

BOOKS AND REVIEWS



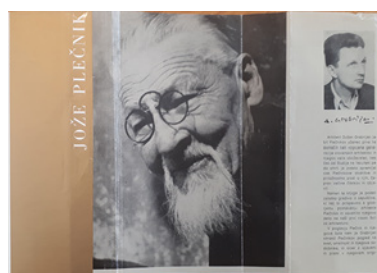
THE BOSNIAN ORIENTAL ARCHITECTURE IN SARAJEVO: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY ONE

1984
DUŠAN GRABRIJAN

Among the first three graduates from Plečnik's school (Dragotin Fatur, France Tomažič, Dušan Grabrijan), the first place was occupied by Grabrijan. After his initial attempts at creating architecture, he delved into theoretical work. His long stay in Sarajevo directed him to research traditional Bosnian architecture, about which he wrote a great number of texts. The book *Bosnian Oriental Architecture in Sarajevo* presents a work grown out of Grabrijan's enthusiasm and conviction of a great future for modern architecture. He saw its realization closely linked to the victorious development of technology. However, he was instinctively aware that novelties would never be quite successful if the centennial traditions of vernacular architecture were not taken into account. Thus, this was the reason for his interest in the Bosnian house, his study travels, his research into the Macedonian house, and his general interest in vernacular architecture. Grabrijan's book manifests the ideas of the period when it was written. There are accurate analyses of the individual buildings, their constructions, functions, furniture, environmental values, and the like. He made a series of thorough appraisals of the built organisms,

penetrated deeply into the unwritten laws of the constructing settlements in Bosnia, and conducted research into the public and private spheres of the town-planning structures, values, and language of the symbolic therein and the like. Hardly could we find in former Yugoslavia such a brilliant culturological synthesis, observed with the eyes of an architect and pondered by the scales of the space and dwelling qualities. Grabrijan appears as an interpreter of the phenomena in the traditionally built space through numerous photographs, drawings, perspectives, and explanatory sketches. The book has not lost this value; to the contrary, it is more valuable at present. Grabrijan will always remain an incentive from a less usual aspect, a basis that can and should be critically appraised but not neglected.

Peter Krečič



PLEČNIK IN NJEGOVA ŠOLA [PLEČNIK AND HIS SCHOOL]

1968
DUŠAN GRABRIJAN

The book *Plečnik and his School* was published sixteen years after Grabrijan's death. It was edited by Grabrijan's widow, Prof. Nada Grabrijan, who also wrote the foreword. Architect Niko Bežek, who is the author of Grabrijan's tombstone in Žale Cemetery, wrote the afterword. Two of Grabrijan's students

and later professors at the Ljubljana Faculty of Architecture, Niko Kralj and Dušan Moškon, wrote an outline of Grabrijan's life and work.

The book content is divided into three parts. The first part consists of Grabrijan's articles about Plečnik's built works; the second and largest part shows Plečnik's school in detail, often including Plečnik's own words, which Grabrijan wrote down during the lectures, and Plečnik's letters to his students; the third part is an attempt to critically evaluate Plečnik's architecture and compare it to contemporary Slovenian architecture. At the end of the book, there are notes to the text explaining interesting facts about the timeline, origins, and concepts of the published texts.

Plečnik and his School includes Grabrijan's elaborated, already published articles, very early notes, and raw studies on architectural theory and history and on Plečnik's work. The book is rich in black-and-white illustrations. The melange of raw and elaborated makes the book very unique and authentic. It gives us a very rare and sincere insight into Plečnik's school and to Dušan Grabrijan's own education and development of thought. The findings—nowadays understood to originate from Edvard Ravnikar—have roots in Dušan Grabrijan's thoughts and writings, many of them published in this precious book.

