam Congress of 1929. The abil-

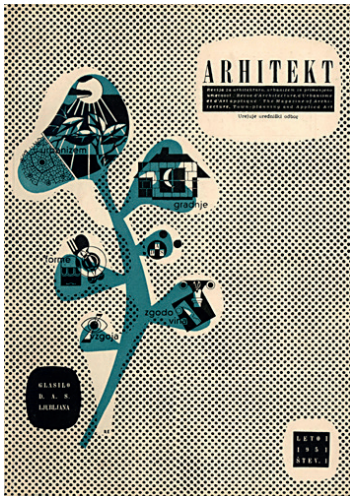


Fig. 1

Cover of the first issue of the magazine "Arhitekt". Graphics by Edvard Ravnikar Univerzitetna knjižnica Maribor, September 1951.

ity of the selected projects to read the contexts and specific conditions «of each part of the city, its perspective being the great city as a complex and ever richer and more differentiated artefact» (ibid) brought to attention a «complex history of twentieth-century architecture - in which avant-garde and the tradition are often intertwined in the creations of the same protagonists and ideas pass through personal relationships that had little to do with architectural movement» (Ferlenga 2022, p.23).

In the panorama of Slovenian architecture of what has been defined as the third generation of architects, Oton Jugovec can be considered as that figure whose sensitivity, together with a profound knowledge of his own origins, has resulted in architecture in which respect for tradition and dialogue with the roots of the territory have «guaranteed an evolving continuity» (Zorec 2020). With his work, Jugovec has managed to achieve a balance between modernity and the local rural, artistic and architectural heritage, experimenting, over time, with techniques and forms of modernity in search of his own distinctive language. The evolution of his work reflects, on the one hand, the knowledge acquired during his early years of training at the Technical University in Prague, and on the other, the influences of the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana and his teacher Edvard Ravnikar. If from the Prague university he inherited «a solid technical education and working discipline» (Zorec 2000-2001, p. 139), in the Ljubljana faculty he was able to incorporate both Central European and modernist instances. The establishment of the university in Ljubljana by Ivan Vurnik and Jože Plečnik had in fact been characterized by a Mitteleuropean breath «that would strongly mark the whole evolution of the subsequent Slovene architecture» (Mercadante 2023, p.2) through the work of Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos, Peter Behrens or the interest in Expressionism and Bauhaus, or the great structures of the Viennese Höfe (ibid). Between the 1920s and 1940s, however, a series of Slovenian architects, including Ravnikar, had frequented Le Corbusier's studio (Hrausky 1993, p. 37), importing the instances of Modernism, later hybridized by the proximity and relationship with Nordic Scandinavian architectural models, also through their work within the magazine "Arhitekt" (fig. 1). The figure of Ravnikar, and his cultural circle, can be considered the pivot of a work of internationalization and cultural exchange that, in some exponents of Slovene architecture, made possible over time that process of *invention of tradition* described and defined by Eric Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm 1987). Particularly in Jugovec's work, it is possible to recognize a kind of evolution of thought that, moving from an initial explicitly modernist attitude, will arrive at a synthesis of modern architecture and Slovenian tradition, in which the forms of the old will build subtle balances with those of the new and, in which, the relationship with the place and the environment will progressively acquire a central role for the project.

In his search for a language capable of representing the *genius loci* and a Slovenian identity, the place will represent «that part of truth that belongs to architecture [...], the concrete manifestation of man's dwelling whose identity depends on belonging to places» (Norberg-Shultz 1979, p.6).

Construction and Place

In Jugovec's work, certain themes can be identified as central to his research and can be used as keys to interpretation and interpretation for his works. In his projects, the definition of form can only be understood as the result of a synthesis of relationships between "construction" and "place",

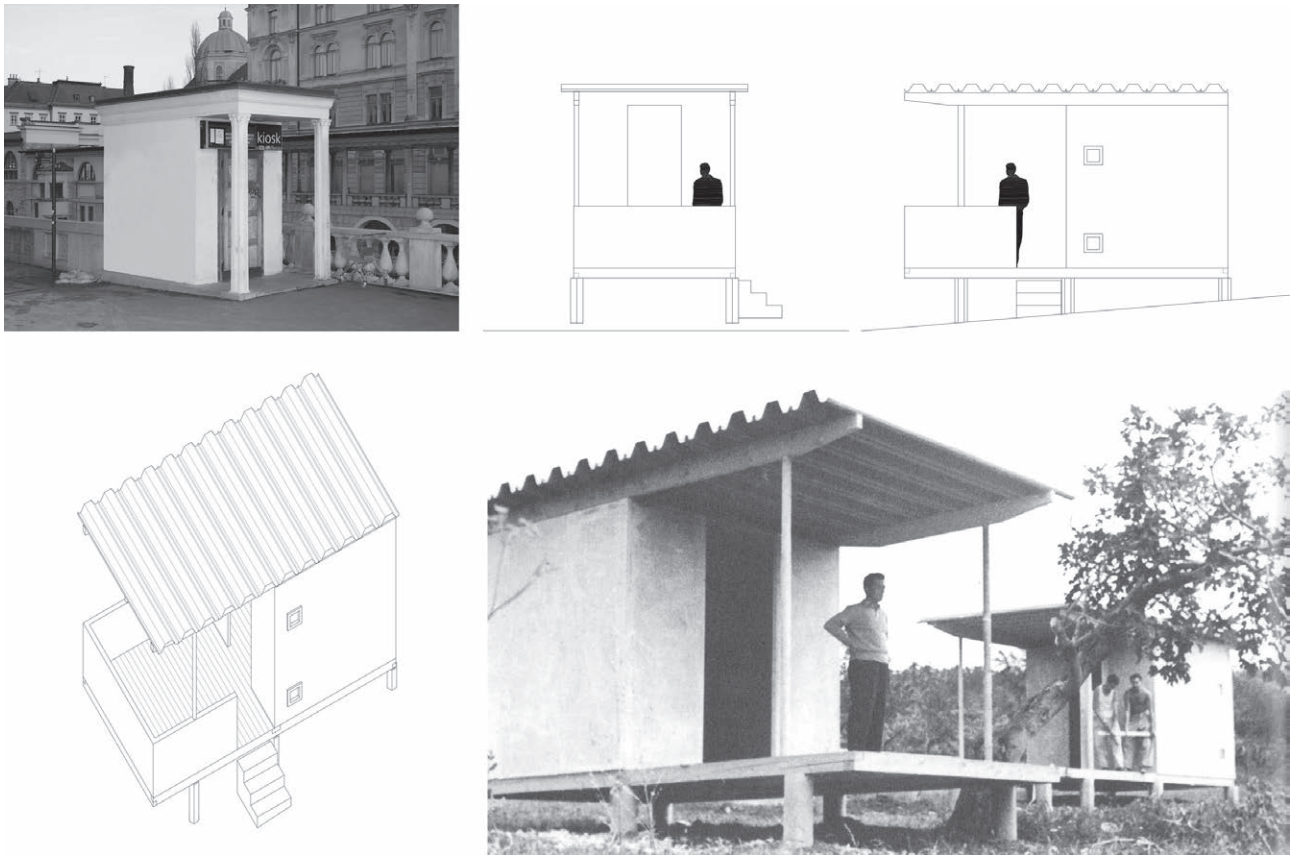
understood according to multiple meanings. This synthesis, which «starting from simple and partial elements, arrives at a complex and unitary representation or knowledge»¹, constitutes an element of interest and innovation that can be identified as a method still fertile for new future design outcomes.

Experimentation with form seeks and finds profound reasons in the relationship with construction, understood in the structural sense, but also in the choice of materials and the precise control of architectural details that distinguish the parts of the building. In this sense, once again, the architect's training constituted an important starting point, both through the teachings of the Prague School, but above all as an outcome of the debate developed in Ljubljana from the 1950s onwards. If towards the end of the 1940s it was the legislation of the FLRJ government [Federativna ljudska republika Jugoslavija] that defined architects as belonging to the category of builders, it would be Ravnikar, in the following years, who would claim a “different” status and role for the figure of the architect (Mercadante 2023, p.6-8). At that particular moment in history for Slovenia, which required the rapid reconstruction of production fabric, roads and housing, Ravnikar, although he developed specific research into prefabrication and the construction of experimental architectural and structural models, at the same time emphasised the importance of the architect's role as an intellectual, as a creator of spaces. In his opinion, this capacity

requires [...] an observation of social facts and a specific preparation, combined, however, with creative skills and an aesthetic sense. The architect therefore, beyond his technical function, is also a creator of cultural values, just as writers, sculptors or musicians create culture (Ravnikar 1951).

Jugovec's works are strongly influenced by this cultural openness, incorporating his precise technical-scientific knowledge with his interests in poetry and music «in which he moved with equal confidence» (Ravnikar 2000-2001, p.5) and with an innovative spirit.

The technical-structural component will, however, accompany his architectural research, together with his interest in the «parallel and simultaneous development and [...] subjective evaluation of all components, creating the exterior and interior space [which] is the germ of individual expression» (Jugovec, in Zorec 2000-2001, p.139). All of Jugovec's production tends to balance structure, construction and geometry, in an attempt to «find its poetic potential as an expressive structure and as a system of construction» (Frampton 1987, p.21), designing every smallest detail², as learnt from Ravnikar and during his first three years of study at the Prague University³. His constructive experimentation will begin with an initial phase dominated by the use of concrete and even prefabricated structures which, passing through a rarefaction of forms and research into lightness, will gradually arrive at the use of wood as a building material identified probably as being more inclined to represent Slovenian culture and tradition. The use of wood in fact, if on the one hand it can be read in the sign of that previously mentioned influence of Nordic architecture developed within the Ljubljana school, on the other hand it recovers not only the popular traditions of local architecture, but also the studies undertaken by Jugovec on design in general and the works exhibited by numerous Slovenian architects in some editions of the International Wood Fair in Ljubljana, the results of which were also published in some issues of the magazine “Arhitekt”.

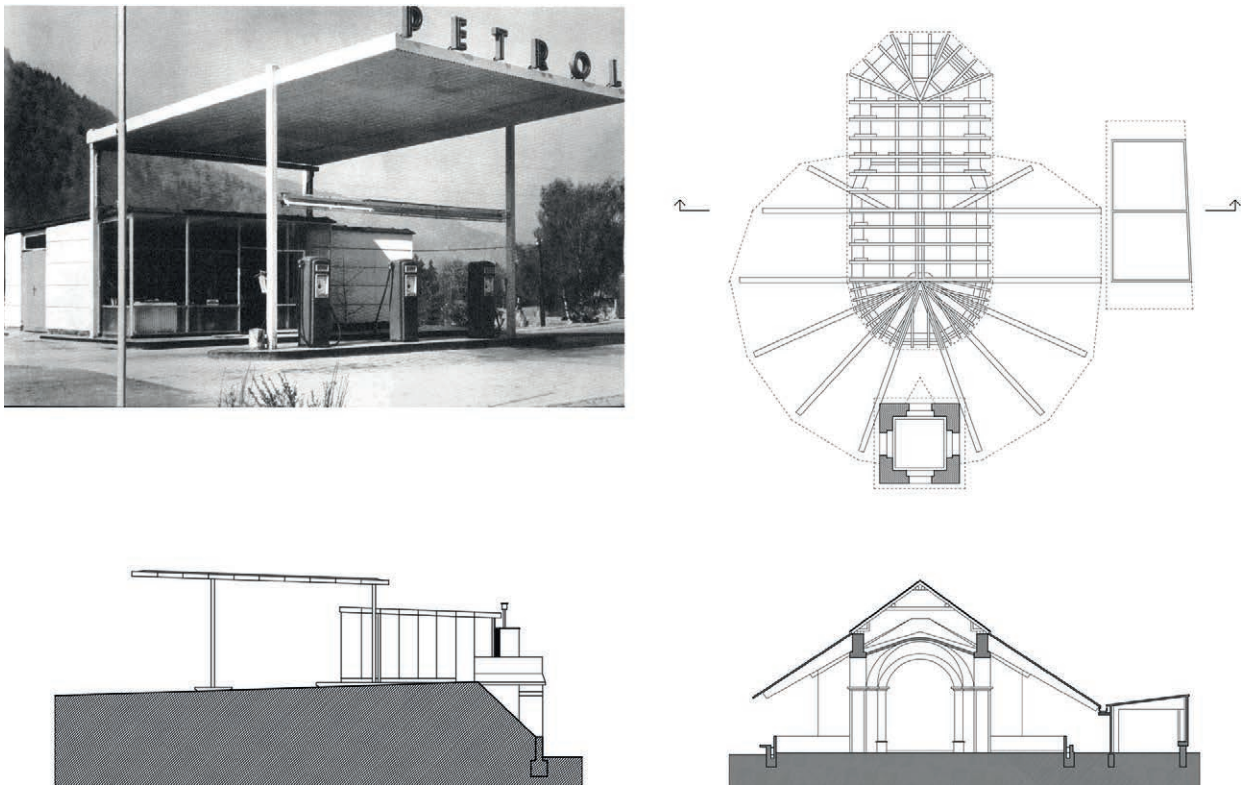
**Fig. 2**

Jože Plečnik, Newspaper kiosk, Ljubljana and Oton Jugovec, Prefabricated holiday homes, Ankaran. (photos from Zorec 2000-2001, p.56 and drawings by C. Pirina and P. Ferrara).

This evolution of thought, and of the method of defining form, manifests a gradual departure from the ways of international standardization, with the aim of develop an architecture capable of extracting and abstracting principles and forms derived from the study of previous epochs, and the tradition of the place, in order to «taking full account of the changeless atmospheric and topographical conditions of a country, which are no longer obstacles but springboards for the creative imagination» (Giedion 1960). In settling in a place, memory and nature play thus play an equally fundamental role as the constructive one. The memory of the place, and of the traces present in it, is combined with the interest and the ability to define, in the project, symbiotic relationships between architecture and nature considered, «in a similar way to Aalto, [...] a symbol of freedom» (Zorec 2000-2001, p.147).

The roof as a shelter

In Jørn Utzon's famous article entitled *Platforms and Plateaus: Ideas of A Danish Architect* (Utzon 1962), the Danish architect describes the inspiration for his architecture in the strange opposition between the Chinese roof-pagoda and the Mexican pyramid, which are translated into the definition of variously articulated ground-bases and suspended roofs in the form of shelters. His evocative sketches tell of worlds in which, on rigid, horizontal plinths, suspended pagodas float, capable of accommodating habitable spaces and, at the same time, of metaphorically “incorporating” the landscape. This suggestion, and these sketches, well represent Jugovec's series of architectures that articulate the theme of roofing in various ways and can be used as examples of an original thought and design trajectory. If on the one hand these architectures effectively express a logical reason for materials and a constructive coherence, on the other hand they progressively become bearers of the spirit of the places in which they are inserted,

**Fig. 3**

Oton Jugovec, Petrol filling stations and Oton Jugovec, Reteče. Church (photo from Zorec 2000-2001, p.59 and drawings by C. Pirina and P. Ferrara).

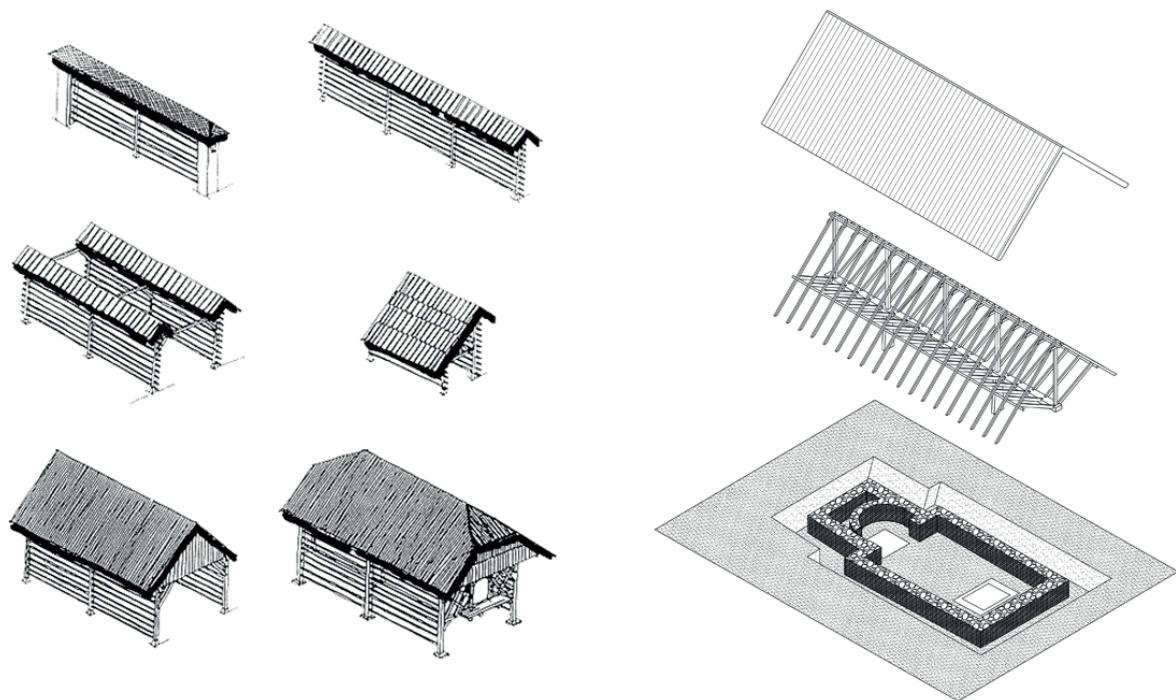
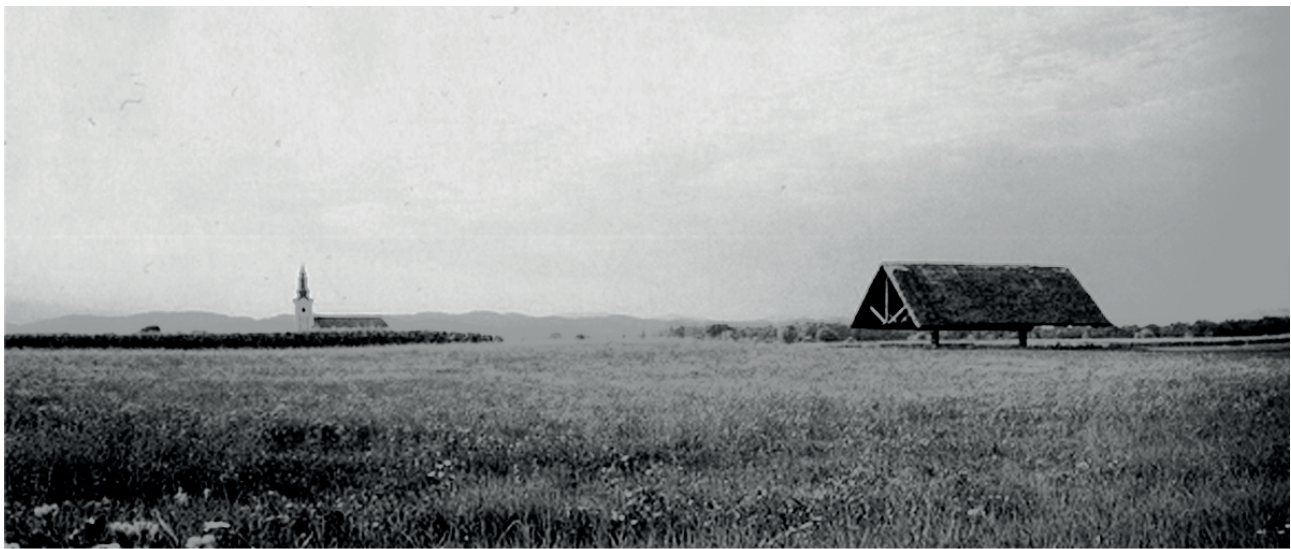
weaving a dialectical relationship with geography.

The slender structures of the prefabricated holiday homes in Ankaran are perhaps indebted to the image of the newspaper kiosk designed in Ljubljana by Jože Plečnik on *Petkovškovo nabrežje* at the entrance to the triad of bridges over the Ljubljanica. Realised in the second half of the 1950s through the assembly of dry structural elements, these structures experimented with innovative construction materials and technologies, and were part of an international debate that animated the new generations of architects in Europe and beyond. Suspended wooden platforms, in the form of stilts, mediate the relationship between the interior of the building and the sloping ground on which the settlement rests. Slender pillars support single-pitch corrugated sheet metal roofs, while walls made of ribbed fibre cement *Solonit* panels define the small 2.60x2.60 meter spaces that accommodate the residences overlooking nature thanks to the covered terrace space that doubles the essential accommodation (fig.2).

At the beginning of the 1960s, the dry experimentation on slender single-pitch roofing systems reaches even clearer definition in the *Petrol* station projects, in which the relationship between roofing and partially glazed volumes defines a greater constructive and formal otherness and autonomy between the parts (fig.3).

It is 10 years later that the work on the reconstruction of the church in Reteče in which the roof, in the form of a shelter, constitutes an element of formal innovation and contemporary grafting onto traditional architecture. The structure of the traditional roof of the church is reassembled above a sort of large suspended 'umbrella' that expands the interior surfaces and radically changes the system of physical and visual relationships between exterior and interior. A stained-glass window, whose design clearly denounces its structurally non-load-bearing function, protects the space of the hall characterised by a slot of light at the foot of the building (fig.3).

In 1973, Jugovec designed and realised his most iconic and best-known work of roofing the archaeological remains of the medieval settlement of

**Fig. 4**

Types of traditional wooden structures of the *kozolec* and Oton Jugovec, covering the archaeological remains of the medieval settlement of Gutenwertha in Otoku (drawings by C. Pirina and P. Ferrara).

