Modernism in the Case of Cultural Architecture in Yugoslavia

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Abstract. As a result of very strong and organised antifascist resistance on domestic territory during the World War II and historical conditions in the rest of Europe, new established socialist country Yugoslavia on geostrategic games was planned to stay part of the eastern block in the new division of post-war Europe. But just three years after the war Yugoslavian political establishment led by charismatic president Tito, despite the serious threats from USSR and Stalin, he decided to start with their own way of socialism based on self-management with reduced influence of the state into the economy, society and culture. The result was an atypical socialist system for that time, which was very open to the world, but especially to Western Europe and the USA. During the whole history, architecture was always the best representation of historical developments and social circumstances in different civilisations through different periods. Yugoslavian modernist architecture developed by domestic architects, influenced by modernist ideas from Central and Western Europe and with phenomenological support of the state can be considered as an indicator of social and cultural movements during the existence of that avant-garde socialist country from 1945-1990. Through the research of different study cases and examples of architecture from socialist Yugoslavia and studies of relevant scientists from the field of architecture and sociology, as a predominant methodology for this study, relations between architecture and socio-economic and cultural conditions will be investigated.

In accordance with the declared ideas for general modernisation of the entire society, modernist architecture in Yugoslavia was widely accepted as a tool for the realisation of proclaimed ideals for open, human oriented and contemporary society. The architecture of cultural buildings was some of the best examples for the mentioned direction in the content, but even more in conceptual and visual expression. The Yugoslavian architecture of the representative cultural centres, museums, libraries and concert halls are some of the most successful realizations of modernism in the region of south east Europe, but even much wider. At the same time, these buildings were witnessing well organized, state supported institutional work that was able to arrange some of the most prominent cultural activities on the highest world level.

1. Introduction
Yugoslavia started with strong social reforms and changing its international position after 1948 and breaking close relations with the Soviet Union. That increased contacts with the rest of the world and resulted in the absence of international isolation, which influenced the beginnings of a political rethinking and pragmatic understanding of culture and art. [1] Socialist Yugoslavia has urbanized and modernized society by transforming it from predominantly rural to predominantly urban. The whole process of modernizing, changing social circumstances and understanding the role of art and culture
was not easy, nor was it carried out overnight. First, it was raised at the political level, through Communist party and state structures, and then further shaped by the work of progressive individuals, such as prominent writer Miroslav Krleža, who opposed the dogmatic interpretation of art at the III Congress of the Yugoslavia Writers’ Union in 1952. After constant progressive steps, the state has started with the strong support of the development of art and culture, its flourishing and enrichment. In order to spread cultural influences, it was developing a respectable infrastructure of cultural institutions from basic local to high national and international importance. The result was visible in the realization of numerous pieces of cultural architecture in the manner of high modernism.

2. Culture in socialist Yugoslavia

The Yugoslav opening to the world, especially to the West, had the most visible influence on the development and shaping of different artistic directions in all fields of art, and thus on the whole way of life. Ketig states that political leadership was tacitly supportive to the spiritual liberalization, by controlling the situation with occasional interventions such as suspending certain journals, reducing newsrooms, etc., in order to announce limits in the development of free thought. [1]

All the significant writers of the time, from the West, but also from Eastern European dissidents have been translated in Yugoslavia. Their presence influences the vitality and diversity of a very high quality and open literary scene, which, although under a less, more latent or quite visible regime’s censorship, managed to produce literature of international significance. It is enough to mention that during this time have been written the most significant books of the grates of Slavic and world literature, such as Miroslav Krleza, Mesa Selimovic, Danilo Kis, Nobel awarded Ivo Andric and many other distinguished authors.

In the film art, a special place is occupied by the so-called a partisan film which contributes domestically and world-wide to the creation of successful war spectacles that glorify partisan struggle during the World War II. During the 1960s, and especially later until the dissolution of the state, Yugoslav films together with domestic literature represented a powerful artistic step towards the democratization of society, with a frequent and very sophisticated, but quite visible critique of the irregularities in the existing system.

The ubiquitous American, as well as European, most often French and Italian cinematography in Yugoslavia has made a strong impact on the Westernization of the entire society and culture of life. The role of foreign, especially film from the West, its popularity and availability in Yugoslav cinemas and later on television was often attributed to Tito’s passionate love for film art.

Quite a similar impact on social movements was caused by winds from the same direction, which was strongly blowing through the music scene of Yugoslavia. This was first expressed through the existence of a number of very serious music festivals of popular music dating from the 1950s and 1960s, similar to the Italian San Remo, and later through the emergence of Rock ’n’ Roll in the United Kingdom and the United States, which influence was evident in Yugoslavia during the 1960s and later. It culminated in the emergence of the revolutionary "New Wave" in urban and progressive music of Yugoslavia from the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Yugoslav music production, radio and television stations were very dedicated to meet the high levels of program quality. Apart from some political censorship, they were under the supervision of various commissions against pap or low quality. In all major cities, immediately after liberation, Philharmonic orchestras were formed and a large number of elementary and secondary music schools and academies were opened in newly