Nataša Koselj



FRA JOSIP MARKUŠIĆ – JOŽE PLEČNIK KORESPONDENCIJA 1932-56

2023
JOZO DŽAMBO AND DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK

The letter correspondence between Franciscan Josip Markušić and architect Jože Plečnik during the years 1932

to 1956 is now available in two scientific volumes, published jointly by Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian publishers and accompanied by a summary in Croatian, Slovenian, German, Czech, and English. The first idea to publish this interesting correspondence came from Slovenian art historian France Stelè in 1967. It was only realized in 2023 by the precious initiative of Jozo Džambo, with Damjan Prelovšek as a collaborator.

The two volumes' content is mainly about Plečnik's St Anthony of Padua Belgrade church, which was Fra Josip Markušić's initiative and main preoccupation and who described it as the most important of Plečnik's work in The Balkans. The Belgrade church for the Bosnian Franciscans was Plečnik's attempt to approach the architectural tradition of Serbia, which had been relatively unknown to him until then. He took the Pantheon in Rome as his model and used this for the ratio between the width and height of the space. He also took several design cues from one of his unrealized Bogojina proposals.

There is interesting illustrated data in Volume I about the fact that there is only one very small-scale work by Plečnik in Bosnia and Herzegovina—a miners' chapel bell tower in Ruda Cemetery in Vareš built on the top of Ivan Meštrović's stone chapel. This information had been hidden from the larger public until now.

The two volumes have a strict scientific form with glossary, index, and reviews by Franci Lazarini, Ivan Lovrenović, and Ivan Šarčević.

Nataša Koselj



**MAKEDONSKA HIŠA
PREHOD IZ STARE ORIENTALSKE V SODOBNO
EVROPSKO HIŠO
[MACEDONIAN HOUSE
TRANSITION FROM OLD ORIENTAL TO
CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN HOUSE]**

1976
DUŠAN GRABRIJAN

The Slovenian translation of Grabrijan's book *Macedonian House*, published in 1976, is an enhanced version of the original book published in 1955 in Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian language. It is a result of a trip to Macedonia in 1949 that Grabrijan made with three of his Slovenian students: Mitja Jernejec, Dušan Samec, and Fedor Škerlep. In the book, Grabrijan claims that Le Corbusier's concept of »the house for everybody« is closer to the Macedonian house than to the Oriental house because, in his view, the traditional Macedonian house is closer to the traditional European house. In conclusion, he describes the differences between the traditional Macedonian and Oriental houses as follows: 1- the traditional Macedonian house is a closed house, *trem* (porch) and *čardak* (balcony) are closed as opposite to the Oriental house where the house and *divanha* (traditional livingroom) are always opened, 2- Macedonian style is a salon in the air or *čardak* under the roof, which is meant for summer dwelling, talks, and parties, 3- Macedonian style is a 'wet' kitchen battery around the *hima* (sheepfold) in the house as a pendant to the Oriental *banjica* (washing area), 4- Macedonian style is a person's working position at table height in contrast to the Oriental house, where they enjoy squatting or laying. In general, Grabrijan saw the Macedonian style as the European way of living, which people never

abandoned but tried to adapt to the Oriental dispositions. He concludes that if we want to go from the Oriental to the modern house, we need to go through the Macedonian house.

Nataša Koselj



**KAKO JE NASTAJALA NAŠA SODOBNA
HIŠA
[HOW OUR MODERN HOUSE WAS CREATED]**

1959
DUŠAN GRABRIJAN

Grabrijan's book *How our modern House was created*, published just two years after the celebrated *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way towards Modernity* (coauthored with Juraj Neidhardt), is probably his most elaborated posthumously published book. It was prepared for publishing already in 1951, but in 1952, Grabrijan tragically and unexpectedly passed away during a medical surgery. He had already written the introduction to this book in which he addressed the already-known publisher Mladinska knjiga, asking himself: »Why should we always accept foreign models if we live originally?« In the book, besides describing the evolution of the traditional regional house (Alpine, Mediterranean, Panonian, Dinaric, Bizantinian, and Oriental), he refers to Adolf Loos, Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and Juraj Neidhardt. The book has a very clear structure, with chapters as follows: Tradition, Construction, Organisation of a Dwelling Unit, Space Differentiation, Space, Furnishing, Installations, Hygiene, and Location. It reads as a fresh 1950s manual for the formative years of architectural studies; it is rich in illustrations made by himself, his students, Juraj Neidhardt, and by artist