Gutenwertha in Otoku, in which an apparently suspended double-pitched roof protects the imprint of ancient walls set into the horizontal plane of the countryside. By accommodating a simple sheltering function, it focuses even more attention on structural precision and on its being an expression of the cultural heritage and identity of those places. That spirit of construction which, according to Luis Kahn, is reflected in a building's ability to clearly narrate its nature by highlighting its structure, is embodied in Jugovec's project in a few precise wooden elements suspended on two pillars, in apparent precarious balance. But beyond the form, it is in the relationship of tension between the roof and the ground that the structure demonstrates its most interesting character. In cross-section, the height of the gap between the lower edge of the roof and the ground line produces a condition where the horizon is cut off and the surrounding landscape is specially framed (fig.4).

If the work refers to the image of Laugier's hut, the logic of the materials and the constructive invention are indebted to the traditional wooden structures of the Slovenian *kozolec* (fig.4), elements of vernacular archi-

**Fig. 5**

Joseph Wagner, Litografija Ljubljane iz zbirke Malerische Ansichten aus Krain, 1842 - 1848 (Digital Library of Slovenia, id. no. QLYI3AXZ). [online].

texture that punctuate the ancient agricultural territory and characterise the landscape (fig.5). Among the many and varied forms of these structures, the typology using two central supports suspending small double-pitched roofs to protect the hay that was stored on the central racks is particularly striking in relation to the Jugovec project. In some cases of the tradition, the doubling of such structures strongly recalls the image of the last of the projects realised by the Slovenian architect in the late 1980s, of the central building of the Partisan Rog Baza 20. The articulation and complexity of the allocated functions gives rise to a building that interprets, in a complex form, if previously described structural figures. The splitting of the structure composes a volume in which 4 large wooden pillars support a pair of pitches that touch at certain points in search of balance. The tapering in plan of the pitches in the form of a trapezoid translates in section into an equally trapezoidal figure that further articulates the volume and the relationship with the surrounding landscape, which becomes the work's protagonist. Once again, the form and construction of the building establish a dialectical relationship with the site and seek in the horizontality of the basement a dimension other than the sinuous lines of the ground (fig.6).

Actuality of Jugovec's work

Attention to place and memory of local identities combined with formal and structural invention from traditional materials are the elements that characterize Jugovec's works analyzed in the text. In his work, the coexistence and ability to combine the instances of modernity with local peculiarities, if on the one hand they can be understood as part of that architectural history of the 20th century interested in investigating relations with tradition, on the other hand they constitute the true elements of interest and topicality of his work. If already during the last years of his career a number of prizes and awards had drawn attention to his figure⁴, in recent

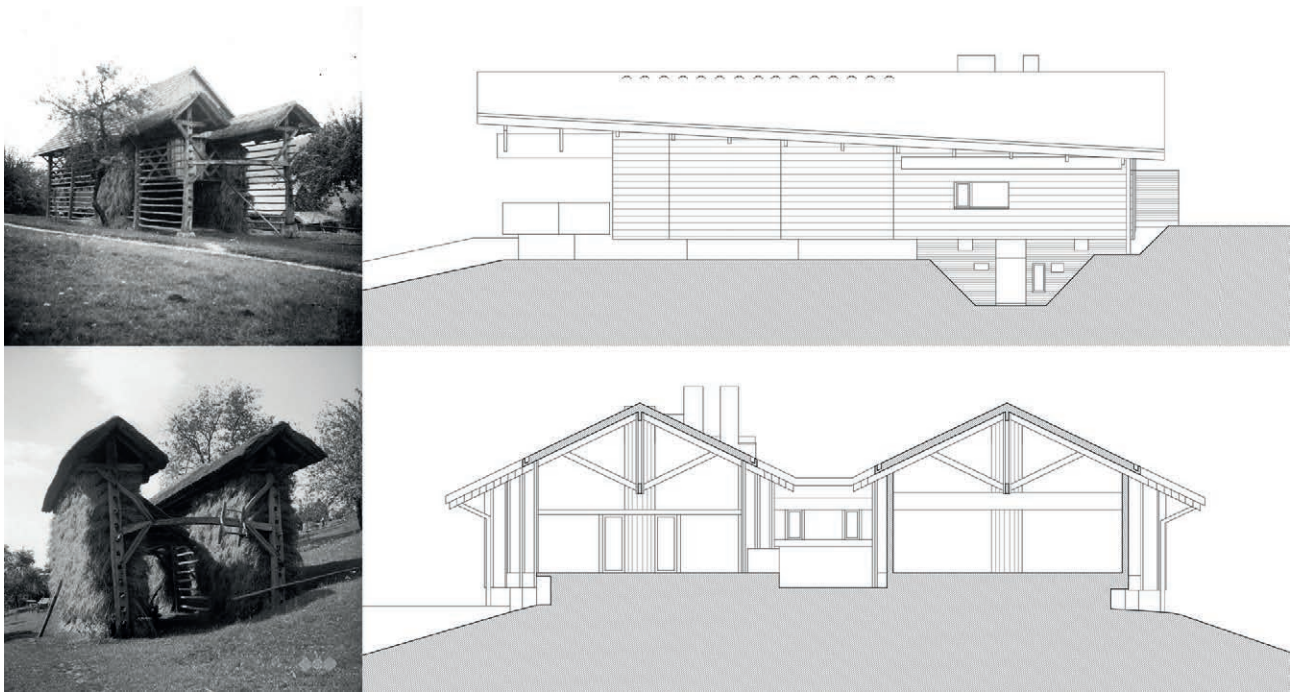


Fig. 6

Types of traditional wooden structures of the *kozolec* (Wikimedia Common). Oton Jugovec, central building of the Partisan Rog Baza 20 (drawings by C. Pirina and P. Ferrara).

years there has been a return to investigating his architecture in his places of origin. If Maruša Zorec's careful monographic work is in the sign of discipline-specific research, it is interesting to note how some of her works transcend the specifically professional dimension to be used in a broader imaginary. In the spring of 2022, for example, the 27th Ljubljana BIO design biennial⁵, entitled *Super Vernaculars - Design for a Regenerative Future*, explored those

practices rooted in vernacular traditions, systems, and cultures and seeking alternative and innovative narratives for the 21st century. [...] Reviving traditional practices is in no way about nostalgia or looking backwards, it's about saying that often there are very valid and common sense responses and ways of doing things that were rooted in climate, weather and terrain and developed for generations that have been lost in our capital-centric, industrial-centric recent era (Withers 2022).

In the main space of the Biennale, a central position was entrusted to the photographic series *When International Style Went Local: Vernacular Modernism in Croatia and Slovenia*, commissioned specifically for the event by photographer Adam Štěch, which included the *Floating Roof* in Jugovec, perhaps demonstrating the recognition of the identity character of this small piece of architecture and its ability to make «still productive, to refer to an evolutionary chain of figurative traditions grounded in the places of our present» (Zermani 2022, p.4). In his work, «the complexity, the tangle of facts (true or presumed) that clusters around each individual work, the overlapping of different and contrasting temporalities, the intersection of experiences and thoughts» (Settis 2023) attests to his ability to “design” a “new” modernity that is useful to investigate for the challenges of our time.

The “new beginning” [in fact] can only take place [...] through a re-connection with the inherent nature of places, with what still resists in its own recognisability, with what is inscribable in a narrative (Zermani 2022, p.4).

Notes

¹ "Synthesis" in Treccani online dictionary. Available in <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/sintesi/>

² «Jugovec was a master of detail. He had this knack of how to do something from before. He could have been a watchmaker, and if he'd been in Switzerland he'd certainly have been a millionaire, because he would have invented a new watch» (Potokar 2022).

³ In an audio recording of his studies in Prague in 1985, Jugovec himself states that his desire to draw every detail probably stems from the lessons he learnt in Prague (Zorec 2000-2001, p.17).

⁴ Republic of Slovenia, 1967 *Fund Prešeren Prize* for the construction of the nuclear reactor in Podgorica, 1984 *Prešeren Prize* for achievements in architecture; *Jože Plečnik Foundation* 1979 *Plečnik Prize*.

⁵ The biennial was held in Ljubljana from 26 May to 29 September 2022 and was directed by Jane Withers.

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Stefania Gruosso, Emina Zejnilović
The Socialist Sarajevo: between heritage and modernity

Abstract.

In the early 1960s Sarajevo experienced an exponential growth and an economic and demographic boom that exceeded the availability of housing. To remedy this growth peripheral areas were occupied by newly built districts which among other things reflected the gigantism of the socialist period, and proposed a system made up of blocks and super-blocks scattered in open territories. The architectural panorama was enriched by a series of new architectural editions, expressly inspired by the principles of functionalism and rationalism of the Bauhaus. All this has been created on the foundations made by a group of architects who returned in Bosnia Herzegovina after they had been trained in the most important European schools of architecture. Work of the new generations of Yugoslav architects marked a shift at the architectural scene in the 1960s. The paper intends to retrace some of the main stages of “modernization” of Sarajevo and highlight the singularity of architectural production that is, internationally, still unknown.

Keywords

Sarajevo — Modernity — Heritage

Introduction

Sarajevo is a *city in the middle* - both geographically and culturally a condition that made it, for centuries, a city of crossroad and a meeting point of cultures, ideologies, and religions. The multiple essence of this city is the result of a continuum of invasions, destructions, wars, and reconstructions. The history of the city began with the Ottoman domination, when Sarajevo was transformed into the most “Eastern” city in Europe, following Istanbul’s example. The Ottoman domination was followed by the rule of Austro-Hungarian Empire, which aimed at adapting the city to European standards. After the ferocity of the two world conflicts the city was destroyed and impoverished and facing the problem of reconstruction.

In the mid-20th century, during the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SRBiH), the city was characterized with increasingly favorable social, economic, and subsequently architectural conditions. Significantly heightened pace of investment construction, progressively complex spatial demands, and a favorable climate of general social enthusiasm, generated projects of brave dispositional ideas and new formative approaches. The rise of urban and industrial society caused considerable increase in migrations to the capital which demanded large-scale urban development, as well as mass production of built environment, particularly of residential unit stock. To remedy this growth the General Urban Plan 1965–1986 was designed by the Institute for Planning and Development of Sarajevo. The document designated its longitudinal extension, in east-west direction, and initiated its rapid expansion from a narrow valley of river Miljacka to the wide area of Sarajevsko polje.



Fig. 1

R.Kadić, The residential ensemble of Džidžikovac built following the orography, Sarajevo 1953. Photograph by Stefania Gruosso, 2018.

The contemporary layout of the city is characterised by series of different layers that are not overlapping but are perfectly aligned with one another. Each individual layer has its own historical-morphological identity and witnesses a piece of the city's history in which the socialist Sarajevo is easily spatially identifiable for its urban extension, the change of city scale, and the vertical development of its architectures.

Socialist Sarajevo and Modernization of the City- The role of Neidhardt and impact of Le Corbusier on the city.

The empowerment of urban proletariat and growth of industrial society was the impetus the government used for building strong socialist state. These occurrences were seen as both ideological and pragmatic tools, which in combination with the established self-management system impacted all aspects of living. The role of architecture in constructing the Yugoslav nation, control of socio-cultural life, and communication of the Yugo-Slavic socialism doctrine was tremendously important. The unique political identity, based on continuous balancing between East and West, resulted in the equally distinct, the “in-between” architecture (Mrduljaš & Kulić, 2012), that combined the communist egalitarianist ideology with the Western aesthetics and technology.

In his book *Nova arhitektura Bosne i Hercegovine – 1945-1975*, one of the most renowned Bosnian architects, Ivan Štraus, identifies four developmental periods of Bosnian architecture modernization (Štraus, 1977).

The complex process was initiated immediately after the WWI, and was mostly focused on immense construction marked by the influence of limited number of architects, and modest economic and investment possibilities. These were the turbulent years, the years of ideological split with Stalin's Russia, and strict social-realism, and the turning point towards economic reforms, decentralisation, and liberalisation. Prominent individuals, crea-

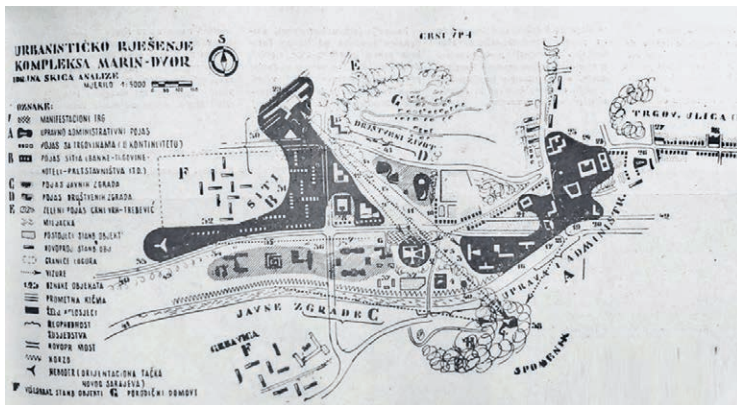


Fig. 2
J. Neidhardt, Master plan for Marijin Dvor, 1960.



Fig. 3
J. Neidhardt, The vertical skyscraper of the Institution of Bosnia Herzegovina, the square and the horizontal Parliament building, Sarajevo 1974-1982. Photograph by Stefania Gruosso, 2016.

tors of the pre-WWII Sarajevo Moderna, such as Dušan Grabrijan, Muhamed and Reuf Kadić, Helen Baltasar, Juraj Neidhardt, Jahiel Finči, and others, affirmed Bosnian architecture within Yugoslav framework and set the path for continuation of modern architectural aspirations. The search for new architectural interpretation was mostly reflected through positive reminiscence of early Moderna, best seen in the exemplary residential ensemble in Džidžikovac (Fig. 1) built by Kadić brothers in 1948, as well as the suggestion made for the modern urban reform of the city.

In the years to come, architecture of Sarajevo was strongly influenced by the schools of architecture from Zagreb and Belgrade, but also the work of Le Corbusier's student and one of the most significant builders of Sarajevo, Juraj Neidhardt¹. He argued for the revitalization of the “man tailored city” idea, and the establishment of the “Bosnian pole in architecture”, grounded on the aspiration to transcend inherited architectural values into new, modern interpretation. (Grabrijan & Neidhardt, 1957) In his 1960s suggestion for the creation of the new city centre in the area Marijin Dvor, he proposed a “spatial pause” that would revive the Ottoman philosophy of Sarajevo – the garden city and be a modernist counterpart of Bascarsi-ja² (Fig. 2). Recommended urban solution was dominated by a form of green pedestrian strip, which would lead to the main traffic road and beyond, in the direction of mountain Trebević. Tired of “skyscraper-mania”, Neidhardt suggested a business area with accentuated horizontal architectural tendency and parterre, which is more in tune with traditional *doksat* architecture (Neidhardt in Oslobođenje). Yet he connected the best of both worlds with his contradictory composition of vertically accentuated BiH Institutions building, juxtaposed with horizontal Parliament building and the entrance square (Fig. 3).

The “Neidhardt approach” to architecture was based on harmonious symbiosis of traditional principles, the «neighborhood cult» and the «right to a view», with contemporary style of clear forms and minimalist expression. In his work he managed to creatively reinterpret this idea through numerous iconic buildings, such as Faculty of Philosophy and Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, residential buildings in Alipasina street 11-17, or his Summer Stage in Ilidza. This created a solid ground for the modernization of the city that continued in the 1960s and 1970s, when architecture was increasingly falling under the influence of regional but also first graduates of Sarajevo School of Architecture.

At the time, architectural demands were more complex in size and content, with new formal expression and spatial dispositions, influenced by contemporary technology and innovation, rise of consumer society and strengthening of Yugoslav nation. The general characteristic was a ten-

dency to create architecture of technical perfection as an aesthetic ideal, (buildings of Energoinvest, Unioninvest, Yugobank, etc) while during the 1970s, design was mostly influenced by international brutality, particularly evident in the building for Radio and TV Home, *Skenderija* the sports and recreation centre, the fallen icon of Sarajevo department store *Sarajka*, as well as number of health, hospitality, and administration edifices to the city (Straus, 1987). Perhaps as never before, architecture was unburdened by local folklore elements, recognizable by fine artistic and technical literacy, establishing an authentic legacy which was the original Yugoslav interpretation of European architectural tendencies. Unmatched in its expression, perfect balance between two worlds.

Residential architecture: Ciglane and Alipasino Polje

The process of modernization in design of residential architecture was grounded on the socialist idea of equivalence embedded within Yugoslav culture. It was ‘the principle of class rather than identity’ that was given the priority, believing that a just social order would resolve any nationalist issues relating to the different ethnic groups. Residential architecture used its minimalist aesthetic as a strategy to participate in the organisation of individual and collective human life (Zejnilić & Husukić, 2018).

Initially, the architecture of living was restricted by modest standards and poor construction quality. During the 1950s and 1960s housing development gained momentum and was characterized by appearance of new residential typology - unified blocks. In composition, they were or either fully stripped off any intervention and burdened with the «overall sensitivity» – or characterized by an exaggerated number of small scales details and interventions, evident in the first large residential area, Grbavica I. Though improved in disposition of living units, conventional architecture that was missing initially planned accompanied spatial content, was believed to be lacking in creativity, spirit, and authenticity.

Despite the uniformity in visual expression, much was done in the following years in reproduction of residential units, which were becoming more complex in content, more contemporary in spatial layout and much larger in size. Some of the most significant representatives of the time are residential settlements, Otoka, Čengić Vila, and Grbavica II. By 1971 the population of Sarajevo tripled in size, from 111.087 in 1948 to 359.448 inhabitants, only to grow to a count of 448.519 inhabitants in the following decade (Grad Sarajevo). Needed swift expansion in residential unit stock was a great burden on the city, that responded with planned residential construction mostly in the valley area of Sarajevsko polje (Sarajevo valley).

The jump in demographics and change in social structure of the population, was also followed with the first wave of illegal settlement construction on the slopes of Sarajevo, that lasted from the 1960s to the 1980s. Though hillside residential area – mahala is rooted in local tradition and is a genuine brand of Sarajevo that still determines the urban ambience, the frenzied, wild hillside development was world-apart from the stepped garden image of the XVI century Ottoman town.

Local architects experimented with new building models and typologies, while maintaining connections with local traditional. Architecture of dwelling in mature Yugo-design production, offered new living style for Sarajevans by proposing, for the first time, the tower block residential typology. Its finest interpretation is displayed in housing conglomerate Alipašino Polje, planed by Milan Medić, Jug Milić and Namik Muftić (1977-1980). At the



Fig. 4

N. Mufti and R. Dellale, Ciglane, Sarajevo 1976-1979. Photograph by Stefania Gruosso, 2018.

same time, bold solutions grounded on traditional model of living were offered in the mega construction of Djuro Djaković housing complex, known as *Ciglane*, designed by Namik Muftić and Radovan Dellale (1976-1979). Ciglane (Fig.4) – the homage of the Ottoman city, is a terraced type collective living settlement occupying area of 16 hectares, planned for 6000 residents in 1451 living units (Dobrovic, 1973). Located in the western part of Kosevo Valley in the site of former brick factory, this specific architectural solution reiterated the concepts of traditional mahala housing around Bascarsija. On a larger scale, Ciglane was one of the planned segments of spatial interventions done along the axis of Djuro Djakovc street (today Alipasina), that culminated with sports centre Skenderija at one end, and planned Zetra complex on the other.

The basic idea was grounded on continuity of urban structure, and playfulness of urban morphology in both horizontal and vertical direction. The picturesque spatial cluster, distinguished by the freedom of volume, harmonious materialisation, variety in views and interplay of urban ambience, manages to achieve necessary urban and residential intimacy regardless of the complex, layered matrix of streets, squares, parks and passages. This is evident in the offered urban content diversity: the main pedestrian promenade and the “gallery” street - above the garages (ground level), the middle street – “quiet residential street” (1st level), quiet street residential oasis and vista (2nd level) (Juric & Islambegovic, 2019).

Recently actualized but back then quite a revolutionary participatory approach in design, was utilized in the design of residential units, where the users were able to take part in the design and evolution of this megastructure through intervention on open terraces. Additionally, they were envisioned as supplementary areas, on account of which the units could expand if needed, as flexibility and adaptability was another major pivotal point of the design.

Opposite to Ciglane, residential complex Alipasino polje (Fig.5-6), is located on mild slopes of wide Sarajevsko polje (Sarajevo valley), between two main transportation arteries of the city. It was designed to house the rising middle classes or the working population of 30 000 inhabitants. (Investprojekt, 1985) Interestingly, it was the first settlement in Sarajevo larger than 15 hectares, covering massive area of 65 hectares and providing 8200 housing units (architect Milan Medic for Municipality Novi grad,

**Fig. 5**

The residential complex Alipasino polje. © Aida Redzepagic, 2020.

Fig. 6

View of Alipasino polje from Igman mountain. © Emina Zejnilović, 2023.



2021). Urban composition is arranged through a series of 19-storey high buildings, positioned on the outskirts of the site, which regress to 5 – storey buildings as they move to the central section of the area. The created “gated” appearance towards the exterior, is intelligently softened with the adjustment of built scale, subtle levelling alterations of large public areas, which with its horizontality balances out the exaggerated verticality along the edges. Abundance of common spaces were provided allowing the locals to nurture the cult of neighborhood and maintain the sense of community. At the same time, the exterior view to the 19-floor tower blocks, corresponded with global architectural trends of the time and reflected the state’s vision of a successful, progressive society. This created an overture to the final phase of Sarajevo’s «unfinished modernization» - massive city expansion for the preparations of the 1984 Winter Olympic Games.

Public buildings. From instrument of the regime to icons of the contemporary city

In addition to the residential growth, the architectural panorama of the city was also enriched through a series of new projects, that were the expression of the role of architecture in constructing the control of socio-cultural life. At the same time, architecture confirmed the interest of the regime to culturally develop the city, through different aspects and approaches, intending to make Sarajevo a modern cultural center. Significant spaces for culture were under construction as instrument through which Tito communicated the modernity of Yugoslavia to the world.