Zoran Didek, who also wrote a foreword for the book describing Dušan Grabrijan as his best friend. The two books *How our modern House was created* and *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way towards Modernity* have much in common in terms of the texts, drawings, photos, and book design. Comparing the two books would be challenging, especially in redefining the role of Dušan Grabrijan in the context of the history of 20th century architecture in the region of former Yugoslavia.

Nataša Koselj



ARHITEKTURA BOSNE I PUT U SAVREMENO

[ARCHITECTURE OF BOSNIA AND THE WAY TOWARDS MODERNITY]

1957

DUŠAN GRABRIJAN AND JURAJ NEIDHARDT

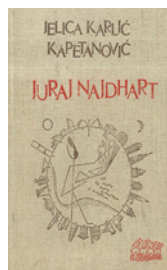
The book *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way towards Modernity* crowned the long-term cooperation of Juraj Neidhardt and Dušan Grabrijan. Between 1938 and 1952, the authors carried out a detailed architectural-ethnographic research of the historic core of the city of Sarajevo, described its unique combination of oriental civilization and Balkan geography, and defined its "unwritten laws," which they claimed could ennoble modern architecture. Determined to have a didactic effect on the architectural culture of early socialist Yugoslavia, the authors conceived the book as a combination of an architectural-ethnographic monograph and an architectural manifesto: the first part of the book presents the architectural heritage, encountered, studied, and valorized (on which Grabrijan and Neidhardt worked together); the second

part of the book, which refers to "the way towards modernity," presents the collected material on the design practice of architect and urban planner Juraj Neidhardt.

After Grabrijan's death in 1952, Neidhardt continued work on the *Architecture of Bosnia*, directing most of his creative energies to the design of its graphic layout. Neidhardt understood the book's form as a powerful means of argumentation, comparable in power to its written discourse. Dozens of different representational techniques arranged with the greatest care so that the pages become a medium of the atmosphere of Bosnia. This approach to shaping the book was completely coherent with its basic thesis: that material culture, including architecture, should be an "organic" continuation of the regional milieu.

Grabrijan and Neidhardt's focus on the unity of Bosnia's regional environment, architecture, and ways of life enriched modernist universalism with local values, representing a unique contribution to the revision of modern architecture after the Second World War.

Mejrema Zatrić



JURAJ NEIDHARDT - ŽIVOT I DJELO
[JURAJ NEIDHARDT - LIFE AND WORK]

1990

JELICA KARLIĆ KAPETANOVIĆ

This intellectual biography of Juraj Neidhardt, which has been generally accepted as a textbook account of his life and work, is based on Jelica Karlić Kapetanović's doctoral dissertation (defended in 1988). The timeframe of the book is determined by Neidhardt's birth in Zagreb in 1901 and his passing in Sarajevo in 1979, while its structure

mostly corresponds to the discrete periodization of his career: education in Vienna, stints in the offices of Peter Behrens in Berlin and Le Corbusier in Paris, several years of practice as independent architect in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, work at the company Jugočelik in Zenica and, ultimately, his mature and final career phase in Sarajevo. As Neidhardt's assistant at the Faculty of Architecture in Sarajevo, Kapetanović produced a history that both benefited and suffered from the uncommon proximity of the author to her protagonist. The core of her impressive pool of sources was Juraj Neidhardt's complete private archive (mostly destroyed during the Siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s), based on which she constructed an overview of his projects and other professional achievements (including the book *Architecture of Bosnia*). These privileges have enriched her history but also influenced her overwhelming reliance on Neidhardt's own late career discourse, which established his architecture as the "humanised modernism" and harmony of "old and new."