Examples include the Skenderija Culture and Sport Centre, a structure whose composition is a clear reference to the work of Le Corbusier, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, whose domes resonate back to the Ottoman architecture and the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Sports and Culture Center Skenderija (CSC Skenderija) (Fig.7) was built in 1969 along the Milicka river in a site close to the new city centre designed by Neidhardt in the area Marijin Dvor. It was built as a response to the city’s need to provide itself with a place that could offer sports and cultural activities, with an intention to improve the living quality. The complex designed by Živorad Janković with the collaboration of Halid Muhasilović presents itself as an ambitious work, unique in its intentions, content, dimensions, remarkable for the new way of interpreting and organizing space. The spacious composition that reflects the influence of the late (ie brutalist) Le Corbusier style (Neidhardt T, 2014) follows a complex functional program which sees the coexistence of sport, culture and commerce; a concept of hybrid architecture very close to the contemporary one. (Gruosso, di Lallo, Pignatti 2022). A huge podium dominates the composition from



Fig. 7

The Dvorana Mirza Delibašić, Sarajevo 1969.. Photograph by Stefania Gruosso, 2018.

street level and is mostly used for commercial activities, and hospitality activities. The two main building segments, Dvorana Mirza Delibašić and Dom Mladih act as a backdrop to the large central public space.

The Dvorana Mirza Delibašić, also called the «concrete rose» is a multi-purpose arena used both for sports events and competitions, characterized by large inclined pillars in reinforced concrete placed on the short sides, which seem to lift the building from the ground.

The Dom Mladih, which means House of Youth, is a multifunctional center made up of a concrete box, marked by horizontal windows that run along the entire facade, into which a cylindrical volume is inserted, hosting a dance hall, an amphitheater, a nightclub and a Youth Center. The uniqueness and the value of the CSC Skenderija are confirmed by the fact that the architects received the *Yugoslav National Borba Prize*, proclaiming it the best architectural project in Yugoslavia. The work was revisited and expanded for the 1984 Winter Olympics, which was the protagonist of new urban transformations for Sarajevo.

Not far from the Skenderija Culture and Sport Centre, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics is located, one of the two faculties for the University of Sarajevo provided by the master plan of Juraj Neidhardt for Marindvor. The project is a clear expression of Neidhardt's theory based on the idea that an architecture adequate to the nation's modern conditions must be built on vernacular foundations.

The structure, that was built in the 1960s, according to the design of Neidhardt himself is composed by two blocks. The first block consists of a series of volumes organized around a central space. The lower part of the first block is finished with an evident rusticated stone base that is a clear reminiscence of the old city. The second block is a one-storey building covered by a roof topped by semi-spherical volumes clad in copper, an intentional reference to the domes of the traditional Ottoman city. The class-



Fig. 8

B. Magaš, E. Šmidihen e R. Horvat, the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sarajevo 1958. Photograph by Stefania Gruosso, 2016.

rooms inside these vaulted spaces feature a particularly effective layout and lighting that filters in from the sides. (Pignatti 2019)

Still in the transitional part towards the new city, along the main street (Zmaja od Bosne), the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina subtly rises (Fig.8). The museum design by a group of Zagreb architects, Boris Magaš, Edo Šmidihen, and Radovan Horvat in the 1958 is perhaps the most international and modernist project in Sarajevo with its dominant cube forms and clean lines. The works has been the first prize winner in a public competition for the design of the Museum of Revolution in Sarajevo. Museum changed its name several times. In 1949 the museum was named Museum of National Revolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1967 Museum of Revolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and finally, by the Law on Museum activity, adopted in June 1993, museum was renamed to Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The building consists of a giant concrete cuboid resting on an almost entirely glazed base which appears to float atop a white stone podium. The entrance is characterised by a large staircase made of stone. The uniqueness and the architectural values of the Museum is well synthesized by the words of the Prof. Stjepan Roš:

The building of the Museum of the Revolution manifests the pure architecture of Mies van der Rohe. It is constructed of “boxes,” transparent and full. The glass-lined breathable skeleton stretches on a white stone pedestal, on which rests a full stone box [...] Spaces are extroverted, clearly oriented towards the inner garden. Nine columns — slender trees — contradict their own actual function because it looks like they break through and do not support. Free placement of walls gives the impression of moving billboards and an “open free plan”.

The socialist Sarajevo towards the future

Forty years since the ending of Tito’s era the capital of BiH is still characterized by a multi-layered urban structure, with clearly identifiable large-

scale urbanization of the architectural layer constructed during the socialist regime. It must be noted that the 1992-1995 war stopped natural development of the city, and created spatial, cultural, and social gap.

Subsequently, the new additions have a “detached” trajectory in continuous attempts to reaffirm the identity of Sarajevo as a more global city. But while contemporary, generic, decontextualized and eccentric architecture imposes itself as a new form of violence that results in urban restructuring in general, representatives of the socialist architecture, are still dominating the image of a city. Their scale, monumentality, and intelligence of urban footprint, particularly within the residential areas Alipašino polje and Ciglane, allows them to maintain their authentic visual and spatial character and quality, regardless of obtrusive interference of contemporary additions, that threaten to architecturally pollute them.

Marijn Dvor, the area proposed as the “new center” by the masterplan of Juraj Neidhardt, confirms its role as symbol of renewal and urban experimentation with continuous investments and efforts for creation of new and contemporary architecture, while on the other hand it continues the reevaluation of the architecture of the past. In this view the public buildings, symbols of the socialist city constitute not only a historical memory but become icons that attend to stimulate the urban development in many aspects and that for this reason must be preserved from the neglected.

Since 2007 the Sports and Culture Centre Skenderija hosted the Art Depot, a temporary location for the Ars Aevi Collection made by the contribution of the most significant artists of the world, who contributed with their works to the creation of the collection of the future Museum of Contemporary Art. It was a way to contrast the violence of the war of the 90s through the culture, together with the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, that covers the history of the country from the Middle Ages to the present and stands as an icon of resilience. Regardless of the poor condition and malfunctioning, it is still one of the most significant city landmarks, that is strongly etched in the urban memory of Sarajevans.

Sarajevo, is therefore an exemplary case of the exceptional work of socialist Yugoslavia leading architects, evident through a unique range of forms and modes easily identifiable along the west-east city axis. The belated recognition of the value of the works of socialist Yugoslavia, was confirmed with the exhibition curated by Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić, entitled *Toward a Concrete Utopia. Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980* which took place in New York at the Moma, Museum of Modern Art, in 2018, in which Sarajevo has been represented through Juraj Neidhardt’s works. The works cited, together with many others that have not been discussed in this paper, constitute nowadays pieces of an open-air museum that still emits the glimmering radiation of the socialist utopia, and stand as a testimony and as a reflection of a fragment of history that characterized the socialist society and system.

Notes

* This paper is outcome of the researches and reflections of the authors conducted within a series of academic activities. In detail: S. Gruosso and E. Zejnilović are the authors of the *Abstract*; S. Gruosso is the author of *Introduction, Public buildings. From instrument of the regime to icons of the contemporary city* and *The socialist Sarajevo towards the future*; E. Zejnilović is the author of *Socialist Sarajevo and*

Modernization of the City- The role of Neidhardt and impact of Le Corbusier on the city and Residential architecture: Ciglane and Alipasino Polje.

¹ Juraj Neidhardt (1901-1979) was a theoretician, teacher, urban planner and one of BiH's most prolific architects who, tried to merge modern trends in architecture with traditional ethical principles that the city of Sarajevo had been founded on.

² Sarajevo's old bazaar, built during the Ottoman Empire rule, the historical and cultural center of the city.

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Florina Jerliu

Socialist Prishtina: The tale of unfinished urbanization

Abstract

The shaping of socialist Prishtina during the ex-Yugoslav era was influenced by various political, cultural, and ideological factors. In the guise of modernization, the state initiated massive demolitions, deliberately targeting the symbolically significant sites that had shaped the city's urban identity during pre-modern times. The second facet of modernization which encompassed new development, was likewise distinctive: urbanization and new architecture in the city was implemented in fragments, thereby visually challenging its pre-socialist fabric. This contribution examines the interplay between planning decisions and urban activities on the ground, which led to city's fragmentation. Official documents and statements are reviewed, to exemplify the overall ethos of the period and thus contribute to a broader understanding of the mode of urbanization in socialist Prishtina.

Keywords

Prishtina — Urban activities — Modernist architecture

Introduction

Prishtina, the capital of the Republic of Kosovo, once the center of the Vilayet of Kosovo (before the fall of the Ottoman Empire), was the capital of the Province of Kosovo within ex-Yugoslavia. It used to be a typical Ottoman city, with a compact urban structure and an identifiable nucleus, the Old Bazaar. Neighborhoods were evenly distributed around the Bazaar and, as in other Ottoman cities, they maintained a superb distinction between public and private realms (Pasic 2004, p.7). Throughout the late 1940s and 1960s, the Bazaar was razed to the ground by the socialist regime, making way for the new city center. This symbolic space was chosen to set the scene for the new Yugoslavian representation of Kosovo, emerging in the form of the Brotherhood and Unity Square, and two state institutions on either side of the square: the Municipal Assembly Building and the building of the Regional People's Committee for Kosovo (today the Parliament of Kosovo). The socialist urbanization of Prishtina replicates such patterns of ideological interventions in the rest of the existing city structure.

De-Ottomanization of the capital city meant not only becoming Yugoslav and modern, but also maintaining an inferior identity of Kosovo Albanians within the federation (Le Normand, p. 258; Malcolm 1998, p. 314). The planned destruction of a large proportion of the traditional architecture justified on the ground of liquidating the backwardness of the Ottoman city (Mitrovic 1953, pp. 165-166),¹ was based not on genuine urban plans as commonly witnessed in other ex-Yugoslav cities, but rather on so-called «urban activities», a term coined by socialist planners to describe the actions that were «necessary for preparing a study on the development

of Prishtina» (Jovanovic 1965). Throughout the socialist period, studies, plans, and «urban activities», were carried out simultaneously, sometimes independently, yet often left incomplete. Thus, fragmented intervention as an output, and unfinished urbanization as a process, became the most distinct legacy of city's modernization.

There is a small body of documentation regarding the urban development of Prishtina during socialism, although in recent times the number of publications on the architecture of the period has increased significantly,² along with the awareness of its preservation. However, the gap of knowledge persists on the context of state and urban policies that gave shape to the city development, and this is identified and addressed briefly in this contribution. I argue that shedding light to the interplay of planning decisions and activities on the ground, both chronologically and thematically, helps to understand certain aspects of implementation of urban policies, which were in line with state policies of the ex-Yugoslavia, while complementary to the specific policy of Serbia in Kosovo. Therefore, this study mainly relies on and analyzes the official and archival documents of the period, with the belief that they are rather overlooked by the scholars, while in fact they comprise an important source on the context and contents of planning. In this regard, few relevant quotes are brought in full, which in hand illustrate the official language and overall ethos of the time, and fill-in the larger picture of the mode of urbanization in socialist Prishtina.

Laying the Foundations of the New Socialist City

In the aftermath of the Second World War, among major undertakings in ex-Yugoslavia was to lay the foundations for new modern socialist cities, and this was made clear through various official documents and statements, as illustrated in the quote below:

[...] Prishtina abandoned its former characteristics, and has grown, and is growing into a modern city; its physiognomy is fundamentally changing, it is transforming with an unprecedented rhythm and is erasing all what identified it with a remote 'kasaba' [town] (Zikic 1959, p.24) [...] it is leaving its past behind and is becoming a modern city – a new socialist city' (Cukic, D. and Mekuli E. 1965, p.12).

This journey in Prishtina commenced in 1947, marked by the transformation of the primary south-north artery (previously known as Lokaq street) into a modernist boulevard, purposed to accommodate newly established state institutions; and was renamed into Marshal Tito Street. The initial modern structure to rise along its eastern front was the Provincial Committee (today the Ministry of Culture), sequentially accompanied by other institutions, such as the National Theatre, the National Bank, and the Municipality of Prishtina, among others (Jovanovic, B. 1965). By 1953, the street transformation came almost to its end.

The Marshal Tito Street project required massive demolitions; beside the Old Bazaar, formerly located at the northern end of the axis, a large portion of traditional architecture including historic buildings (a catholic church and a mosque), were razed to the ground (Jerliu, F and Navakazi, V. 2018) (Fig. 1). It is noteworthy to highlight that this transformation occurred well prior to the adoption of the Detailed Urban Plan (DUP) for the city center in 1967 (Pecanin).

The «retroactive planning» of the city center, as understood from the quote below, was implemented to alleviate the challenge of finishing the planned



Fig. 1

Sequence from the former Marshal Tito Street, before and after demolition of the 16th century Lokaq Mosque and the construction of the Hotel Bozur (later Hotel Iliria). The modernist hotel "Iliria" was privatized in 2006 and soon was destroyed to make space for a new hotel Swiss Diamond. (Photo source: Municipality of Prishtina Photo Archive).

urban blocks. They were partially developed to house new institutions, but private parcels within the envisioned enclosed urban block typology, were left untreated. Even today, they are spaces filled with private houses: a pre-socialist cadaster awaiting to be regularized (Fig.2).

This plan was partially implemented for the needs of the administration of the Province, the Municipality and other public facilities... The realization of these spaces destroyed the old Bazaar and a large number of facilities in the surrounding environment. Other contents cannot be realized due to the existing housing, and this plan should be put out of force. (ibid)

In a way, the plan was designed with the expectation of being phased out, which reveals the overarching intention of the socialist regime: to construct the facade of the Marshall Tito Street rather than to urbanize the city center to the benefit of residents, being in majority Albanians (Jerliu and Navakazi 2018).

Socialist Urban Planning: "Loading..."

A milestone date in the city development is 1953. This is the year identified among other as the beginnings of a large-scale deportation of Kosovo Albanians, as part of the treaty signed between ex-Yugoslavia and Turkey. The so-called «Gentleman's Agreement» reached in January 1953 between Tito and the Turkish foreign Minister Khiprili requested that Yugoslavia fulfils the 1938 Convention, according to which about one million inhabitants were to be settled in vacant regions of Turkey. Between 1945 and 1966, known as the «Rankovic's Era»,³ roughly 246,000 were deported to Turkey from the whole ex-Yugoslavia of which 100,000 people (mainly Albanians) from Kosovo alone (Malcolm 1998, p. 323).

This process had a profound impact on Prishtina, both demographically and economically: most of the investments during this period were concentrated in the capital-investment, rather than labor-investment. Also, investments were made in primary industry such as in mines, power stations, and basic chemical works, a sector that was intended to supply Kosovo's raw materials and energy for use elsewhere in Yugoslavia. (Malcolm 1998, pp. 322-324).

The year 1953 is also symbolic for the beginnings of urban plans in Prishtina. It is the year of adoption of the *Urban General Plan for Prishtina 1950-1980*, drafted by *Iskra* from Belgrade under the leadership of Dragutin Partonjic. The plan foresaw the city growth from 24, 081⁴ to 50.000 inhabitants and surface from 223.04 Ha to 950 Ha. While information on the technicalities of the plan is briefly revealed in a later Prishtina Urban



Fig. 2

Sequence from the modern city center, showing the mode of unfinished task of socialist urbanization (Photo excerpt from Google Earth 2022, drawing by the author).

Plan 2000 (PUP 2000), a report from 1953 *Gradovi i Naselja...* provides the substance of the plan. Given that the language used in this report is rather self-explanatory, hence the quoted vision:

The geopolitical position of the city, its role in the economy of the country (ex-Yugoslavia), especially of its wider region, the changes in social conditions, the relatively rich economic hinterland, the inherited primitive and materially poor construction of heritage, and other factors, impose the need, in solving the urbanization problems of Prishtina, for a general reconstruction of the existing situation, not only of the city but also its immediate surroundings. Based on the analysis of established current and possible objective conditions, the future development program for the next 20 years envisions Prishtina with an increased population of 50,000 and an economic character as a poorly developed industrial city, with predominantly processing industries employing 8-10% of the population. The guidelines of the program had to inevitably reflect in the basic framework of the regulatory plan. The applied type of urban reconstruction anticipates the acquisition of free territories and radical measures for the rearrangement of the built-up area, with maximum utilization of inherited values. (Mitrovic 1953, p. 166)

Based on this rather unambitious vision, the new city borders were set. Extensive reconstructions took place in the inner-city while vastly disregarding its built heritage, and the southern outskirts developed into new modernist neighborhoods. However, within a decade, the city's population had reached the envisioned figure of 50,000 inhabitants,⁵ therefore, a decision was made to expand the city boundaries from 950 hectares as planned in 1953, to 1950 hectares (Cukic and Mekuli 1965, p.36). Interestingly, PUP 2000 disclosed that no material evidence on urban plans for the following development phase were found in the premises of the Municipality of Prishtina:

Judging by the note that this space was planned for 107 954 inhabitants until 1980, this could have been the amended Prishtina Urban Plan [alluding to Partonjic 1953 Plan], for which no traces of documentation exist. [So] In 1965 arch.

Fig. 3

DUP for the Historic Core: existing situation (left), proposed layout (right). [Figure-base: Urbanisticki Zavod Opštine Prishtina, 1979; drawing by author].



Nikola Dobrovic began the drafting of the “Directive Plan for Traffic and Land Use for the city”, which was completed and approved in 1967. The plan was drafted for 100,000 inhabitants and surface of 1950.00 hectares. From documentation, only the graphic annex of land use exists (S: 2500). In 1969 the decision was made that the “Directive Plan for Traffic and Land Use for the city” is replaced by the General Urban Plan for Prishtina, by which the Plan of 1953 ceased to be in force. (Municipality of Prishtina 1987, p.11)

As the quote reveals, throughout 1960s-1970s, there was a process of planning for a new “general” plan. In meantime, as of 1965, and well beyond until mid-1980s, urban development in Prishtina continued its pace on the basis of smaller plans, namely, Detail Urban Plans (DUPs), which according to the planning officials: «... [were] based on the Decision that replaces the General Urban Plan from 1966, and more recently on the General Plan of Prishtina» (Pecanin). Regardless the confusions deriving from this statement as to which plan substitutes or is substituted by a certain decision or plan, or whether generally existed any General Urban plan, DUPs were made for various sizes of space and contents, ranging from large-scale neighborhoods to small housing areas, be it built-up areas scheduled for demolition or free land, from large to small complexes of housing and public buildings; there were even DUPs for individual buildings too⁶. According to archival data, between 1967 and 1986 a total of 34 DUPs were drafted; by 1990, majority of DUPs were partially implemented and only a small number of them were in fact fully realized (Pecanin).

Another victim of «retroactive planning» was the Historic Core. The Detailed Urban Plan (DUP) for the Historic Core was approved in 1979, which is over 30 years after systematic and planned destruction of Prishtina’s urban built heritage. Although in principle DUP should have intended to protect the survived heritage, its highlight was the planning for a massive commercial building of 18,600 sqm, occupying circa 60% of the total planned newly built area. This superstructure foresaw to amalgamate the shops which started anew eastward Bazar’s area after its destruction: the Bazar’s second life was beginning, and the regime went after this one too. Spatial analysis reveals that the plan aimed to preserve roughly 50% of the existing area, of which 8.6% was roadway, 24.6% green space, and a mere 11.7% existing structures, which included a handful of significant monuments. The remaining half of the area was earmarked for reconstruction. (Urbanisticki Zavod Opštine Prishtina, 1979, pp.20-22) (Fig. 3).

Fig. 4

Modern architecture in Prishtina. a) Ulpiana neighborhood built in 1960s in free land; one, if not the only example of successful planning implementations b) National Library; until late 2004 the surrounding of the library was deserted. Greening and few paths were introduced latter to enable access from the university buildings located in the near vicinity. (photo source: facebook community page 'Prishtina e Vjetër' in: <https://web.facebook.com/PrishtinaOLD/> (accessed 7.12.2017))



Since its inception, the DUP for the Historic Core was continuously opposed. In 1987, PUP 2000 introduced new boundaries and conditions for the preservation of historic area, and by 1990, authorities had also acknowledged their complete failure in safeguarding city's pre-socialist past (Pecanin).

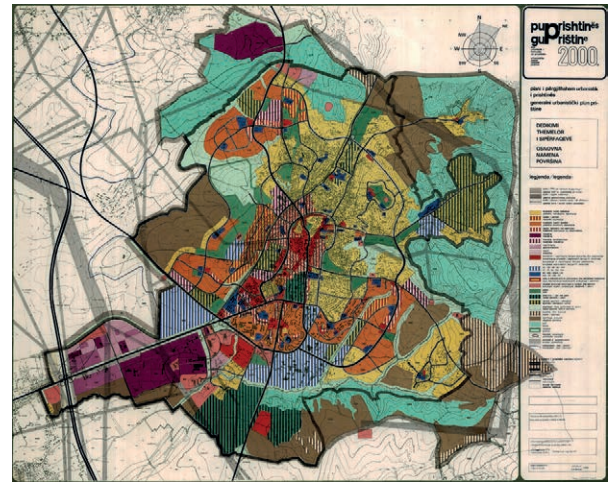
The Promise of Urbanization

During mid-1970s and 1980s, Prishtina benefited the most from the Yugoslav development fund for underdeveloped regions. (International Monetary Fund, 1985). A considerable portion of this fund in the urban development sector was allocated for planning, and to a lesser degree, for building new state institutions, one of which was the University of Prishtina, established between 1975 and 1977. The University acted as a catalyst for large-scale internal migrations to the capital, resulting in its rapid expansion: between 1971 and 1981, the population nearly doubled, increasing from 69.514 inhabitants in 1971 to 108.083 inhabitants in 1981. (Municipality of Prishtina 1987, p.5)

During this period, Prishtina witnessed substantial growth in its southwestern area, characterized by the creation of new modernist neighborhoods, yet, with no foresight for their physical interconnection. This included the creation of Dardania, Sunny Hill 1, Sunny Hill 2, and Lakrishte neighborhoods, while Ulpiana neighborhood had already been built in the late 1960s (Fig. 4.a). Significant segments of the city's outskirts were also planned through DUPs, primarily for individual housing, like the Tauk Basce small neighborhood, Aktash 3, Dragodan hill, among others (Pecanin.). As was common in other socialist cities, these houses were constructed for the wealthy and higher-income working-class groups (Sze-

Fig. 5

Comune di Pristina, Mappa del Piano urbano di Pristina 2000, 1987.



lenyi 1983, p. 63). Contrastingly, the remainder of the city, particularly its entire north, was largely overlooked throughout the entire socialist era. The most significant architectural contribution of this period was the construction of modernist public buildings. However, similar to the case of new modern neighborhoods, they often lack integration with their surroundings, thus creating disjointed spaces. Many public buildings, like the National Library for instance, failed to shape cohesive urban quarters due to the unfinished public space in front and around them (Fig. 4.b). The reasoning behind such an approach might have been political, as the social utilization of urban space, especially public gatherings, were perceived as a potential catalyst for Kosovo Albanians' revolts against the former socialist regime.

The promise for comprehensive urbanization of Prishtina was most convincingly given by the 'Prishtina Urban Plan 2000' (PUP 2000), approved in 1987 (Fig.5). This plan, the final one conceived during the socialist era, remains one of the few official documents that still serves as a valuable resource in understanding the city's narrative. PUP 2000 sought to rectify the accumulated spatial and social discrepancies and challenges. It conceded that Prishtina's development suffered from a lack of consistent and inclusive planning, which, as it postulates, led to the formation of three markedly different spatial entities in the city, each unique in its creation and development: 1) The neglected and unplanned northern part of the city, typified by poor living conditions, thus urgently needing improvements; 2) The historic city center inclusive of new modern buildings, necessitating the completion of the residential urban infrastructure, with a specific emphasis on rehabilitating the historic core; and 3) The new modernist center and southern parts of the city, which began developing from the 1960s onwards, characterized by solid construction and services, but requiring phased reconstructions and completion (Municipality of Prishtina 1987, pp. 38-39, 57-59). This categorization endures even today, attesting to the substantial impact of fragmented and unfinished process of urbanization of the city. PUP 2000 also noted that:

[...] the protection and regulation of archaeological sites and historic nucleus is imperative, since the future of this sector risks to be left without its past, and the results of creation of contemporary values risk the abruption of historical and cultural continuity. ((Municipality of Prishtina 1987, p.172)

Two years later, with the ascension of Milosevic to power in ex-Yugosla-

via, Kosovo entered a terrible phase of state repression that greatly undermined the comprehensive urbanization improvements as proposed by PUP 2000. In the present day, Prishtina has developed new urban plans; however, PUP 2000 - more often being overlooked than revisited - continues to be vital in genuinely tackling the city's challenges rooted in its socialist past.

Conclusion

The *tale* of socialist Prishtina is one of unfinished urbanization. Its modernization during the socialist era is intriguing - especially if juxtaposed with other centers of ex-Yugoslavia - not only for understanding the nuances of modernist and socialist urban policies, but also to make sense of what has been inherited from that era and how it has influenced the city's subsequent development. Enlightening in this view are the official documents and statements of the time of socialism; their analyses offer significant insight into the enduring impact of the political ideology in city's intricate urban development.

Initially, the Ottoman city had a compact urban structure; it was deranged in the name of recreating it as a compact modern city, but this aim was not truly achieved. Instead, the rebuilding process erased vital fragments of historical tissue, while new development themselves were left scattered throughout the urban landscape. As a result, the once compact city became fragmented. Thus, fragmentation is the legacy inherited from the socialist era, and comprehending its content, along with the latent potential for its recalibration in line with the premise of historical continuity, as advocated in current discourse, proffers a hopeful alternative for the present and future of the city's modernist legacy, as well as a means of overcoming its "unfinished" condition.

Notes

¹ The 1953 report on cities and towns in Serbia defined the existing architecture of the city of Prishtina as to being remote, and therefore, subject to the so-called «general radical reconstruction» of the «primitive appearance and poverty of material and architectural heritage values of the city».

² Some recently published books on Prishtina are: A; Sylejmani, Sh. (2010). Prishtina ime (My Prishtina). Java Multimedia production: Prishtina; Hoxha, E. (2012) Qyteti dhe Dashuria: Ditar Urban - City and Love: Urban Diary, Center for Humanistic Studies "Gani Bobi" Prishtina; Gjinolli I, Kabashi, L., Eds. (2015). Kosovo modern: an architectural primer, National Gallery of Kosovo, Arbër Sadiki (2020) Arkitektura e Ndërtesave Publike në Prishtinë (Architecture of Public Buildings in Prishtina), NTG Blendi, Prishtinë, among other.

³ Aleksandar Rankovic, the Minister of Interior who was known for directing a harshly anti-Albanian security policy, was dismissed in 1966.

⁴ 24, 081 inhabitants reflects the figure from the second registration of population carried out in the same year, 1953, by the socialist regime in ex-Yugoslavia.

⁵ This growth is mainly attributed to the natural growth of the Albanian population in Kosovo, a feature that characterizes the demography of Kosovo throughout the 20th century. For more information on population growth during the 20th century see: Statistical Office of Kosovo (2008), Table 2, p.7.

⁶ The strategy of 'fragmented' development through DUPs was observed in ex-Yugoslavia during the 1960s, as a result of inconsistent execution of urban plans after the Law on Urban and Regional Planning was enacted in 1961. (See: Le Normand, B. 2014, p.118.) However, in Prishtina this mode of development continued throughout the socialist period.

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Viktorija Nikolić, Tamara Marović
**Neglection of Modernism.
Montenegrin coastal architecture**

Abstract

The recent demolition of one wing of the Hotel *Korali* in Sutomore, Bar, one of the awarded examples of coastal socialist architecture in Montenegro, designed by architect Milan Popović, has caused strong public disapproval and at the same time indifference of various state institutions in charge of protection and management of the built heritage. Considering that the process of establishing protection over architectural buildings in Montenegro takes an extended period of time due to various stakeholders, a significant legacy of socialist architecture has not yet been adequately acknowledged, while only recently, it seems that the world is becoming aware of its importance. Therefore, a lack of strategy in the planning documents in the last decades has led to various forms of reconstructions, extensions and upgrades in order to adapt those structures to capitalist needs and ideas, while neglecting the value and original identity of these buildings.

Keywords

Socialist Architecture — Coastal tourism — Milan Popović

Introduction

In the case of most socialist regimes, as was the former Yugoslavia, utopian projects are evident, born as objects of contemplation between political ideology, focused on a common sense of unification of national identity and social change. Yugoslav modernism was a gesture of rebellion against the Western Modern Movement and socialist Realism. Situated between the capitalist West and the Communist East, Yugoslav architects responded to contradictory demands and influences. The architectural design approach of the former Yugoslavia in socialist period, was characterized by ambitious constructions and in many cities, including the Montenegrin coast, highly reflected in the most important Montenegrin architects, such as Milan Popović¹.

At the time, the pure Montenegrin coast offered fantastic spatial opportunities for architectural expression, resulting in structures that whether defied the nature, or were in harmony with it. From international-style architecture to brutalist “social condenser” – radical diversity and idealism of the nation have been demonstrated in Montenegro.

After the collapse of Yugoslavia, following the fall of the political ideology, the architectural ambition was interrupted and was no longer reflected in the identity and mentality of the citizens. The utopian dream has now been abandoned and turned into a nightmare.

Ideology of development of society and socialist architecture in Montenegro

When speculating the principles of strengthening national identity and love for the country, one must take into account that, «...the socialist state

went on to pursue a relatively independent brand of socialism based on workers' self-management, becoming the torchbearer of a „Third Way” in the bifurcated world of the Cold War.» (Stierli, M. and Kulić, V., (2018), p. 7). The introduction of the “paid vacation” concept enabled the working class to get acquainted with the culture, nature and other riches that Yugoslavia had to offer.

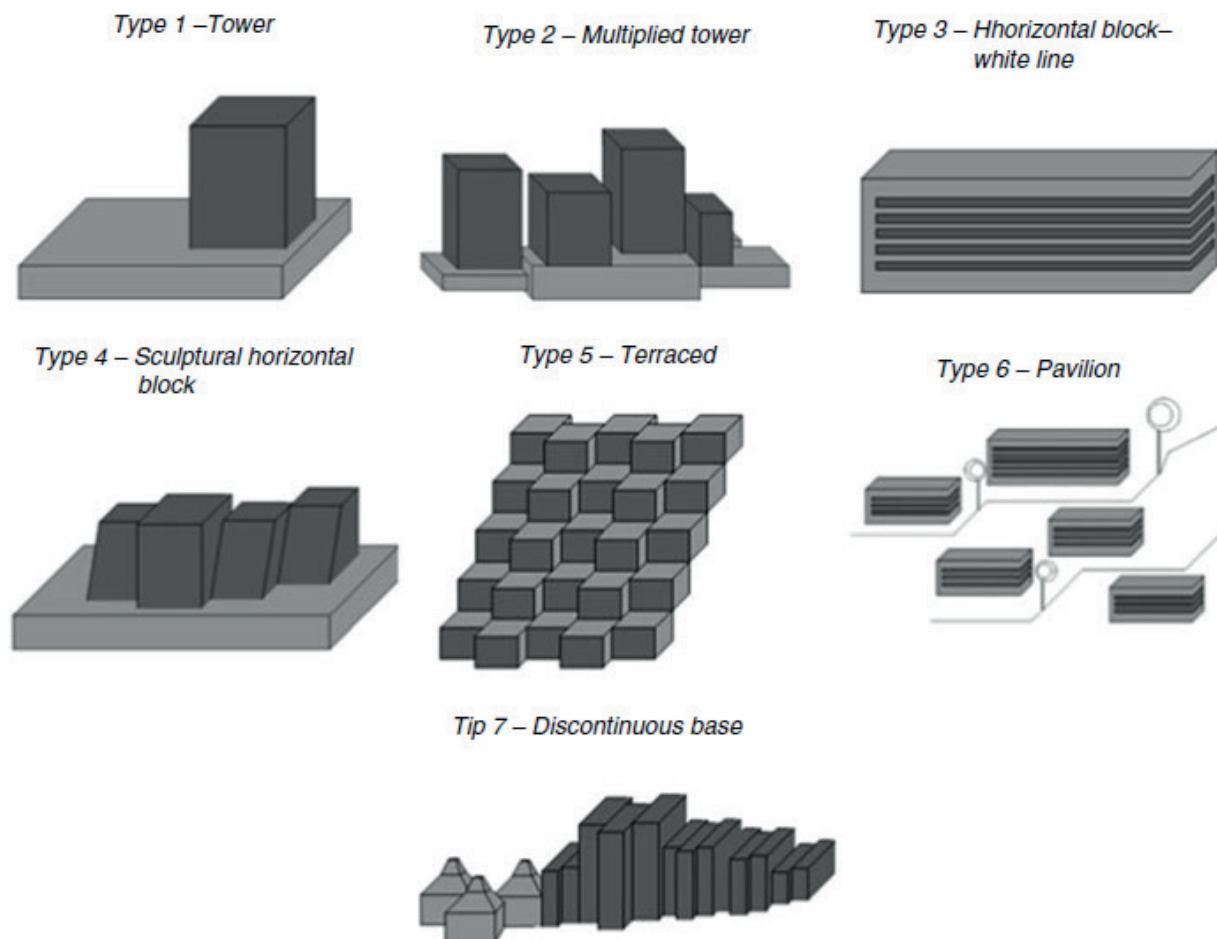
The symbolic role of tourism, as a generator of social development, was of great importance in Tito's Yugoslavia: large, impressively designed modernist hotel complexes were the leading means of showing the success of the “Third Way” politics and radical internationalism, and thus the architectural expression reflected modernity, freedom and innovation, while respecting local tradition, «...as the design of commercial hotels shifted from elegant modernist tower-and-slab typologies of the early 1960s to the increasingly complex group forms and megastructures in the following decade.» (Kulić, V., (2018), p. 37). Whether for socio-political or commercial purposes, the main objective at the time was to inspire the masses to travel.

Spatial planning of the coastal zone of Yugoslavia was directed in 1969, with the adoption of the regional spatial plan *Južni Jadran*² in a way that, among other things, tourism and infrastructure connections within the country were emphasized, while also establishing a better and more accessible connection with the Mediterranean countries and Europe. On the territory of Montenegro, it included all coastal municipalities, but also three continental cities: Titograd (today Podgorica), Cetinje and Danilovgrad. Of the thirteen tourist areas planned by the *Južni Jadran*, four were planned in Montenegro: Boka Kotorska with its center in Herceg Novi, Budva coast with the center in Budva, Ulcinj coast and Skadar Lake with the center in Ulcinj as well as central hinterland formed around Cetinje. This strategic plan has led to the mass movement of the population towards the cities, especially considering that Montenegro was the least urbanized area of Yugoslavia before World War II, so tourism fully generated the development and architecture of the Montenegrin southern region.

Many architects in Montenegro began to develop their own formal strategies increasingly distinct and recognizable in architectural composition, creating a unique style with elements of brutalism. The 1960s and 1970s are referred to as the golden age of Montenegrin architecture with great enactment of public competitions and with the consequent construction of expressive buildings. More than thirty hotels and touristic resorts were built in this period in Montenegrin Coast, carrying a special architectural expression - inspired by modern principles, with a particular regional character. The diversity of landscapes conditioned by the morphology of the southern region was particularly inspiring in terms of the architectural approach of the authors.

Extraordinary environments have been created blurring the boundaries between landscape, architecture and sculpture, so different typologies of objects are recognized.

Objects have been identified as ones that stand out with their volume in relation to the landscape in regular cubic masses – both in a strict form (tower) and in a discontinuous one, forming masses reminiscent of a city silhouette (multiplied tower); then buildings of smaller floors with a characteristic horizontal white line, i.e. prominent horizontal structural elements (horizontal block/white line); modified sculptural block in relation to all planes of the object (sculptural horizontal

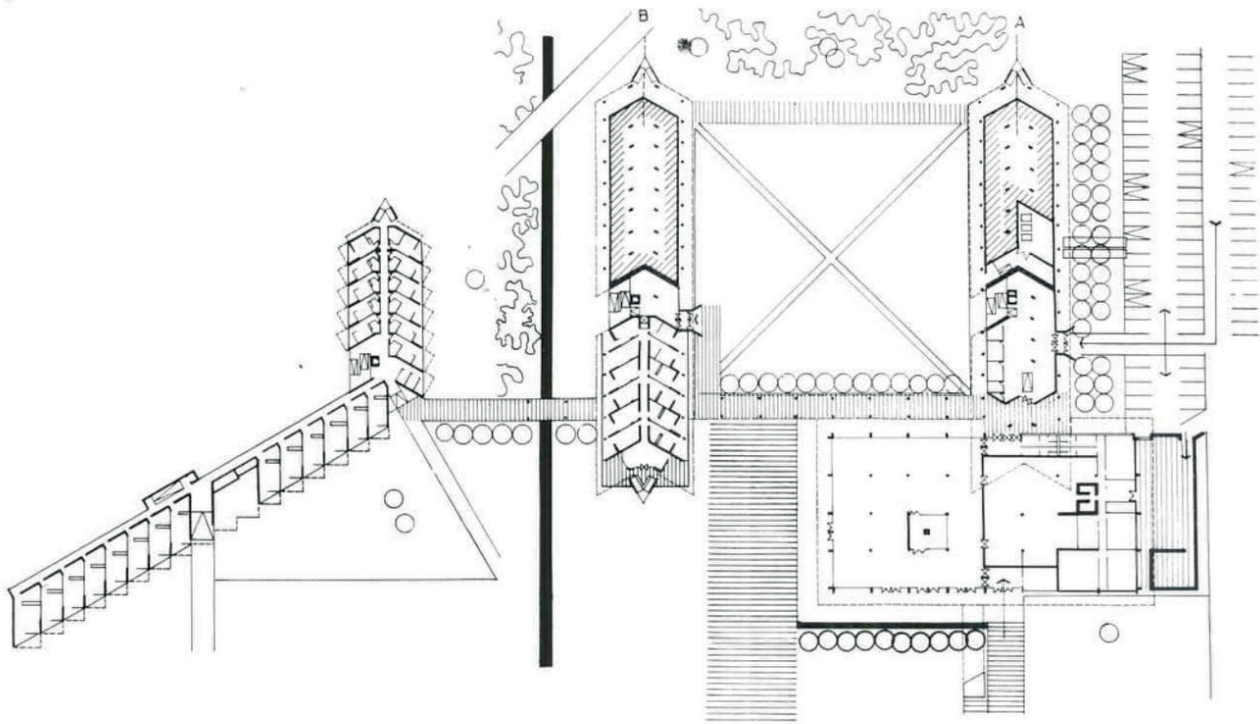
**Fig. 1**

Types of hotels according to the architectural conception of the objects (elaboration: T. Marović).

block); compact structure that adapts to the terrain and becomes an integral part of the landscape (terrace type); free structures in the space that form a tourist settlement (pavilion type); and buildings that are irregular in shape at the base, of various volumes and materialization of the façades (discontinuous base). [Fig.1] (Marović, T., 2021, p. 238-239)

Architecture of the coastal region through the oeuvre of architect Milan Popović. Case study: hotel *Korali*

A specific architectural approach to the design of hotel facilities on the Montenegrin coast is particularly noticeable when analyzing the design oeuvre of Montenegrin architect Milan Popović, an outmost modernist and the main representative of constructive functionalism in Montenegro. His work is characterized by innovative ideas, but also by the simplicity of strict function of the objects he designed. At the same time, his specific expression was dominant throughout the territory of Montenegro and recognizable through all the typologies of the buildings: hotels, universities, residential buildings, hospitals, schools, student dormitories, etc.). Milan Popović is the only Yugoslav architect to be a five-time laureate of the Republic award of the newspaper *Borba* for architecture³. Out of a total of seven hotels he designed on the Montenegrin coast, three were awarded with the above-mentioned award: hotel *Oliva* in Petrovac (1965), co-author Vladislav Plamenac; hotel *Korali* in Sutomore (1968), and hotel *Kastel Lastva* in Petrovac (1973). Other two awards he received were for two exceptional examples of brutalist architecture in Montenegro: Clinical Hospital Center in Podgorica (1974), co-author Božidar Milić and Technical faculties building of the University of Montenegro, in Podgorica

**Fig. 2**

Hotel Korali - Floor plan (source: <https://architectuul.com/architecture/hotel-korali>).

(1977), co-author Pavle Popović.

In the case of hotel *Korali* in Sutomore (1968), the characteristic modernist form is achieved, but at the same time, the concept radiates authenticity and artistic approach. The hotel is designed as a pavilion and consists of three units, each of them containing 200 beds, showing the magnificent architectural skills in achieving a perfect functionality of the hotel wings. Although the two pavilions are placed perpendicular to the shore, all rooms and terraces are rotated towards sea by a 45 degree angle, assuring the sea view [Fig.2]. Describing the pavilion type of buildings, Maroje Mrduljaš states that

the pavilion-like agglomerations strive for a more intense interaction between architecture and nature. These urban planning schemes include terraces, promenades, public infrastructure and landscaping, in order to take full advantage of the local vegetation. (Mrduljaš, M., (2013), p.192)

Observing the architectural form of the hotel *Korali*, the pavilion concept can be perceived in a way that it leans on the landscape of the hinterland, but at the same time it dominates the space by the form of broken masses, while creating an extension of the coastal and promenade zone, introducing visitors to a new landscape of the coastal environment. It is a characteristic example of a modernist architecture, because of its simple form created by the very elements of construction.

The function of the hotel can be read and discerned directly from the façade, with an undoubtedly visible difference between rhythm and fragment [Fig.3]. The continuous straight line and white façade are clearly expressed, as a characteristic segment and materialization of the hotel typology of this period on the Montenegrin coast. The building exudes a strong attitude towards accomplishing the idea of new movements in architecture, but also in politics, society, and development in general.

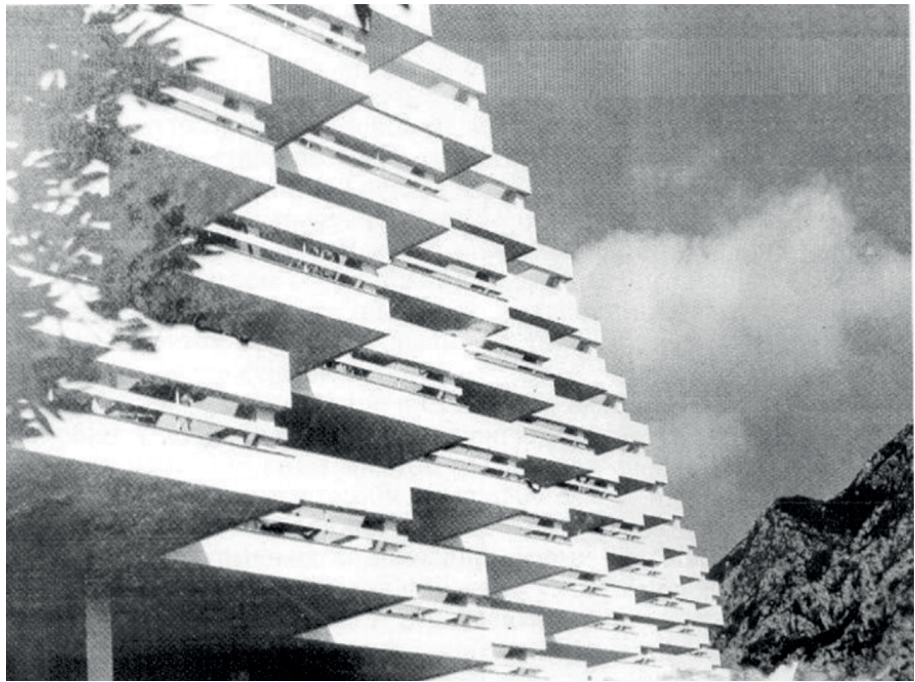
Given their position in urban tissues, many tourist facilities had an enor-

Fig. 3

Hotel Korali – Façade segment
(source: <https://architectuul.com/architecture/hotel-korali>).

Fig. 4

Hotel Korali – Roof terrace (source: <https://architectuul.com/architecture/hotel-korali>).



mous impact on society, thus becoming not only places for vacation, but creating an entertaining environment for a socialist man, who could finally afford various forms of consumerist lifestyle. In that sense, open roof terraces of an enormous area were designed for hotels *Korali* and *Oliva*, which was a gathering place for the most important social events, serving not only the hotel users, but also the local population [Fig.4].