The book, nevertheless, establishes a sound chronology of Juraj Neidhardt's professional development and brief analyses of his most important projects. The book's appendix consists of an exhaustive list of Neidhardt's projects and research studies in chronological order, as well as a bibliography (of both texts by and on Neidhardt).

Mejrema Zatrić



**JURAJ NEIDHARDT - ARHITEKT,
URBANIST, TEORETIČAR, PEDAGOG,
PUBLICIST**

**[JURAJ NEIDHARDT - ARCHITECT, URBANIST,
THEORETICIAN, EDUCATOR, PUBLICIST]**

2019

IBRAHIM KRZOVIĆ AND TOMISLAV PREMERL

Since the 1970s, Juraj Neidhardt had been a member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The book *Juraj Neidhardt - Architect, Urbanist, Theoretician, Educator, Publicist* was initiated and produced by the Academy to honor Neidhardt's immense contribution to Bosnian and Herzegovinian architecture and culture in general. The book is structured as a monograph, seeking to offer a complete overview of Neidhardt's life's work. It consists of two essays: a shorter one by Croatian architect Tomislav Premerl titled "Neidhardt's Modernism - shaping a new humanism" and a longer one by Bosnian-Herzegovinian art historian Ibrahim Krzović, titled "Neidhardt's Bosnian achievements." Between these two texts, there is a reprint of Le Corbusier's introduction to the book *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way towards Modernity*. One of the book's greatest values lies in the high-quality reproductions of a bounty of sketches, drawings, photographs, and other primary documents eloquently suggesting the scope and quality of Neidhardt's immense oeuvre. A special contribution was made by photographers Dragana Antonić and Enis Logo, who produced an exhaustive contemporary photographic survey of Juraj Neidhardt's built work. The book's beautiful layout design by Asim Djelilović is in keeping with primary material's visual sensibility. The book is fully bilingual.

Mejrema Zatrić



**THE PAINTER LE CORBUSIER:
EILEEN GRAY'S VILLA E 1027
AND LE CABANON**

2023

TIM BENTON

Le Corbusier was an easel painter before he was an architect. His partner in Purism, Amédée Ozenfant, defined their paintings as "machine[s] for evoking emotion." After seeing an exhibition of De Stijl-colored architecture, Le Corbusier polychromed his 1924 Villa LaRoche-Jeanneret in Purist colors. In 1925, he painted a colossal 'E' and 'N' on the long side elevation of his Pavillon Esprit Nouveau. Three years later, he designed the demountable Nestlé Pavilion as a building-sized collage of colored figures and written words that the viewer walked within. And in 1933, he covered the prominent curved stone wall in his Pavillon Suisse in Paris with a mural of forty-four photos. But only in 1936 did Le Corbusier begin to paint murals on walls: a creative endeavor distinctly different in his mind from what he had done with colored architecture so far. With architectural polychrome, he said in a discussion at La Maison de la Culture, Paris, in 1936, "Tumults can be disciplined by color, lyrical space can be created, classification realized, dimensions enlarged and the feeling for architecture made to burst forth in joy." And to this he added, referring to the painted mural, "But I can also, if the place is suitable, have recourse to a painter, ask him to inscribe his plastic thoughts in the spot, and with one stroke open all the doors to the depths of a dream, just there where actual depths did not exist."

Tim Benton's *The Painter Le Corbusier: Eileen Gray's Villa E 1027 and Le Cabanon* tells the story of Le Corbusier painting architecture, particularly the

story of Le Corbusier's initial foray into mural painting. In April 1936, he painted his first mural—nudes and a seashell—in the Vézelay house of his friend and publisher, Hungarian-born Jean Bodovici. Bodovici then invited Le Corbusier to paint murals on the walls of E1027, the vacation house he and Irish designer Eileen Gray had built in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin on the French Riviera between 1927 and 1929. Le Corbusier painted his first two murals in E1027 in April 1937, nearly five years after Gray had left both Bodovici and the house forever. In August 1939, he painted five more murals in E1027. He then painted murals in the small restaurant next to E1027, and, after the War, he painted still more murals in 'Le Cabanon', the one-room vacation house adjoining the restaurant overlooking the sea he built for himself in 1952. These were Le Corbusier's first murals, all painted in small, private places.