The disappearance of an architecture

In terms of architectural expression and the complexity of the circumstances within which it was created and shaped, socialist Montenegrin architecture should be treasured as a valuable heritage of the 20th century. However, after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, «the commons – from urban public spaces to the various civic, educational, and cultural facilities – have been subject to shady privatization schemes, reduced to mere real

estate» (Stierli, M. and Kulić, V., (2018), p. 8), which led to disappearance or reconstruction of these structures without appreciation for the heritage. Therefore, we only witness the outlines of what can be called the characteristic socialist architecture of the coastal area today.

The above-mentioned awarded project for hotel *Korali*, is an example of a current state of total abandonment of socialist Montenegrin architecture due to the negligence of the institutions, especially in terms of protection of heritage and author's rights. Following the recent event of "reconstruction" of the hotel *Korali*, leading to a total demolition of one wing, it is evident that the current society doesn't recognize its value enough to invest more in order to preserve a unique modernist and awarded architecture piece, which represented a symbol of an ideology and society. In this case, it was more important to respond to requirements of today's tourism concepts, than to celebrate architecture. Furthermore, this is a reflection of a much broader image of the socio-cultural fracture, thus provoking controversies, scandals and different opinions.

At the same time, the economic and political crisis in which the countries of the former Yugoslavia find themselves, leads to the impotence to face the past that continues to haunt the present. One can argue that the general attitude and indifference of the society towards the socialist architecture and heritage, could be the consequence and attempt to deviate from past ideologies. However, regardless the limbo in which this architecture seems to exist, perhaps its bareness and vulnerability might be the stage for some new actors to act, but with honest sensitivity towards its uniqueness.

Notes

¹ Milan Popović (1934-1985) was a Montenegrin Architect, graduated in Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade in 1958. He was a leading architect in Republic Institute for Urban planning and Design of Montenegro (from 1961), who created a number of significant buildings in Montenegro.

² Regional Spatial Plan for South Adriatic, later known as "*Jadran I*", covered the entire coastal zone of Yugoslavia and was a result of cooperation between the Government of SFR Yugoslavia and the United Nations Development Program. Numerous experts from Europe and the region participated in the development of the plan.

³ The Workers' Council of the newspaper *Borba* introduced the award on February 19, 1965. Federal and republic awards of this newspaper, have been awarded for the best architectural works in Yugoslavia continuously for 26 years. Architecture promoted through one, at that time, significant daily newspaper, represented the best way to establish a good communication between architecture and society (Alihodžić, R., (2015).

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Viktorija Nikolić (Belgrade, 1991) architect, she completed her Master of Science degree in Architecture from the Politecnico di Milano discussing a thesis focusing on socialist architecture in former Yugoslavia and urban renewal of the House of Revolution in Niksic, followed by professor Ilaria Valente. She is currently working in the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial planning and Urbanism in Montenegro, as a head of department for Development and promotion of architecture, carrying out international architectural competitions for public buildings, developing various state strategies and rulebooks for architectural design and coordinating Montenegro's participation at la Biennale di Venezia 2023. She is currently working on State guidelines for the development of Architecture in Montenegro.

Tamara Marović (Bar, 1992), Msc Architect, (University of Montenegro - Faculty of Architecture; University Donja Gorica – Faculty of Polytechnics), was a Visiting critic at the Syracuse University from New York - School of Architecture, and a co-leader of summer school for Architecture students: “Between Myth and Utopia - Perspective Atlas of the Former Yugoslavia” (2019). She has worked as an associate architect with various firms, and has taken part in national competitions and research projects, and is currently working as an advisor in the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial planning and Urbanism in Montenegro, in the department for Development and promotion of architecture. She has been a coordinator and part of the creative team of the Montenegro's participation at la Biennale di Venezia 2023.

Marina Tornatora, Blagoja Bajkovski
Skopje: concrete vs fiction.
From Internationalism towards ethnonationalism

Abstract

The recent resurgence of interest in Balkan brutalist architecture within the architectural discourse serves a dual purpose. It not only addresses a notable gap in historiography but also reflects a shifting perspective towards a heritage that continues to hold significant cultural and architectural value, particularly in the context of 1960s and 1970s urban and architectural development. This contribution focuses on Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, as an illustrative case study of the modernization efforts in former Yugoslav countries. The city's architectural and cultural legacy, from the post-1963 earthquake reconstruction guided by Kenzo Tange's master plan, currently faces the risk of erasure due to the transformative effects of the Urban Renewal Plan (SK2014).

Key Words

Skopje — Kenzo Tange — Brutalism

The prolific architectural production in Yugoslavia after the Second World War remains a relatively lesser-known chapter in the history of architecture. Only recently has it been reevaluated, shedding light on the quality and distinctiveness of a modernization process in which architecture served as the tangible expression of a societal vision. This era witnessed highly experimental architectural endeavors on various fronts, encompassing spatial organization, urban integration, material utilization, and technical coherence. Moreover, these experiments incorporated a fusion of urban and architectural decisions with interpretations of distinct national styles that shaped Yugoslavia.

Within the Balkan region, the city of Skopje (Ckonje), the capital of North Macedonia, stands out as a distinctive case study. With its current population of 526,500 inhabitants, Skopje holds a significant place not only due to historical events but also because of the architectural density that redefined its layout and urban structure during the 1960s and 1970s.

Skopje can be described as an “interrupted” city, where its visage bears the marks of numerous transformations and reconfigurations. Here, the influences of East and West converge and interact, while diverse ethnic groups co-exist, including Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Bosnians and many others. In the 1960s, Skopje represented an opportunity to actualize the tenets of modern architectural culture, akin to more renowned examples like Brasilia (1960) and Chandigarh (1953). Tracing its origins back to *Scupi*, an Illyrian settlement later annexed by the Roman Empire, Skopje has a history marked by successive waves of conquests, including Ottoman Turks, Bulgarians, and periods of Serbian and Yugoslavian control. The city became the capital of the independent state of North Macedonia in 1991.

Six decades ago, on the 26th of July 1963, Skopje endured a devastating

Fig. 1

Kenzo Tange, Model of the Master plan for New Skopje, 1965.



earthquake registering a magnitude of 6.1. This seismic catastrophe resulted in a tragic toll, with over 1,000 casualties. The earthquake wreaked havoc, causing damage to 60% of the existing urban structures and leaving 80% of homes either severely damaged or completely destroyed.

In the aftermath of this catastrophic event, the strategic communication and rhetoric surrounding it, bolstered by the charismatic leadership of Josip Broz Tito, drew international attention. The charismatic appeal of Tito led to a massive outpouring of humanitarian aid, effectively designating Skopje as a symbol of global cooperation between nations. During the delicate era of the Cold War, Macedonia was transformed into a sanctuary of peace, where even in the midst of geopolitical tensions, humanitarian efforts converged. Notably, the American military, dispatched by President Kennedy, and Soviet seismology experts, sent by Premier Khrushchev, converged on the same ground to offer their assistance.

In this context, the Skopje Reconstruction Plan emerged as an unparalleled opportunity to showcase to the world the Yugoslav socialist model in action. It transformed Skopje into an international laboratory for profound contemplation on urban theories that had been the subject of intense debate within the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne). Additionally, it provided a platform for a generation of Yugoslav architects to actively participate in the global architectural discourse. The significance attributed to the reconstruction efforts is underscored by the involvement of the United Nations. The organization sponsored and coordinated the international competition for the New Skopje Plan¹ (1965), under the guidance of architect Ernst Weissmann (1913-2005), who was the director of the United Nations Center for Housing, Building, and Planning and a student of Le Corbusier. The earthquake, therefore, marked a moment of crisis and upheaval, but it

also presented an opportunity for the reestablishment of Skopje as a «world city, symbolizing international solidarity and embracing cosmopolitan ideals, as eloquently articulated by Weissmann» (Tolić, 2012). The Plan for New Skopje carried significant symbolic weight, as it aimed to demonstrate «the physical and technical organization of a specific political, social, economic, and cultural model» (ibid).

With the belief that solutions could be amalgamated and refined, the winning proposals emerged from two distinct groups: one led by Kenzo Tange, accompanied by Arata Isozaki, Yoshio Taniguchi, and Sadao Watanabe, and the other by the Institute for Urban Planning of Zagreb, under the leadership of Radovan Miscevic and Fedor Wenzler.

The objective of this article is to delve into the urban model introduced by Kenzo Tange's Plan (Fig. 1), which has profoundly shaped Skopje since its reconstruction. Furthermore, it explores the latest urban transformations the city has undergone, particularly "Skopje 2014 Plan" in relation to Tange's Plan.

Kenzo Tange's New Skopje

The Japanese team's Plan for the city of Skopje is conceived as an architectural experiment to be carried out in 40 years, with the year of conclusion in 2000, designed by a monumental infrastructural system that organizes and structures the city, as already experimented in the Plan for Tokyo Bay (1960) and that of the Residential Unit (1959) for 25,000 people, developed at MIT in Boston. In these projects the city is designed by a network of continuous connections, for vehicles and pedestrians, to which perfectly recognizable «new architectural prototypes» (Tange, 1965) differentiated by intended use are grafted.

The detail with which the architecture is designed opens up a specific scalar dimension of the city project, in which the macro scale combines with that of the architectural object. An approach evident in other projects by Tange, such as the one for the Tokyo Olympics (1964), the complex in Hiroshima (1949-1959), the Offices in Kanagawa (1958) and the masterplan for the Osaka International Exposition (1970) in which «the functional typologies all have their own very specific volumetric peculiarity which often makes them act in contrast in the composition, and which makes them become a real experimental laboratory and source of linguistic inspiration for the Japanese architect's subsequent projects» (Aymonino, 2017)

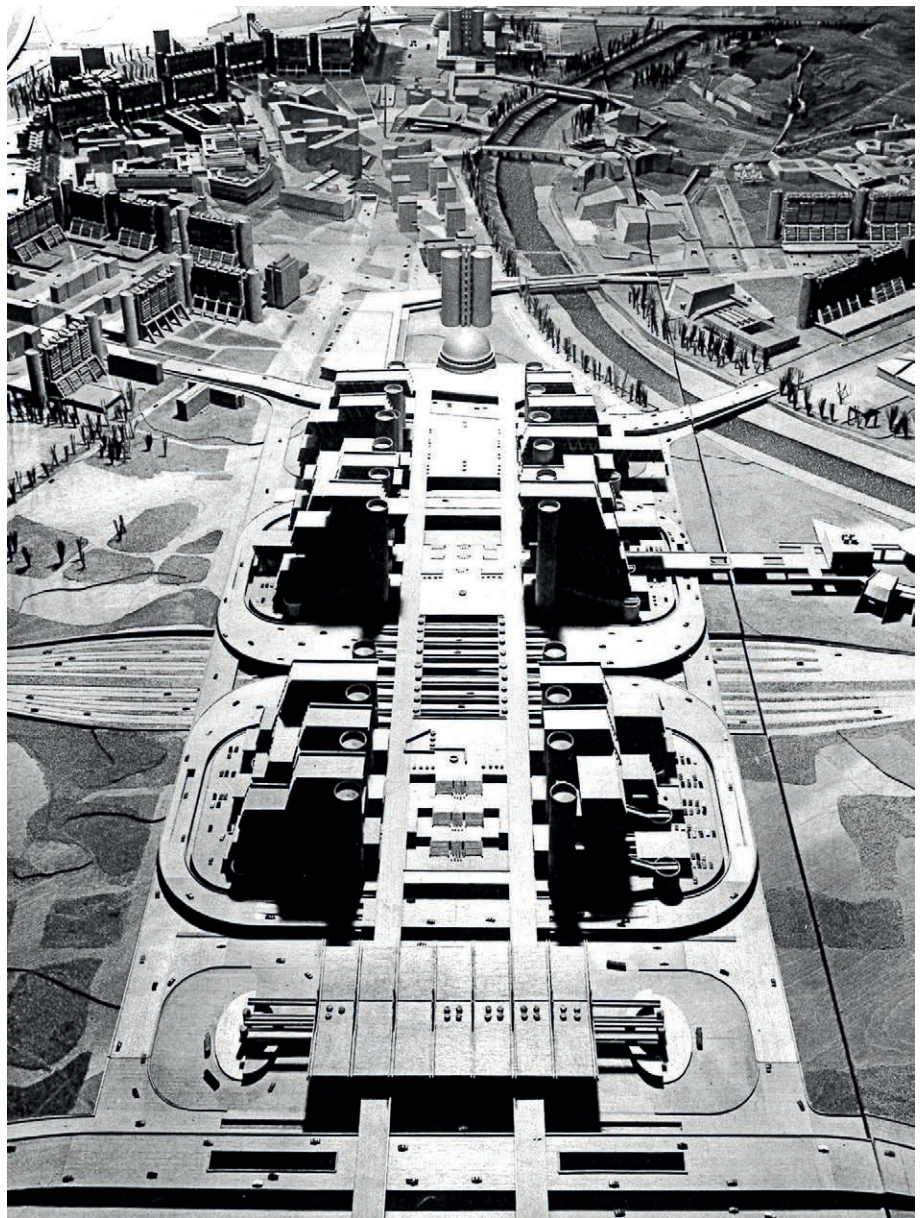
The references to the Cluster City (1952-1953) by Alison and Peter Smithson also emerge in filigree, in the uninterrupted and branched cluster system of building bodies. In Skopje, the Japanese architect starts from tabula rasa, from a zero floor obtained by demolishing the few pre-existing structures that survived the earthquake, in correspondence with which he inserts green areas, and identifying a park on the Kale hill on which the Museum of Contemporary Art stands today and the Freedom Monument.

The structuring elements of the project are identified in the *City Gate* and the *City Wall*: the "door" and the "wall", architectural and urban interventions that evoke the memory of medieval Balkan cities.

By using the concept of the 'door', we not only aimed to model a structure with the physical appearance of a door, but also anchored in people's consciousness the idea that it is a door through which one enters Skopje. If the intervention does not keep its symbolic name, it will be rejected by the population. The city wall also became famous and although some argued that the 'wall' was an obstacle and should be removed, people resisted the idea of a project without it. The city wall, which became the center of its iconic image, suggested not abandoning the idea of the 'wall'. We learned, through

Fig. 2

Kenzo Tange, Model of the Master plan for New Skopje, 1965. View of the City Gate.



experience, that it was necessary to identify a series of symbolic processes in the project. (Tange, 1976)

Therefore, connecting the radical nature of the project with the historical identity of Skopje, the “door” and the “wall” that structure the new urban layout are identified as symbolic elements, becoming the emblematic signs connected to the local context. As in previous experiences, Tange reiterates the need to conceive “new prototypes”, through a project that from a territorial and urban scale proposes architectural solutions investigated through detailed drawings and large models.

Furthermore, to create that «open structure» with «infinite growth» theorized in previous projects, the Japanese team proposes the rotation of the urban system in an East-West direction, orthogonal to the historical axis, thus defining a *decumanus* as a new hallway.

This strategy allows for greater connection with the surrounding area, the possibility of growth of the city and the dislocation of the old train station from the central area within the new urban gate.

Here the *City Gate* (fig.2), an imposing tertiary and infrastructural hub, with clear references to the Tokyo Plan, builds a new raised ground, separating

Fig. 3

Kenzo Tange, Transportation Center (1971-1981).



pedestrian connections from car and rail mobility. An architectural megastructure conceived as an intermodal «transformer», which should have housed shops, offices, hotels, cinemas, meeting rooms, only partially built and immediately judged to be oversized for a reality like that of Skopje.

The *decumanus* is conceived as an administrative and commercial axis with a continuous and modular system of vertical nuclei, where the systems and stair blocks are located, connected by horizontally suspended corridors which clearly echo the metabolist architecture of Kisho Kurokawa but also the «street in the air» by the Smithsons.

Pairs of stairways delineate the pedestrian pathways leading from *Gateway Square* to the office block and the car park. The conceptualization of this urban gateway rested on two paramount objectives: first, to craft a unified system harmonizing horizontal and vertical movement trajectories, and second, to conceive a spatial articulation that exercises visual control over flow, movement, and human perception. Simultaneously, each distinct space within this complex corresponds to a physical entity, serving a unique function and adopting a specific form within the perpendicular alignments, where administrative and directional activities are concentrated, as well as in parallel to the axis. Adhering to the visionary planning approach, Tange amalgamates these dual dimensions on a spatial plane through the inclusion of pedestrian bridges and stairways enveloping the entrance buildings and seamlessly intertwining with the office structures. In cases where buildings connect closely, elevated corridors facilitate the organic expansion of these spaces on an urban scale. The entire project adheres to a module that governs the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the volumes, extending down to the minutest details, thereby establishing a common language that streamlines communication between designers and builders. The extensive application of three-dimensional grids facilitates the creation of intricate spatial configurations grounded in the concept of a unified scale.

Within the broader City Gate project, only the *Transportation Center* (1971-1981) (Fig.3) came to fruition. This remarkable structure, realized through the collaborative efforts of Kenzo Tange's studio in Japan, forms the ultimate node of the new East-West axis, extending toward the regional territory.

The third developmental phase of the Plan is characterized by the construc-

tion of the *City Wall*, which appears to draw inspiration from Dubrovnik's city wall. This architectural element takes the form of a double linear residential strip, resembling a horseshoe, and serves as the delineation of the new urban center's perimeter. Its purpose is to accommodate the anticipated population growth of the city in the future.

The City Wall symbolizes an endeavor to harmonize the deep-rooted community spirit of the Macedonian people with the requisites of modern collective living. Recognizing this distinctive aspect, the planning team conceives a spatial arrangement that preserves neighborly relations as an inherent quality of the Skopje community. The original competition project, which initially envisioned residential complexes with ground-floor shops, underwent modifications during the third phase. It transitioned into groups of integrated apartments, incorporating common services within the interstitial spaces.

The architectural composition of the wall comprises two distinct building typologies. The first consists of a linear terraced structure, standing 24 meters tall, featuring apartments designed to align with the height of existing urban buildings. On the upper floors, balconies extend toward internal courtyards. The second typology encompasses residential tower complexes, organized in groups of two or three buildings. These towers are strategically positioned on corners or along streets, evoking the imagery of a fortified enclosure, akin to sentinels guarding both sides of the street. In both typologies, the ground floor accommodates shops catering to daily needs, small restaurants, bars, offices, and meeting rooms. Additionally, provisions are made for self-service parking, catering to residents' vehicles.

This eliminates the need for driveways within the courtyards and introduces a tree-lined strip along the external side, seamlessly integrated with the primary urban green space, which also houses the primary schools.

Every meticulous detail and architectural element in Tange's comprehensive project aims to translate the dynamics of contemporary society into a tangible spatial arrangement.

Skopje's Béton Brut Cityscape

While Kenzo Tange's renown played a pivotal role in drawing international attention to the Plan for *New Skopje*, thus projecting Yugoslavia's modernization under Tito onto the global stage, it was during this subsequent phase that the energies of local architects and artists came to the fore.

Only in recent times, the significance of their contributions has been adequately recognized. Notable figures such as Bogdan Bogdanović, Juraj Neidhardt, Svetlana Kana Radević, Edvard Ravnikar, Vjenceslav Richter, Milica Šterić, Mimoza Nestorova-Tomić, Georgi Konstantinovskij, and Janko Konstantinov represented a veritable «Yugoslav avant-garde» (Ignjatović). Their international experiences endowed them with the ability to interpret the nation's drive for modernization within the realm of architectural design.

In the years following Tange's masterplan, Skopje underwent a period of remarkable ferment, evolving into what can aptly be described as a «béton brut cityscape» (Lozanovska, 2015). It became a laboratory for the exploration of brutalist architecture, a movement that indelibly shaped the city's visage and identity.

The *Operative Atlas. Skopje Brutalism_Graphic Biography of 15 Architectures*² (Tornatora, Bajkovski, 2019) stands as comprehensive and well-structured exploration of this architectural heritage, commencing with an analysis of the original drawings meticulously preserved in the city archives. This endeavor unearthed hitherto unpublished materials, shedding light on the

**Fig. 4**

Janko Konstantinov, Telecommunications Center (1972-1981).

complexity and originality of this architectural production and seeking to establish its rightful place within the architectural discourse while ensuring its due recognition.

Among these architectural gems, the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (1971-1975), designed by Olga Papesh (1930-2011) and Radomir Lelovikj (1933-2014), and situated in close proximity to the railway, stands out as the inaugural structure realized as part of the City Gate project's final segment. The Telecommunications Center (1972-1981), (Fig. 4) designed by another Macedonian architect and painter, Janko Konstantinov (1926-2010), exhibits a captivating fusion of visionary elements reminiscent of Japanese metabolist architecture. This intervention comprises three distinct buildings — the telecommunication center, the administrative building and the counter hall — all situated atop a single platform that not only connects these structures but also defines an urban courtyard. The round form of the counter hall conjures the imagery of a grand tent with a ribbed roof, supported by anthropomorphic structural elements, projecting outward and bestowing upon the building an extroverted character reminiscent of architectural marvels like Oscar Niemeyer's Metropolitan Cathedral of Brasilia (1970) or Pier Luigi Nervi and Annibale Vitellozzi's Sports Palace (1957) in Rome.

Tracing along the banks of the Vardar River, the Commercial Center (1967-1972) by Zivko Popovski (1934-2007) emerges as the conclusive episode of the new East-West axis within Tange's masterplan. This architectural feat represents a pioneering typological structure, ingeniously fusing commercial spaces — incorporated within a sprawling multi-level horizontal platform — with preexisting residential edifices seamlessly integrated into a series of towering structures.

This complex presents an innovative departure from the conventional American-style shopping center model. Located strategically within the city's center, it adeptly resolves the linkage between the main square and the urban park Zena Borec. Functioning as a diverse nexus, it orchestrates a network of external and internal ramps, facilitating pedestrian movement through verdant spaces and connecting them to the layered urban fabric of the city. A succession of terraces, akin to authentic urban squares, unfolds a modern reinterpretation of the traditional Bazaar concept, wherein the thoroughfares

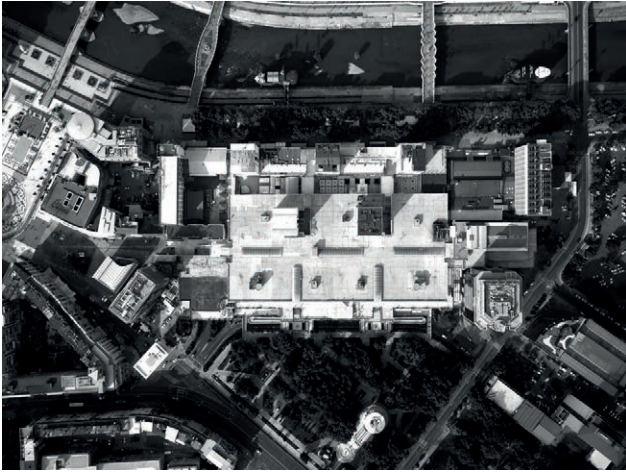


Fig. 5
Zivko Popovski, Commercial Center (1967-1972).



Fig. 6
Mimoza Tomić and Kiril Muratovski, Museum of Macedonia (1971-1976).

pulsate with commercial activities.

On the opposite bank of the river lies the Macedonian Opera and Ballet (1972-1981), designed by the Slovenian group Biro 71. It is the sole structure constructed from the envisioned Cultural Center, situated at the heart of the city. The Slovenian architects pioneered an architectural masterpiece reminiscent of contemporary designs that sculpt form through tectonic modeling of the terrain, akin to projects such as the City of Culture (1999) in Santiago de Compostela by Peter Eisenman or the Oslo Opera House (2007) by Snøhetta. The Macedonian building presents itself as a tectonic metamorphosis of the land, shaping a new topography where architecture and public space coalesce, extending to the urban stretch along the Vardar River. Phenomenological considerations permeate all spaces, maintaining a rational distribution of functions while delineating plastic forms from the exterior to the interior.

Lastly, the Museum of Macedonia (1971-1976) (fig.6), designed by Mimoza Tomić (1929) and Kiril Muratovski (1930-2005), comprises various exhibition spaces — Archaeology, Ethnology, History — redefining the topography of a segment within the Old Bazar fabric near the Kurshumli Han, an Ottoman caravanserai. Through terrain modeling, the intervention configures a connection device among the diverse elevations of the existing layered fabric. Here, an architecture of pure cubes arises along the diagonals. Eliciting Byzantine masonry, Mimoza adorns the upper portion of the building with white marble tesserae from Prilep quarries, almost suspending it from the darker exposed concrete below. This juxtaposition enhances the abstraction of the cubic volumes, defining both the plan and the elevation. The contemporary intervention's integration into the ancient Ottoman fabric is filtered by the roof's design, characterized by dark-colored slopes contrasting with the white marble volumes. The ridge lines, rotated along the diagonal, create a new skyline in dialogue with the surrounding context.

In this itinerary, we cannot overlook the contributions of Georgi Konstantinovski (1930-2022), a Macedonian architect who completed his education at Yale University under Paul Rudolph. Notable among his works are City Archive (1966) and Goce Delcev Dormitory (1969), representing the early instances of brutalist architecture by a Macedonian architect on an international scale. These structures have remained integral components of Skopje's urban fabric, a city currently undergoing profound transformation, particularly since gaining autonomy from Yugoslavia.

Over the past decade, the principles outlined in Tange's Urban Plan and the architectural heritage have faced significant alterations through the imple-

Fig. 7

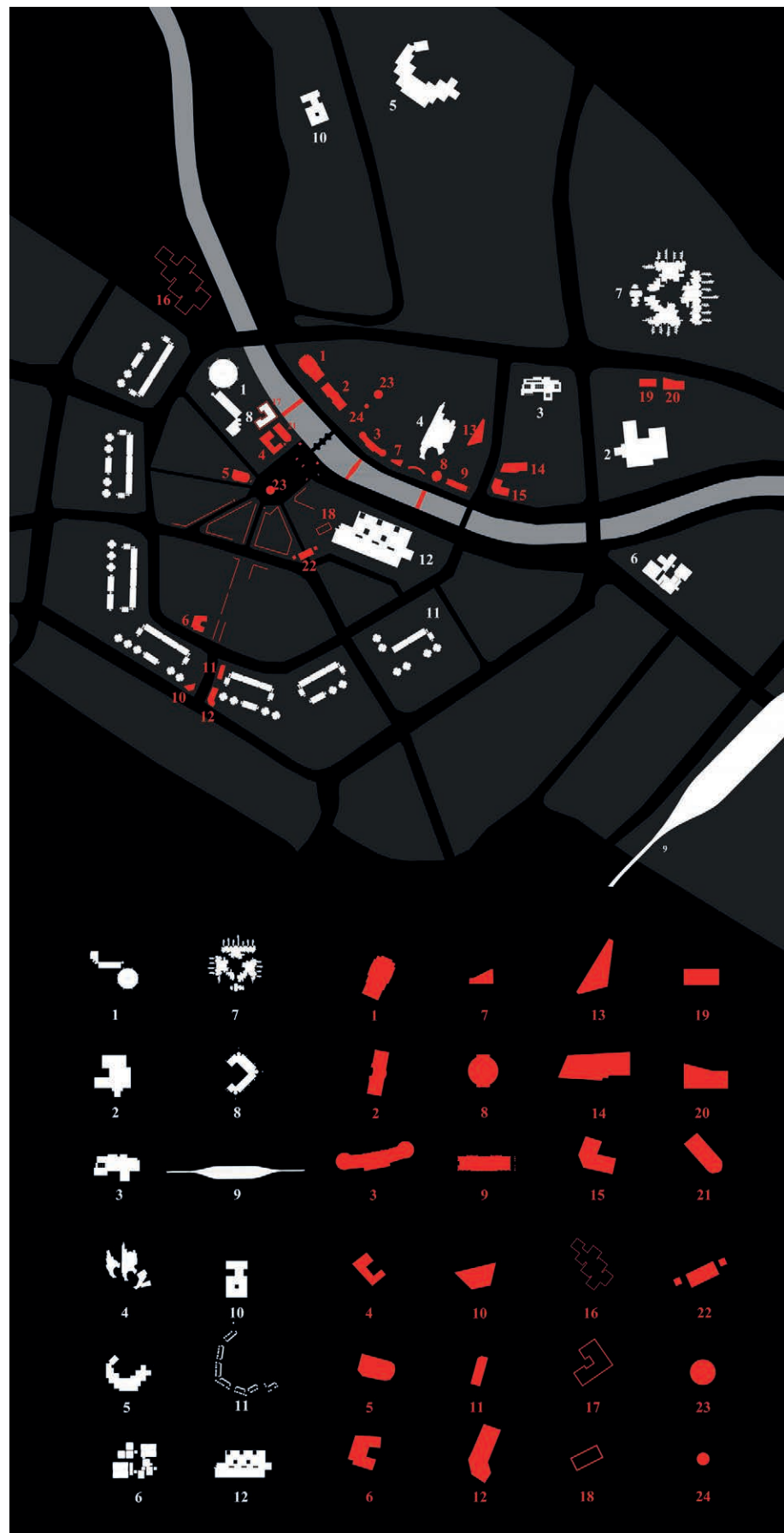
Comparison map between post-earthquake architectures (in white) of Kenzo Tange's plan and interventions of the SK2014 plan (in red).

[in white, Skopje Brutalism]

1. Telecommunications Center,
2. Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
3. National and University Library,
4. Macedonian Opera and Ballet,
5. Museum of Macedonia,
6. National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia,
7. Saints Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje,
8. Republic Dispatch Center,
9. Skopje Transport Center,
10. Museum of Contemporary Art,
11. City Walls,
12. City Shopping Center.

[in red, Skopje 2014]

1. Macedonian National Theater,
2. Museum of the Macedonian Struggle,
3. Archaeological Museum,
4. Marriott Courtyard Hotel,
5. Marriott Hotel,
6. Ministry of Finance,
7. Agency for Electronic Communications,
8. Public Prosecutor's Office,
9. Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
10. Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services,
11. Commission for the Regulation of Energy and Water Services,
12. MES Macedonia (Energy Regulatory Commission of North Macedonia),
13. Ministry of Political System and Intercommunity Relations,
14. Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning,
15. A1 Macedonia Headquarters,
16. Government Building with an eclectic façade,
17. Republic Dispatch Center with an eclectic façade,
18. EVN (Electricity Distribution Company) with an eclectic façade,
19. Basic Criminal Court of Skopje,
20. Court Palace Garage,
21. Officers' Residences,
22. Gate Macedonia,
23. Monument of Philip II and Alexander the Great,
24. Olympia Fountain - Mother of Alexander the Great.



mentation of the “Skopje 2014 Urban Renewal Plan.” Officially announced in 2010 and funded by the previous Macedonian government, this initiative has, to some extent, been halted, resulting in a varied development in Skopje’s city center. This development has included the construction of new



Fig. 8
Republic Dispatch Center MEP-SO (1987-89), comparison of the original project with the subsequent transformation.

Fig. 9
Macedonian Opera and Ballet (1972-1981), comparison of the view along the Vardar River with its subsequent transformation.

buildings, bridges, approximately 34 monuments and sculptures, as well as transformation of over 10 existing structures. All of these interventions are characterized by a pronounced eclecticism, predominantly manifested in the facades and exteriors.

In addition to planning new constructions to fill urban voids, the new plan has initiated actions aimed at erasing the remnants of the socialist era and transforming the existing architectural heritage. Eclectic facades, constructed with ephemeral materials, now adorn some of the city's iconic buildings. Simultaneously, new public structures have emerged without a harmonious relationship with the urban context.

In particular the Republic Dispatch Center MEPSO (1987-89), (fig.8) by Zoran Shtaklev as shown in (fig. 8), designed by Zoran Shtaklev, serves as an example of the transformation of modern architecture. It was originally characterized by a horizontal cantilevered roof plane atop a transparent glass volume. However, it has been modified into a structure that roughly resembles a Greek temple, complete with an entablature, columns, and a basement. In the case of the Macedonian Opera and Ballet (1972-1981), (fig.9) deliberate alterations to the public space between the building and the Vardar River have been made. These alterations encompass various architectural interventions, such as additional buildings, monuments, and sculptures. Collectively, they form an eclectic linear curtain along the Vardar River, effectively obscuring the original building and disrupting the urban relationships envisioned in the Tange Plan.

In the case of interventions on the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University Campus (1970-74), (fig.10), the absence of a clear strategy has resulted in the placement of new structures in open spaces, thereby compromising the overall integrity of the campus. This complex, situated north of the Vardar River,



Fig. 10

Student campus of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University (1970-74), comparison between the original project and the subsequent addition of new buildings on the campus.

serves as a pivotal hub within the cultural and educational center outlined by Kenzo Tange's Plan.

In conclusion, the Skopje 2014 project was a controversial attempt to transform the architectural landscape of Skopje by incorporating elements and motifs that imposed artificial "neoclassical" styles, unrelated to the city's history. However, the plan was eventually halted due to reactions from the cultural community, the absence of genuine public participation, and the misinterpretation of the city's heritage. These interventions, lacking a coherent strategy, have disrupted some of the reconstruction efforts. (fig.11-12) Within this intricate fabric, the architectural production following the earthquake continues to exhibit a profound sense of individuality in terms of spatial and urban characteristics, form, materiality, craftsmanship, and more. To the extent that the past seems more modern than the present, this phenomenon transcends mere aesthetics. It presents a landscape characterized by profoundly modern architecture, where "beton brut" serves as a plastic material akin to the works of Giuseppe Uncini, conveying manufacturing processes and materializing a nexus between substance, form, and structure. The relationships, principles, and spatial concepts embedded within such brutalist architecture, while the "utopian" vision of the Tange Plan remains unrealized, not only represent a legacy of the recent past but also constitute a wellspring of ideas for the future.

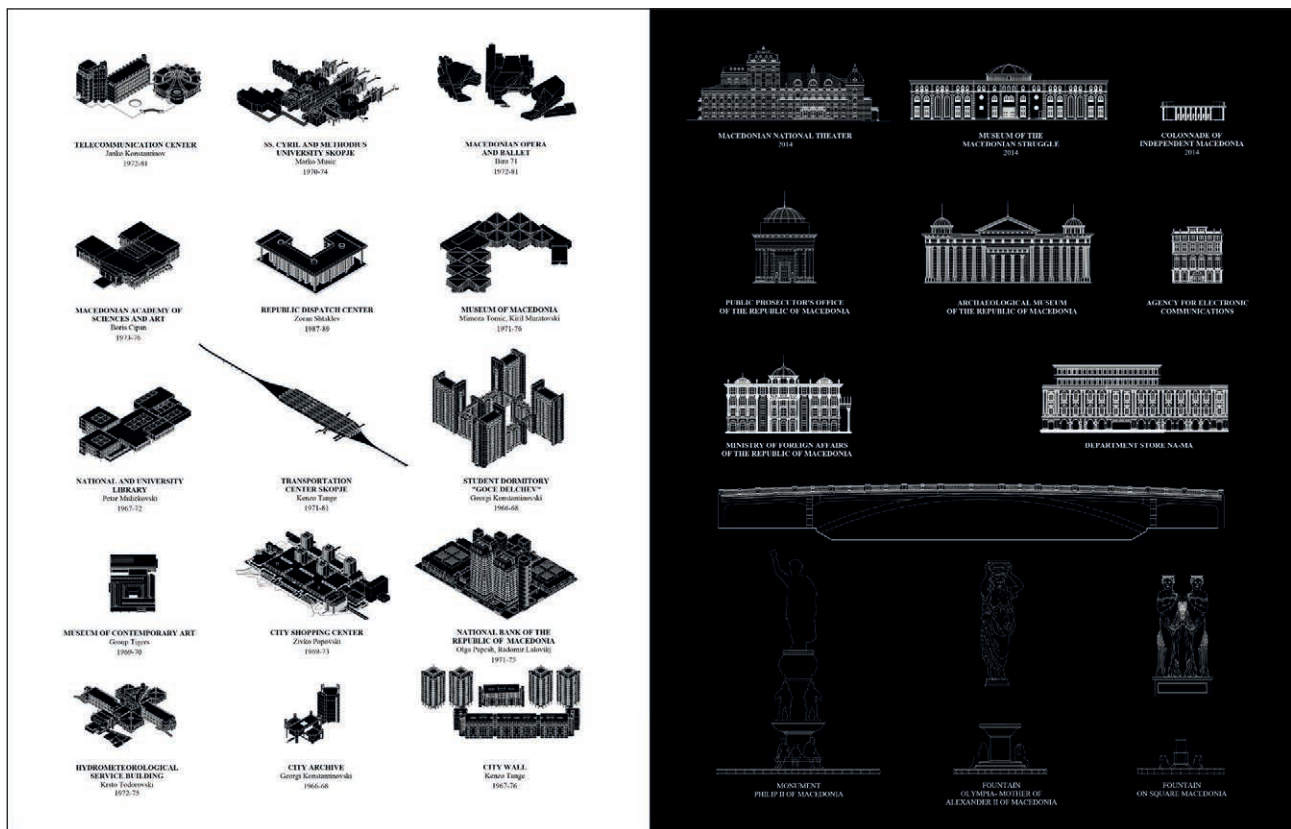
Perhaps Skopje's designation as the Capital of Culture for 2028 can serve as an opportune moment to turn a new page, harnessing its historical heritage to intersect with novel design dimensions and redefine the city's urban identity.

Notes

* The subtitle of this article is inspired by the text of Slobodan Veleviski and Marija Mano Velevska, published in *Freeingspace: Macedonian Pavilion*, 16th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2018.

¹ The City Center of Skopje reconstruction international competition saw participation from the following teams: Slavko Brezovski and his team at "Makedonija Proekt" in Skopje; Aleksandar Djordjevic and colleagues from the Belgrade Institute of Town Planning; Eduard Ravnikar and associates from Ljubljana; J.H. van der Broek and Bakema based in Rotterdam; Luigi Piccinato partnering with Studio Scimemi from Rome; and Maurice Rotival from New York.

² *Operative Atlas of Skopje Brutalism_Graphic Biography of 15 Architectures* is a part of the volume TORNATORA M., BLAJKOVSKI B. (2019) – *99FILES: Balkan Brutalism Skopje*, MoCa, Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje. This research is an excerpt from Blagoja Bajkovski's PhD thesis, conducted under the mentorship of prof. Marina Tornatora and co-mentorship of prof. Marija Mano Velevska at the Faculty of Architec-



On the previous page

Fig. 11

Arrangement of architectural elements within post-earthquake renovation interventions in contrast to SK2014 interventions in Skopje City Center.

Fig. 12

Photos depicting post-earthquake renovation interventions compared to SK2014 interventions in Skopje City Center.

ture, “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” University in Skopje. The thesis was completed within the Department of Architecture and Territory (dArTe) at Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, as part of the XXXII cycle of PhD studies, coordinated by Professor Gianfranco Neri.

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Blagoja Bajkovski (1983), is an architect and assistant professor at the Faculty of Architecture at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. In 2020 he finished his PHD on the topic of Operative Atlas of Brutalist Skopje_ A graphic biography of 15 architectures. Since 2016, he is part of the research laboratory Landscape_InProgress, a structure that explores future landscapes, places that have been exposed to strong traumas, affected by events and processes of transformation. Within this laboratory he has further developed the theme of brutalist legacy in Skopje working on the research titled 99FILES. In 2018 he participated at the XVI Venice Biennale with the project SKOPJE DESTRATIFICATION '29 '65 sk14.

Ottavio Amaro, Francesca Schepis
Spomenik. Architectures of sublime memory

Abstract

Spomenik is a synonym for 'monument' in memorial architecture and art. They are one of the outcomes of the civil strategy for resistance to Nazi fascism in Yugoslavia. This civic art corresponds to a brutalist expression, a sign of modernity and differentiation of Tito's Yugoslavia within the world of "Soviet Realism" and a conscious action of the need to project so many pluralities of different cultures and histories into a unified national idea. Despite being constrained within their own compositional and functional natures, the two arts come together in these installations – spatial designs, objects, or hybridized elements in their relationship of scale and function. After a phase of neglect and culpable oblivion following the Balkan conflicts, architectural critics show widespread interest in these monumental sculptures. This is proven by various international exhibitions and research works, which enhance their artistic, architectural, and cultural aspects along with the architects and artists who designed them.

Keywords

Art/Architecture — Monument/Ritual — Landscape

Introduction

Spomenik is the word for "monument" in Serbo-Croatian language. It refers to memorial architecture and art altogether as the outcome of a civic resistance strategy to Nazi-Fascism linked to Tito's government in Yugoslavia. He knew the need to project so many pluralities of different cultures and histories into an idea of a unified state. The result is countless signs and symbols made over about fifty years, hard to list in their entirety. This mosaic still overrides geographical, administrative, and cultural boundaries today in a time of new divisions. A high membership value was entrusted to the characters of civic art, conveyed through the plastic expressionism of form and scalar relationship without direct figurative and rhetorical connotations. Thus, it could dialogue with the landscape scale without renouncing possible evocative and poetic references. They are monolithic and assertive signs, shaped by the time of light and shadow, along with the display of the solid matter represented by concrete, typical of a *brutalist* expression. They are a sign of Yugoslavia's modernity and differentiation within the world of "Soviet Realism" and indeed represent new constructive dialectics in the postwar Western debate beyond mute international rationalism.

Historical events and critics' discovery

The first approach to the monuments-symbols of recent Balkan history can be considered the photographic campaign by Jan Kempenaers between 2006 and 2009, shown in a traveling exhibition between Belgium, Holland, and the United States. It was then documented in the book *Spomenik* (Kempenaers, 2010), published in collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent. The Antwerp-based photographer's gaze captures and captures sculptur-

al constructions in a precise atmospheric condition, choosing the abstraction of diffuse twilight. The imposing masses of granite, reinforced concrete, or steel are framed in a condition of nature not inhabited by living beings, pure and isolated, casting no shadows on the ground to tie their presence to their location. Instead, they look like timeless apparitions. In presenting the first stage of the exhibition, Willem Jan Neutelings introduced an important point of view on the theme of time. *Spomeniks* sprung up in places that hosted horrendous war events during World War II but also led to civil confrontation between the different cultures of the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia: partisans, ustaše, and chetniks against each other in the fury of destruction. At the dawn of reconstruction, after the establishment of the republican federation, the objects of memory could not carry any still-divisive symbols. Instead, they had to free themselves from any figuration in the abstraction and boldness of pure sculpture. Rather than the image of a mournful past, they had to be the beginning of future, widespread, and universal equality. Even so, as Neutelings invited to reflect, the internecine warfare a few decades apart and the blind desire to dismember the *spomeniks* violently called into question not only the socialist state but the very possibility of coexistence. Perhaps this is why Jan Kempenaers's photographs deny the monuments any form of life other than vegetal or mineral.

Architectural critics began to show widespread interest in these monumental sculptures with the exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia. Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948-1980*, held at MoMA New York between July 2018 and January 2019 under the curatorship of Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić. The exhibition is, in fact, the first retrospective on socialist architecture designed and built in the Balkan territories of the former Yugoslavia. Its great merit was to highlight the richness and complexity of a physical reality designed and constructed to give concrete form to a new political and social reality. Balkan socialist architecture represents the spatial pattern for a moment of great historical transformation involving thousands of people under one ideal.

Few moments in history have witnessed a condition of total interdependence and simultaneity between the construction of a new form of society and the construction of the landscapes, the city, and the buildings intended to house it. One was considered inseparable from the other. The New York exhibition features four sections arranged as follows: "Modernization," examining the role of architecture in the rapid urbanization and industrialization of a largely rural country; "Global Networks," which examines the role of Yugoslavia's foreign policy in shaping its tourism and creating large-scale construction projects at home and abroad; then, "Everyday Life," exploring the country's mass housing projects and the emergence of modern design in a socialist consumer culture. Finally, the "Identities" section addresses the relationship between Yugoslavia's regional diversity and national unity.