Benton's first and best chapter, "Le Corbusier, Art and the Wall," is an extensive, impressively illustrated history of the then-contemporary painting-architecture scene in France and Holland. Gray's Villa E1027 is discussed in great detail. Built slightly earlier than the Villa Savoye, it has none of the overwhelming didacticism of Le Corbusier's masterwork. It isn't an argument but a pleasant place on the sea, an extraordinarily modern house of beautifully modulated light and evocative space. Benton details Gray's original coloration of E1027 in his second chapter and tells of Le Corbusier's friendship with Bodovici, his respect for Eileen Gray, and his heartfelt admiration for E1027. He documents each painting in detail, describing the murals as 'easel paintings': transpositions of works painted on canvas years earlier by Le Corbusier, wall paintings that adorned E1027 but failed to "open all the doors to the depths of a dream." The latter part of the book adopts the tone of an in-depth guide to the murals of all three buildings and to several murals Le Corbusier painted later elsewhere. As the account unfolds chronologically, an unexpected history of a very important and little-understood period in Le Corbusier's life appears.

An evolution from architecture as a phenomenal object toward architecture as a phenomenal space is made obvious.

Tim Benton is the best historian of Le Corbusier. And the subject of this book—Le Corbusier's Roquebrune-Cap-Martin murals, initial steps in the great initiative to realize 'ineffable space'—has been neglected (and sometimes shamelessly abused) for far too long. It is nice to bring it to the surface.

Daniel Naegele



LUXURY FOR ALL
MILESTONES IN EUROPEAN
STEPPED TERRACE HOUSING

2020

GERHARD STEIXNER, MARIA WELZIG (EDS.)

The stepped terraced house is a type of building that meets modern housing requirements: it is economical and offers ample living space with the comfort of a terrace or a garden. Rising to popularity with the advent of new social movements it was forgotten with the progressive erosion of the new ideas of society and relegated to obscurity or even disqualification as eyesores. Yet the enduring satisfaction of residents and ecological advantages of greened

houses make terraced housing as attractive as ever.

The buildings studied in the book have not only become architectural icons; even today, one can still learn from them about what residential buildings need. One proponent of this building style was Austrian architect Harry Glück; part of his text pleading the case for a green city is reprinted here.

The twelve case studies documented in this book include the well-known Brunswick Centre in London (Patrick Hodgkinson, 1972), the Olympic Village in Munich (Heinle, Wischer und Partner, 1972), and the Koseze Housing Estate in Ljubljana (Viktor Pust, 1981). All projects are illustrated with scaled drawings specifically prepared for this publication and with new photography. Among the international contributors are Nataša Koselj, Mark Swenarton, Clare Melhuish, and many others.

HERITAGE IN DANGER

BUILT WORK OF JURAJ NEIDHARDT



Exterior view of the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, around 1960. © Unknown, Slavko Maksimović's private archive.

Almost the entirety of Juraj Neidhardt's built work was created in the decades of his late career. Although several emblematic projects—notably the 'Sextuplet' collective workers' housing type—were designed before World War II, Neidhardt's work as modernist heritage is historically firmly situated in the socialist Yugoslav era. The proper evaluation, listing, and conservation of modern architectural heritage is a relatively new subfield of heritage conservation in many countries around the world. In the majority of ex-Yugoslav states, the institutionalization of these endeavors has been complicated by the political and historical controversy surrounding the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the opposing interpretations of the social, cultural, and historical values of modernist Yugoslav heritage.

This situation is even more complicated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the dissolution of Yugoslavia unfolded through full-blown warfare and resulted in severe damage to the building stock, often disastrously impacting some of the