These sections give vast space to collect, catalog, and display the projects, photographs, models, and documentary films of the *spomeniks*. They highlight the continuity across the monuments' ideational moment – when the artistic-architectural project takes shape – realization and spatial and evocative results.

Since this pivotal starting point in the rediscovery of such a conspicuous heritage, attention to the architecture of the Federated Balkans has grown exponentially. Indeed, the past five years have witnessed many scholarly research works, photographic projects, and film documentaries themed on the extraordinary story of a realized utopia.

**Fig. 1**

Boško Kučanski, Il Pugno, Makljen, Bosnia Erzegovina, 1978. Photo by Alberto Campi, +38, 2017.

Some of the most relevant ones – to mention the leading and best known – include the work of Donald Niebyl with the *Spomenik Database* site and volume (Niebyl, 2018); Boštjan Bugarič, who was one of the curators of the exhibition *Architecture. Sculpture. Remembrance. The Art of Monuments of Yugoslavia 1945-1991*; Alberto Campi with +38 (Campi, 2020), a poignant photographic reportage of his journey across all the member states of the former Federal Republic; the very recent exhibition *Stones Between the Fronts. Anti-Fascist Monuments on the Territory of Former-Yugoslavia*, which opened on September 14 this year at the Architekturzentrum Wien under the curatorship of Melanie Hollaus and Christoph Lammerhuber, in collaboration with MuseumsQuartier Wien and Architekturzentrum Wien. The exhibit includes full-scale analog models of two *spomeniks* and virtual reproductions of some environments, attempting to render the complexity of the memorials through augmented reality. Most importantly, it also has countless sketches and technical drawings by Bogdan Bogdanović, of which the Architekturzentrum Wien holds 12,500 examples in imperishable memory.

In an interview with Dániel Kovács (Kovács, Bugarič, 2020) for the web page of “Domus,” Boštjan Bugarič explained the correlation between the exhibition *Architecture. Sculpture. Remembrance* and MoMA’s encyclopedic exhibition. He pointed out that the diffusion of Yugoslavia’s architectural culture has even earlier origins, traced back to the exhibition of the national pavilion at the 39th Venice Biennale in 1980. There, the architects themselves – Bogdan Bogdanović, Dušan Džamonija, Slavko Tihec, and Miodrag Živković – presented their work and made it known on a global scale. They were aware that they had accomplished and shaped a cultural revolution. After being destroyed shortly after that, their work was revived in the first decade of the ‘00s by the Association of Croatian Architects in collaboration with the Maribor Art Gallery in the project *Unfinished Modernisations - Between*

**Fig. 2**

Miodrag Živković and Ranko Radović, *Memoriale della battaglia di Sutjeska nella valle degli eroi*, Tjentište, Bosnia Erzegovina, 1971. Photo by Alberto Campi, +38, 2017.

Utopia and Pragmatism, first organized regionally, then becoming a more extensive network, leading up to the conception and realization of the New York exhibition. Meanwhile, Donald Niebyl's impressive cataloging work, *Spomenik Database*, began. Through an ever-developing website, he attempts to reconstruct a comprehensive map of the places of monumental architecture in the Federal Republic. The *spomeniks* and President Tito's houses, memorials, cemeteries, charnel houses, and museums have been marked at their geographic coordinates. In addition to the inventory of thousands of works, the catalog includes the protagonists of this cultural revolution, the architects and artists who left memories of a nation united under the sign of culture across the federated states. Through this activity of research, study, and popularization, the fate of the *spomeniks* continues to bounce from one part of the world to another, perpetuating – if not the sense of an ideal, egalitarian, and widespread society – at least its deep and radical trust in the capacity of the forms of art and, peculiarly, architecture to memorialize it.

Dialectic art and landscape

«After the dispute with Stalin in 1948, a new artistic expression was born,» says Boštjan Bugarič, «Abstract Modernism became the main artistic expression in Yugoslavia with its innovative approach, monumentality, and great expressiveness in the landscape» (Kovács, 2020)

Even today, despite the maps of the former Yugoslavia producing a sense of disintegration and a dismembered geography, the *spomeniks* identify an ideally unified territory through their quantity and quality. They form a network of points and routes that mark places and characterize landscapes without the need for geographical boundaries or cultural, political, or ethnic constraints. They still live by their artistic and architectural expressiveness in a time suspended between the visible and invisible: «The invisible is part of the visible, it is inherent in the visible: it is the very condition, indispensable



Fig. 3
Miodrag Živković e Svetislav Ličina, *Monumento al coraggio*, Ostra, Serbia 1969. Photo by Alberto Campi, +38, 2017.

to the revelations that lead us to knowledge. » (Turri, 2004) It is visible in its relationship with the landscape, the essence of nature and history, nature and culture; it is invisible in its ability to narrate places as an overlay of memories and human events filtered through the idea of “commemoration.”

So, if landscapes «are a field for reading the world» (Venturi Ferriolo, 1995), these are “talking” places, where *spomeniks* – memorials – serve as the most appropriate megaphone for a society in search of symbols and moments of collective identification in a specific historical period. In this sense, the architectural and sculptural presences of the *spomeniks* represent “the remnants” of a past and an ideal and political tension. They are analog to landscapes bearing signs of the past, with evocative “ruins” that add new and different meanings in time and space. Undoubtedly, their scale of intervention and expressive and plastic research reveal their landscapes. Yet, at the same time, they become landscapes. Beneath a willingness to forget and often to remove, there are silent ruins, mysterious and primordial megaliths in their apodicticity, perhaps belonging now to an imagery of a fantastic archaeology that retains all the expressiveness and emotional pull proper to “unspeakable” objects as in Le Corbusier’s acceptance. Therefore, on the one hand, we stand before ongoing “desacralization” processes (*spomeniks* often become locations for advertisements or commercial events) of sites linked to events, commemorations, and collective rituals. On the other hand, these constructions’ expressive and evocative capacity, where architects and artists have dealt with cognitive and transformative actions of the sites involved through a close and virtuous relationship between art/nature/landscape, remains intact.

This relationship shows the non-rhetorical character of the *spomenik*, which instead characterized the post-revolutionary evolutions of socialist art. In the former, the language of art was not chosen to enhance monuments’ figurative aspects and expressions of personality worship; instead, it was tied to their sculptural and architectural nature, projected toward abstraction and plastici-



Fig. 4

Rajko Radović, Podgora, *Ala di gabbiano*, Croazia, 1962. Photo by Alberto Campi, +38, 2017.

ty, conceived as the union of form and matter.

The reference was not Soviet postwar art but a more Western culture that was more open to innovation. Maybe it was more oriented toward the German revolutionary tradition of the '20s, with Walter Gropius's *Monument to the March Dead* (Weimar, 1921) as its highest and most authentic expression: no reference to figurative art, no commemorative inscriptions, but only a sense of form and matter. Its description by Giulio Carlo Argan could undoubtedly be applied to many of the *spomeniks* made in Yugoslavia:

In the 'Monument to the March Dead,' pure plasticity is already conceived as coagulation and precipitation of space through movement: such movement is not intended as an action or route in a given space. It can only be the disruption of a balance, a deviation from given constants, the landslide of oblique planes, and slipping slopes. Matter is the product of that condensation of space, traversed by a current of motion. It is no longer a primal matter awakened by the artist's will from natural stasis but an artificial matter born with the form. Outside the form, it is nothing but fluid and muddy mass, in perpetual motion and tension: concrete.» (Argan, 1988)

The Monument to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (Berlin, 1926), designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *retains the same spirit yet different expressive values*. The major authors chosen to design the *spomeniks* are architects, too, and have proven willingness to work on more general spatial and landscape aspects. This is "encyclopedic" experimentation with a possible marriage between architecture and sculpture. Despite being bound by their own compositional and functional statutes, both arts operate on these installations – spatial designs, objects, or hybridized elements in their relationship of scale and function. Whatever their nature, these constructions are aimed at a new aesthetic, figurative, and symbolic achievement with great emotional relevance regarding the identity of territories and landscapes.

**Fig. 5**

Jóhann Jóhannsson, *Last and first men*, 2017, frame.

The weight of memory

One of the aspects discussed in this paper is the relationship between the monument, the physical substance of a testimony meant to last over time, and what revolves around it: the ritual performed by its visitors' movements, who fulfill the function it was erected for.

The question dissolves into a rhetorical stance. Does someone have to go to the monument for it to have a reason? Instead, is it possible to assume that just their physical presence is sufficient? The two are not separable. Users' ritual comings and goings are an integral part of its essence, fulfilling its function and giving it meaning. That action incorporates the meaning of its presence. The colossal and imposing *spomenik* sculptures, works of melancholic *land art*, are perfected through the visitor's ritual of approaching, gazing at, and renewing memory. Thus, they become architecture. Artists and architects have designed them almost entirely stripped of figurative or stylistic elements, echoing archaic and ancestral structures from other spatiality and temporality. The *spomeniks* are almost always set in wide landscapes where nature predominates over anthropization as if to indemnify the history of those places for the grave and mournful events they hosted. In this process, therefore, rituality moves from the scale of the sculptural object to the architectural one, which inhabits a place and is inhabited, up to the large scale of the landscape it connects to.

At the beginning of his best-known work on the character of the image in the Western world, *Life and Death of the Image* (Debray, 1992), Régis Debray is primarily concerned with defining its origin as a representation of death. «The birth of the image is closely related to death. But if the archaic image springs from the graves, it is out of a rejection of nothingness and to prolong life» (Debray, 1992). From the initial lines, it defines the intimate correlation between tomb and monument, which appears innate among ancient populations, almost as if it were the outcome of a spontaneous ritual.

Architectural modernity then led to Adolf Loos's celebrated definition of architecture as recognizing a burial place. For the Austrian master, only by

**Fig. 6**

Jóhann Jóhannsson, *Last and first men*, 2017, frame.

transcending functional purpose, stripped of all practical reason, can architectural space rise to the status of a work of art. Such honor belongs only to the tomb and the monument: «If we find a mound six feet long and three feet wide in the forests, formed into a pyramid, shaped by a shovel, we become serious and something says: someone lies buried here. *That is architecture.*» (Loos, 1910).

It means recognizing altogether a *form* - the earthly body emptied of gaze, light, and breath - and a *ritual* - the burial of mortal remains - which transcends culture, religion, and place, which is universally identified only because it aligns with our emotional chords, our human feeling. The presence of the *spomeniks* spread across the landscape of the former Yugoslavia portrays the continuous fulfillment of this recognition. They perform a secular ritual, far from any form of religion, but dense with deep spirituality. The currently visitable monuments impose a precise mode of approach on those who observe them, an exact time to travel the distances between one element and the next. Even the sequence in which the various parts appear has been somewhat pre-determined. Their ingenious creators range from the well-known and oft-mentioned Bogdan Bogdanović to Dušan Džamonija, who took the monumental spatiality of a *spomenik* to the Italian shores of the Adriatic Sea in the Ossuary of the Slavic Fallen in Barletta (Tupputi, 2021), from Montenegrin architect Svetlana Kana Radević to Miodrag Živković with his audacious structures. Maybe they hoped this would happen despite time and the brutal and irrespective *damnatio memoriae*. Significantly, the weight of this timeless ritual can be seen in the film *Last and first men*, Icelandic musician Jóhann Jóhannsson's first and only cinematic work, first shown in its embryonic form in 2017 at the Manchester International Festival, with live accompaniment performed by the BBC Philharmonic. Then, it was presented in its final version at the 2020 Berlin Film Festival, posthumously, almost two years after the untimely death of its director. The film is a cinematic transposition of Olaf Stapledon's 1930 first science fiction novel and tells of a civilization of immortal humans capable of telepathic communication. While awaiting the end of Earth and the entire system due to the

**FigG. 7-8**

Theo Angelopoulos, *Lo sguardo di Ulisse*, 1995, frame.

disintegration of the Sun, they rediscover their survival instincts and try to oppose their earthly end. The 16-mm film fixes, in a blurry, dusty black and white, interrupted only by a few green lights and the red image of the Sun, are combined with the scenes of a world difficult to place in time and space. Director Jóhannsson chooses to film them in the locations of the *spomeniks*. Often framed at an angle or from an unusual point of view, sometimes from the ground upward or in a partial close-up manner, they are not just film sets but become the protagonists of the action. Tilda Swinton's narrative voice completes the work and gives it an otherworldly aura, betrayed only by the emotion of mankind's disappearance. The camera slowly glides over the surfaces of the monuments, which vibrate in their textural chiaroscuro and are succeeded by images of forests, clouds, and skies, as if to relocate them in a new state of memory.

Conclusions

The fate of the *spomeniks* matches the crisis caused by the Balkan wars in the '90s. Along with economic, geographical, anthropological, and historical factors, the crisis takes on the guise of a cultural crisis, often capable of quickly losing and forgetting a historical and architectural heritage of great

identity value. The end of the regime brought along the plan of destroying symbols and testimonies representing the memory of a time that employed considerable human and intellectual resources. Yet, its urban, territorial, and artistic outcomes must be brought back and valued within the more general heritage of humanity. In this sense, the experimental laboratory pursued by Tito's cultural and territorial policies, aimed at creating a 'socialist modernism' away from the rhetorical emphasis of the Soviet Union and with an eye toward Western innovation, is still a model to be studied and valorized through the testimonies and examples still present. The *spomeniks* are among the most significant and representative permanences of Balkan and Brutalist artistic and architectural culture: their fate cannot be to end up like the fragments of Lenin's statue that director Theo Angelopoulos set to sail on the Danube in *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995), as a metaphor for the drift of a population's memory.

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Francesca Schepis (1977), architect, is a Type-B Researcher in Architectural and Urban Design at the Department of Architecture and Territory - dArTe of the *Mediterranea* University of RC. She graduated in Architecture in 2005 with Laura Thermes. She obtained a PHD in 2009 with the thesis *Il Massiccio del Monte Bianco di Viollet-le-Duc e l'Etna*. Iconografia come progetto supervised by Gianfranco Neri. She was a research fellow in 2011 as part of the PRIN 2008 – *Regeneration of Trails and Marginal Urban Fabrics*; in 2014-15 and 2016-17 for the Research Project *P.A.R.C.O.*; in 2019-22 with a POR 2014-2020 grant. Her interest in architectural themes is also conducted through design experimentation, by participating in several International Summer Schools and Design Competitions. In 2020 he received the In/Arch - ANCE Calabria Award for the realization of a Spiritual Center in Cosenza.

Giovanni Comi
**Possible inventions from the ancient.
 Between architecture and archaeology**

Author: *Angelo Torricelli*

Title: *Il momento presente del passato*

Subtitle: *Scritti e progetti di architettura*

Language: *Italian*

Publisher: *FrancoAngeli s.r.l., Milano*

Series: Architectural Design and History

Characteristics: *15,5x23 cm, 155 pages, paperback, color*

ISBN: *978-88-351-4540-0*

Year: *2022*



Il momento presente del passato. Scritti e progetti di architettura collects and re-proposes essays and projects by Angelo Torricelli on the relation between old and new in architecture.

The book – divided into three chapters, *I. Saggi*, *II. Album: opere e disegni*, *III. Antico e nuovo: progetti* – can be considered as an autobiography from which the coherence between Torricelli's design activity and his theoretical approach emerges in a clear way.

These writings are motivated by the need, as an architect, to take a critical position on issues that have marked the cultural debate in the decades of training of the author.

This collection is an ordered and circumscribed selection of Torricelli's production aimed at «deepening the theme of project conception in the relationship with stratification»¹.

The writings and projects are collected according to a non-chronological sequence but as pieces of a large «deposit of materials, facts and ideas, accumulated over time, in the set of works and cities studied or lived»² – including Milan, Athens, Alexandria Egypt, Hadrian's Villa – which only give a glimpse of the greater order of which they belong.

The result is a new collage of works, of «heterogeneous times that form anachronisms»³, which thus offer themselves to new possible unveilings of unedited concatenations.

Torricelli entrusts to the first essays, and in particular to *Non per altro si restaura che per apprendervi: l'antico nelle città e nelle tradizioni del moderno*, 1991, the task of exposing his own interpretative line which «far from re-proposing the clash between innovators and conservators, between designers and restorers, wants to test the relationship between the old and the new as a specific theme of architecture»⁴. A theory that comes true in the design and research experiences conducted within the work group he coordinates on the subject of *Archaeology and architectural design* at the Politecnico of Milan, which were the original sparks of this reflection.

The analogy between project and archaeological excavation thus takes the form of a «going back» towards the past, in an «investigation» which, however, does not assume historical research as a means through which the project can learn about the past, but rather as the only possible access route to the present. A necessary act that aims to place the work in the history of

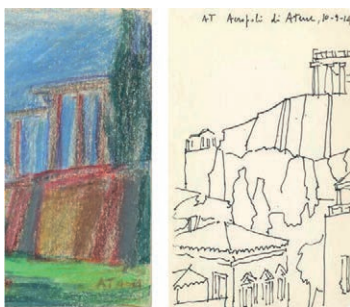


Fig. 1

Angelo Torricelli, Atene sketches, 1974 and 2014.

Fig. 2

Angelo Torricelli, Concorso per la valorizzazione dell'area archeologica "Aosta Est", 2018. General plan with shadows inside the plan of Roman Aosta, Angelo Torricelli (group leader), Giovanni Comi, Gianluca Sortino, Lorenzo Jurina, Cesare Taddia.



the place, as a new layer added to those that preceded it. It means tracing a method of reading the city and interpreting it as active memory: the time the author speaks of is not something finished in a past point, but a force that animates and feeds the present.

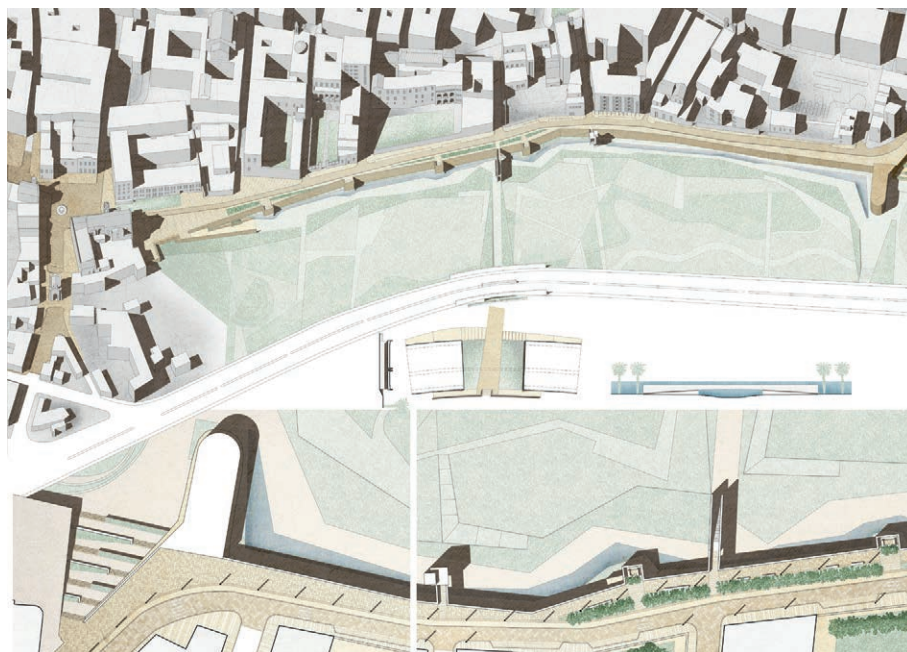
It is in this circularity that we understand how “making a project” is not only the natural extension of “knowing”, but the way able of offering an explanation of reality, beyond the appearance of things, to find «beyond the multiple formless, the first form, the origin not historical or genealogical, but substantial»⁵. That motion of proximity to the *arké*, at the origin not only located in a chronological past but contemporary with the historical becoming.

Proof of this is the fact that Torricelli speaks of the «potential for novelty enclosed in the vestiges of the past» with a humanistic attitude, a slow proceeding that studies the ancient or measures it without any form of sentimental admiration but in order to «understand which canons and which “rhymes” inform them»⁶. Expression of that “anachronistic” method – in the proper sense of *anà-krònos*, in contrast with one’s own time – through which to study, or read the city and architecture, beyond appearances, but also beyond history as a succession of events.

An operation that brings to light, starting from the reality of things, that condition of possibility which is such because it precedes reality and which only the “precise” drawing – because it eliminates what is superfluous – of the hand sketch is able to investigate⁷. The archaeological investigation is, in fact, always a search in the past for a possibility for the present.

Fig. 3

Angelo Torricelli, Concorso di idee per la riqualificazione del percorso delle antiche Mura del Carmine a Barletta, 2017. Axonometry, plan with shadows, plan and section details. Angelo Torricelli (group leader), Claudia Calice, Giovanni Comi.



From this thesis which is based on the «conviction that the past is modified by the present» as written by T.S. Eliot in *Tradition and individual talent*, Torricelli derives his reflection on time as an uninterrupted circle, in which ancient and contemporary are welded according to a conception of the past «which lives in memory and is continually rethought, recreated, reinvented».

If the attempt to understand the present forces us to interrogate the past, it is equally true that the fraction of the past to which we address always depends on the present from which we move. A “revelation” that is achieved through the ability to see among the “gates still open” possibilities that, although never realized, show themselves as an alternative to the construction of the city, an opportunity to search for its authentic essence.

The choice of the title – almost in the form of an oxymoron, as Giuseppe Di Benedetto observes in the introductory essay to the book – precisely recovers this concept, dear to Torricelli, to express his own theory of composition which, in its operational meaning, must assume the burden of keep tensions together, never excluding complexity.

For many years a pupil of Torricelli, the writer is aware of his rigor and severity of judgement, the multidisciplinary nature of cultural, artistic, historical and literary references – citation as a re-enactment of the past – the idiosyncrasy for current events as simplification and subjection to contingencies.

For these reasons, *Il momento presente del passato* is a necessary book for architecture because it defines research as the temporal “gap” that allows for making appropriate choices with respect to reality and giving the project a predictive value in that it is capable of recognize the roots of one’s actions.

Notes

¹ Torricelli A. (2004) – *Conservazione e progetto*, now in Torricelli A. (2022) – *Il momento presente del passato. Scritti e progetti di architettura*, Franco Angeli, Milano, p. 45.

² Torricelli A. (2022) – *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

³ Didi-Huberman G. (2007) – *Storia dell'arte e anacronismo delle immagini*, (tit. orig. *Devant le temps. Histoire de l'art et anachronisme des images*, 2000), Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, p. 19.

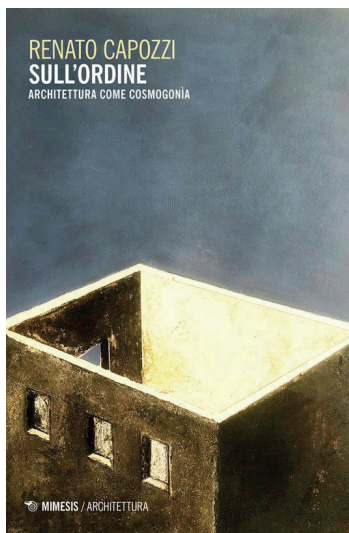
⁴ Torricelli A. (1990) – *Non per altro si restaura che per apprendervi: l'antico nelle città e nelle tradizioni del moderno*, now in Torricelli A. (2022) – *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁵ Pigafetta G. (1990) – *Saverio Muratori architetto. Teoria e progetto*, Marsilio, Venezia, cited in Torricelli A. (1993) – *Goethe, Schinkel e il principe di Salina*, now in Torricelli A. (2016) – *Palermo interpretata*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa, p. 55.

⁶ Cacciari M. (2019) – *La mente inquieta. Saggio sull'Umanesimo*, Einaudi, Torino, p. 52.

⁷ Some sketches and drawings taken from travel and study notebooks were exhibited in the exhibition of Angelo Torricelli, *Disegni dal confino & C.*, Palazzo Bocconi, Milano, from September 15th to October 5th, 2022.

Author: *Renato Capozzi*
 Title: *Sull'ordine. Architettura come cosmogonia*
 Language: *Italian*
 Publisher: *Mimesis, Milano-Udine*
 Characteristics: *14x21 cm, 144 pages*
 ISBN: *9788857595313*
 Year: *2023*



After reading Renato Capozzi's latest book, one is sucked into a sense of vertigo, if not the same, at least similar to what one feels after getting up from one's desk as an architect: paperwork everywhere, notes, sketches; disorder, one would be led to think, and indeed this would be the case, except for the decisive detail that all this mass of reflections poured onto paper and scattered around is aimed at a purpose, that of giving rise to a form, through a project.

On the surface, the book takes the form of a descent into the Maelström, where instead of shipwrecks, wreckage and junk of all kinds, there are instead transcribed excerpts of other people's thoughts, at the foot of which comments are noted down, which may or may not turn into ideas, but which are there; clues that the mind searches for in order to find a direction, a way, a thread that binds them.

Notes and thoughts, fused together, like a sequence of works that have been constructed and even only thought about (as when the author mentions the succession of buildings that Mies designed without them being realised, including the pavilion for the Brussels International Exhibition, the 50x50 house, the Bacardi headquarters in Santiago de Cuba, the latter two prefigurations of what would find completed form in the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin), almost like a collage of passages elaborated in such a sequence as to induce one to investigate the possibility that the meaning of the quoted texts may have been slightly shifted, an operation that must be carried out while remaining extremely careful, because the risk always lurking is that of manipulating them for purposes quite different from those for which they were conceived.

This is not the case - at least it seems to me - in this very recent study, where the passages cited converge to establish an extended reflection on order, without, however, allowing oneself to be dazzled by the authority of those who formulated the propositions as if by dogma, and on the contrary finding a possible logical sequence among them, or at least offering scholars an attempt to reconstruct one, thus constituting very fertile material for investigation.

Certainly this book could be inscribed in the tradition dating back to the ancient era, of texts that scholars, philosophers and sages consulted to draw thoughts for quotation (one result among others: the letters that Seneca

wrote to Lucilius), and in this respect, the repertory presented by Capozzi is formidable; not a manual of composition, but something that is placed before it, identifying the prerequisites of coherence; nor, as some might believe, a text on an alleged mission of architecture, because at the end, the author leads a reflection on the order that he himself reserves the right to develop further, and we are certain that he will not miss the opportunity to read the future results of this development. Valuable in this respect is the reference to a text by Alberto Cuomo where he refers to Ernst Hans Gombrich, the author of a very full-bodied volume whose title Cuomo uses for his own writing, *Il senso dell'ordine* (translated into Italy by Einaudi forty years ago and unfortunately not reprinted since 1990), Gombrich being a historian, not an architect, and yet in his own way a composer - in the sense of the training as a classical musician with stringed instruments he received in his youth - coming from that Viennese milieu of a century ago, where much of contemporary thought (including architecture: for Adorno, Adolf Loos was the most revolutionary of architects) that is still an object of meditation took shape, and which will undoubtedly prompt future reflections on architecture.

Francesco Martinazzo
**For a “zero degree” of forms.
 Collage as a compositive methodology**

Author: *Elvio Manganaro*

Edited by: *Riccardo Rapparini*

Title: *Durand incontra Balestrini a Venezia*

Language: *Italian/English*

Publisher: *Lettera Ventidue Edizioni*

Characteristics: *24x16,5 cm, 216 pages, paperback, black and white*

ISBN: *978-88-6242-783-8*

Year: *2022*



Durand incontra Balestrini a Venezia. At first glance, a well-packaged book, with sophisticated graphics, which already from its title - erudite and enigmatic at the same time - reveals all its disorientating, amphibious nature, oscillating on various borderline planes. A book that immediately presents itself as imaginary, invented, BORGESIAN. It is indeed an impossible encounter, the one devised by Elvio Manganaro (with the careful curatorship of Riccardo Rapparini), between Jean-Nicholas-Luis Durand and Nanni Balestrini, in Venice. Neoclassicism and Neo-avant-garde compared, it might seem strange; and two methods, both contemplating a norm and a ‘discard’, both we might say automatic, both combinatorial: one architectural and one literary. It is the logical-mathematical spirit, the repetitive and mechanical aspect, that dominates the pages, as well as the physical form. The long history of the *Ars combinatoria* comes to mind: from Raimondo Lullo to Giulio Camillo, to Giordano Bruno and the avant-gardes of the 20th century. And yet, unexpectedly, not a digression on the dynamics of such a “collision” (between Durand and Balestrini), but a *merzabau* generated from its fragments. It is only by retreating, “sheltered”, into one of the “caves” sedimented by the dust, that we discover that from this cosmic, elliptical image (made up of literary, cinematographic, poetic or artistic citations), little by little it is revealed, gradually blurred, what the book actually is, nothing simpler (at least on the surface): it outlines the results (or rather the workings) of an architectural composition workshop (at the Politecnico di Milano) in the second year of the bachelor.

The work of the teacher-author with the students in fact starts from a depot-warehouse of Venetian architectures: projects built or left only on paper, then disassembled, mutilated and put side by side (or superimposed) according to different logics (always following a clear method, however), and finally recombined through the technique of collage within the perimeter imprint of the geometries of the *First Prototype of Venetian Palace* by Andrea Palladio (1570). Thus the seven resulting *palimpsests* (or exercises), starting from the “playful abstraction” of the collage in the configuration of plans, elevations and sections; find a functional reliability in the reference context, testing its possibilities as an operational tool. So, in the face of an increasingly technocentric discipline, where composing seems to be tied to profit and the aestheticisation that comes with it, «Invece qui,

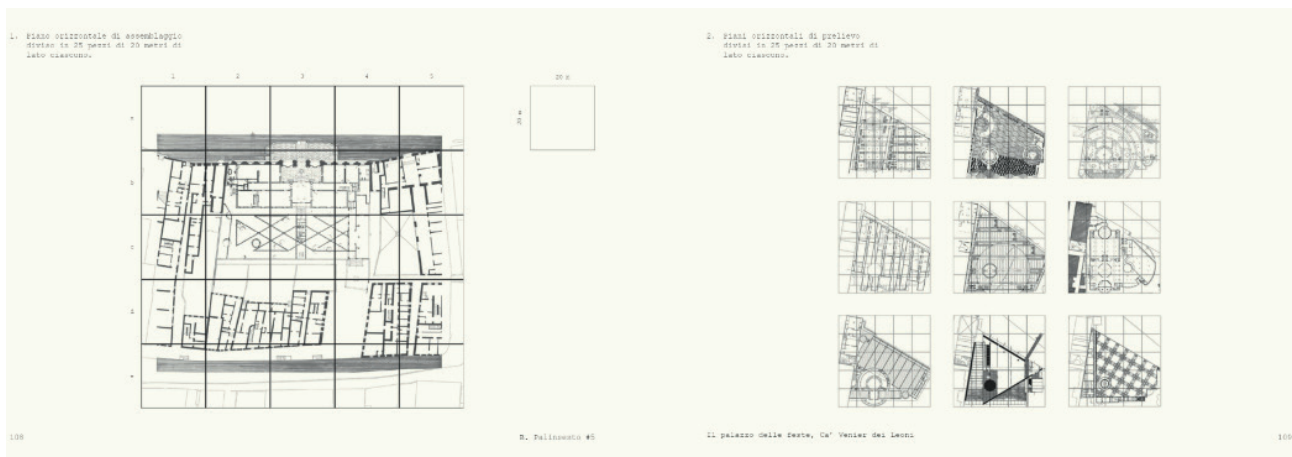


Fig. 1

Images taken from the volume, *Planimetria Ca' Venier dei Leoni*, developed from the materials of the 1985 competition (on the left). Projects for the Italian Pavilion at the Biennale Gardens 1988 (on the right).

per una volta, [scrive Manganaro] si sarebbe voluto presentare allo studente di architettura solo il metodo o il Procedimento, limitandosi alla strumentazione, ai meccanismi interni, ai dispositivi operativi, al libretto delle istruzioni insomma, castigando la malia delle parole e le seduzioni della retorica. [...] [Un] piccolo manuale di architettura automatica. Un prontuario per fare poesia a partire da altre poesie [...]. È questa dimensione antisoggettiva a sembrarmi l'unica cosa che valga la pena oggi essere perseguita, facendo violenza ai nostri mondi interiori, che sono tutti uguali, appiattiti sulle medesime frustrazioni e vanità»¹. To free oneself, therefore, from all causality with the 'happy' disenchantment of the dialectical materialist, from all mercantilistic or historiographical impulses. This would seem to be the point: to limit the semantic scope of images, to return to a zero degree of forms, understood as signs emptied of meaning, taken for what they are in their combinations and balancing acts, in the chasing game of signifiers.: «Queste reliquie eteroclite di una tassonomia scombinata, e perciò grifagne, museali, diventano gli attrezzi di un giocoliere»². Here is the breaking point, anti-academic if you like. If I may. This is not a book that provides answers or clear-cut outcomes; on the contrary, it dodges any teleological ambitions in a roundabout way. If in fact distinctive principles, order and demonstrability constitute the foundations of the method, «[...] producono conoscenza, e non di rango inferiore, anche gli sviamenti, gli attimi di pura fascinazione per ciò che non stavamo cercando e che ci viene incontro con la felice impertinenza della casualità, interpellandoci come un enigma esigente»³.

Indeed, there remains an open question, which the book, almost like an amulet, poses to us, and we do not know what it is. We could say, in a Pasolinian sense, that this book is a 'scandal', even though it is not scandalous at all, since provocation is no longer of any use, it is always swallowed up by the system. Here, on the other hand, we witness this obstinacy in rejecting every form of stale doctrinaireism, every claim to scientificity, and every wrapped-up taxonomy. We witness a veritable desecration, where even the reference is used not in a biographical way, nor pertinent to anything, but hallucinated, distorted, as if inserted into a kaleidoscope gone mad. Thus, the readiness of the fragment to present itself as an apparition, to evoke entire worlds, the heteroclite nature of the text, its bringing into play a "palincentuous reading" (cf. Philippe Lejeune), even of the masters, whether architects or poets, and the transdisciplinarity that derives from it, are configured as places of epistemological uncertainty in which to sink, to experience their very formation, their composition, their stratification. It is no coincidence that the battle that the book enacts takes place on an

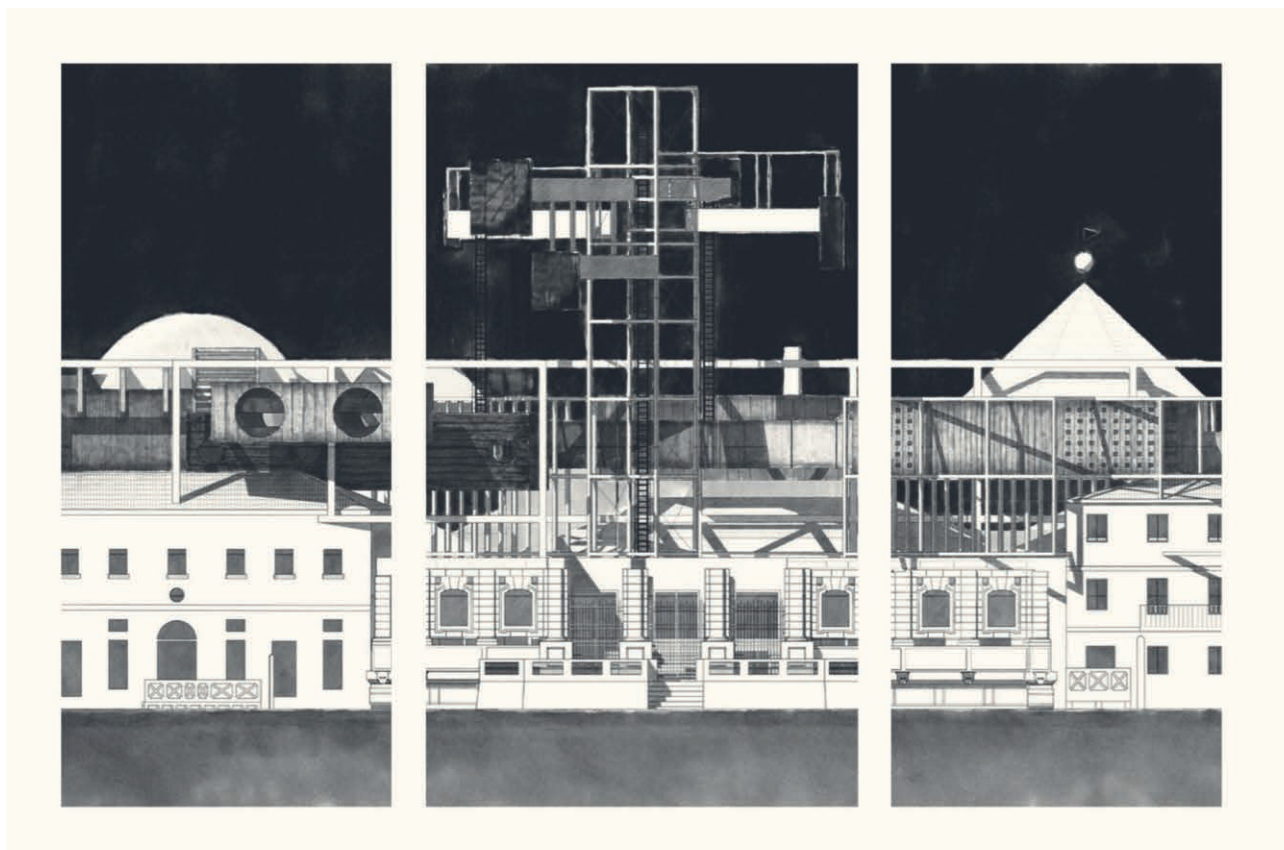


Fig. 2

Images taken from the volume, *Venezianella and Studentaccio*, the palace of the parties, Ca' Venier dei leoni, project by Benedetta Scarano, Caterina Solini.

aesthetic level: to the detriment of the 'bulimia' of images by which we are submerged daily, which is atrophic, here «Alla negatività del non-sense e dello sberleffo (DADA) si accompagna la volontà di costruzione, e quindi un modello di lavoro artistico metodico e scrupoloso»⁴. What remains?

Notes

¹ Manganaro E. (2022) – *Durand incontra Balestrini a Venezia*, Lettera Ventidue, Siracusa, pp.11-12. «Instead, here, for once, [writes Manganaro] one would have liked to present the student of architecture only with the method or the *procedure*, limiting himself to the instrumentation, the internal mechanisms, the operational devices, the instruction booklet, in short, chastising the malice of words and the seductions of rhetoric. [...] [A] small manual of automatic architecture. A handbook for making poetry from other poems [...]. It is this anti-subjective dimension that seems to me the only thing worth pursuing today, doing violence to our inner worlds, which are all the same, flattened on the same frustrations and vanities».

² Ripellino A. M. (1987) – *Scontraffatte chimere*, Pellicanolibri, Roma, p.7. «These heteroclitic relics of a discombobulated taxonomy, and therefore grimy, museum-like, become the tools of a juggler».

³ Tartarini C. (2011), presentation of the book of Georges Didi-Huberman, *La conoscenza accidentale. Apparizione e sparizione delle immagini*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino. [online] Available at: https://r.cantook.com/edgt/sample/aHR0cHM6Ly9lZGlnaXRhLmNhbnRvb2submV0L3NhbXBsZS83NTElL3dlY-19yZWfkZXJfbWFuaWZlc3Q_Zm9ybWF0X25hdHVyZT1lcHVl [Last accessed: 31 may 2023]. «[...] also produce knowledge, and not of a lesser rank, the diversions, the moments of pure fascination for what we were not looking for and which comes to us with the happy impertinence of chance, questioning us like a demanding enigma».

⁴ Nicastrì A. , quoted in Cortellessa A. (2009), «Angoscia dello spazio», in Grazioli E. (edited by), *Kurt Schwitters, «Riga»* n.29, p.15. «The negativity of non-sense and mockery (DADA) is accompanied by the will to construct, and thus a methodical and scrupulous model of artistic work».

Alessandro Camiz
Rebuilding: where, how, when, for whom?

Author: *Enrico Bordogna, Tommaso Brighenti*
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The Italian architects' debate on the topic of post-seismic reconstruction for fifty years, if not more, has essentially stalled on the question "where and how". Every earthquake, and there have been several in the last 50 years, is followed by an interminable debate between those who believe it is necessary to reconstruct "as it was, where it was" and those who - using as a pretext an alleged compositional freedom and the need to express contemporaneity - believe that we should instead rebuild elsewhere, or with other forms. On the other hand, this debate is evidently entirely contained within the architects' category, which in our opinion seems to want the repression of the real theme underlying the reconstruction of urban fabrics, a theme that we can summarize in the other two questions that the title proposes, i.e. "when and for who". In short, we must never forget that the earthquake is a tragedy, and that it leaves behind ruins, dead and survivors without roots. The real theme of every reconstruction project is that included in the headlines of the newspapers the day after the earthquake in Irpinia which occurred on November 23, 1980, quoting the commendable words of President Pertini, "be fast". With each earthquake a phase of emergency begins, and it does not end until the urban tissues have been rebuilt and the people have returned (if that is ever possible) to a normal life. The reconstructions of historical fabrics destroyed by recent earthquakes (Abruzzo 2009, Central Italy 2016) take more than ten years, and as consequence when the reconstruction has finally taken place, many people will have died in the meantime, and many others will have been born elsewhere and will not recognize in that reconstruction any identity value. In short, the reconstruction must begin immediately, that is, as soon as the earthquake swarm has ended. And this must be done with a medium-term planned strategy, which on the one hand guarantees immediate temporary accommodation for the displaced persons, but which in the meantime very quickly, within a maximum of 5 years, gives back to the inhabitants, in one way or another, their homes, their workplaces, their streets, their public spaces and their services (all of which are constitutional rights) thus allowing them to return to normal a life, as much as possible. The volume by Bordogna and Brighenti, with the preface by the great master who unfortunately passed away recently and prematurely Giovanni Carbonara, brings the architects' attention back to the age-old reconstruction problem, an attention that is never sufficient, and presents us with numerous high-quality illustrations and various design experimentats on this theme. In the first part, the volume examines the various reconstruction strate-



Fig. 1
Amatrice, Bird's-eye view of
the ancient core after the summer-autumn 2016 earthquake.

gies that have been implemented in the past for the reconstruction after an earthquake, accompanying them with important author's projects. Once again, we cannot fail to mention the project by Gianfranco Caniggia and Francesca Sartogo, Historical-critical research for the reconstruction and restoration of the historic center of Venzone, 1977-1979 (Strappa, 2023) and the Recovery project of the historic center of Teora, 1981-1983, by Giorgio Grassi and Agostino Renna (Capozzi, 2011). But let's examine the dates, 1 year after the Friuli earthquake (1976) Caniggia and Sartogo were already at work, 1 year after the Irpinia earthquake (1980), Grassi was already planning. For the L'Aquila earthquake, which occurred in 2009, today after 14 years, construction sites have not yet started in some smaller towns, but neither have the projects. In the second part of the volume, various high-quality projects are presented which, at different scales, propose the reconstruction of buildings, portions of urban fabrics and entire inhabited centres, as in the case of Amatrice. The volume collects a series of design experiments, conducted as graduation thesis, where for Amatrice, Camerino and Norcia, the authors explore the reconstruction of historical buildings with great care and different strategies, and with formal results worthy of attention. It is here that Bordogna Brighenti's contribution shines, having brought the attention of the faculty of architecture students to the reconstruction project theme for several years, it has contributed meaningfully to avoiding that widespread effect of psychological repression that follows every earthquake, not only as and understandable among the earthquake victims, but also among politicians and above all – and it is even more serious – among intellectuals.

The third part concludes the volume with an anthology of texts by various authors on the reconstruction theme. The book as a whole can be proposed as a reasoned guide to reconstruction, of great use both for professionals and for students of the faculties of architecture and engineering who find themselves drawing up post-seismic reconstruction projects.