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1 For some of the most important partisan films as „Sutjeska“ and „Battle of Neretva“, were engaged the most prominent domestic but big number of international movie stars as: Richard Burton, Yul Brynner, Sylva Koscyna, Sergei Bondarchuk, Orson Welles, Franco Nero. Poster for Oscar nominated film “Battle of Neretva” was designed by Pablo Piccaso.
formed universities. Even jazz was proclaimed, by the rigid structures of the system, as one of the symbols of Americanization of society, jazz became popular in the 1950s like the music of urban youth centres. At the same time, it was promoted by the formation of jazz orchestras and big bands within the regional broadcasters in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Sarajevo. The Zagreb jazz quartet of Bosko Petrovic formed in 1959 has become an internationally recognized phenomenon. At the same time, Dizzy Gillespie arrived in Yugoslavia in 1956, Glenn Miller jazz orchestra in 1957, and the great Louis Armstrong in 1959. By the late 1950s and during the 1960s, Woody Herman, Count Basie, also performed in Yugoslavia. Ella Fitzgerald, Modern Jazz Quartet, and Louis Armstrong for the second time, Miles Davis 1971, 1973, 1986... [2]

Fine art has developed under the influence of turbulent movements in the world of modern art and reached the top of the range in the work of a large number of internationally recognized artists such as Mersad Berber, Edo Murtic, Dusan Dzamonja, Vojin Bakic and many others. After the brief presence of socialist realism, shortly after WWII, sculptors and painters turn to abstraction, even when they worked on the topics and subjects from the glorious partisan past. A particularly important role for sculptural art was the construction of impressive monuments at sites of historical battles or pogroms of the civil population during World War II.

The development of the industry has been accompanied by the remarkable development of progressive industrial design, which still today in a unique way visualizes the way of life from those times and the level of modernization and promotion of urban and contemporary in the everyday life of the then society. Through artistic development and in the spheres of popular culture, the difference between the countries of the Eastern Bloc and Socialist Yugoslavia seems to be the most visible.

3. Examples of cultural architecture in Yugoslavia

Development of cultural infrastructure was supported by the construction of buildings of high culture but also with a large number of so-called “homes of culture” throughout Yugoslav rural areas or small towns. An outstanding example of modernist architecture is the Home of Culture in Konjic, designed by Joze Josip Osojnik, Juraj Neidhardt and Andrijica Cicin Sain. The location of the building is right next to the Sarajevo-Mostar main road, passing through the very centre of Konjic. The Cultural Centre is located on a steep slope which was incorporated into the project to form a series of terraces, staircases and even an outdoor amphitheatre that all contribute to the fluid concept of permeating the indoor and outdoor spaces, which form a harmonious complex integrated into the surrounding area.

"The hybrid complex with a large multipurpose hall, an open auditorium, a city café, a library and educational facilities has been designed as an emancipation palace in a prominent place in the city and has made a major contribution to its modernization." [3]

A similar function of promoters and bearers of various cultural activities, especially in smaller communities, very often was taken by Homes of Army, everywhere where the Yugoslav Army had a larger presence, and this was the case in the majority of Yugoslav urban areas. Sometimes, usually in larger cities, existing buildings were used for this purpose, while in smaller towns new buildings were constructed with very interesting modern architecture. There were located in the centres of the cities with the obligatory accompanying square surrounded by facilities of complementary public content, bringing quality to urban life in smaller urban areas.

2 „Hibridni kompleks s velikom višenamjenskom dvoranom, otvorenim auditorijem, gradskom kavanom, knjižnicom i prostorima za edukaciju projektiran je kao palača emancipacije na istaknutom mjestu u gradu i temeljito je doprinio njegovoj modernizaciji.“
3.1. Museum of the Revolution in Sarajevo

In accordance to Juraj Neidhardt's previous urban design for the Sarajevo Central Zone, as a result of the Yugoslav architectural design competition announced in 1958, it was created the Sarajevo Museum of the Revolution (Figure 1, 2), today the Museum of the History of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Museum was built after Committee of the architectural competition selected the winning project of Boris Magas, Edo Smidhen and Radovan Horvat. Design of the building is an example of the refined cubist architecture of high modernism. Magas himself explained the architecture of the museum as an abstract form from the early stages of his work. [4]

The monumental composition is lofty and emphasized by a pedestal with clearly defined groups of spaces arranged in three formal and functional units. Longitudinal part of the building with completely skeletal structure is made for exhibitions and storage spaces on the ground floor and basement, it is glazed from two sides and establishing very successful direct relations with its own garden and the surrounding greenery of the neighbouring museum. On the southwest side of the museum complex is a smaller wing of the building with three floors for exhibitions, administration and a library. North façade is marked by the domination of the most significant part - floating white cubic, boxy structure lifted above the contrastingly transparent, glassy materialized longitudinal of the object. It is an interesting decision of the designers to orient the main entrance on the east side of the building, towards the existing complex of the National Museum, and not towards the main city road along which it is located and towards which it establishes an introvert relation. Such an attitude correspond to the spirit and concept of Bosnian traditional houses, which, instead of facing the street, establishing relations towards the greenery and the courtyard. The museum project is oriented to the courtyard from the west, which is in use as an integral part of the open space for exhibitions. The building is an ode to Mies philosophy "less is more" in which the white cube in its fullness levitates above the glass-lined, completely translucent, almost dematerialized and invisible skeletal pedestal.

"The spaces are extroverted, clearly oriented towards the inner garden. Nine columns - the slender, cross-like trees contradict their own real function because they look like they are piercing, rather than supporting. The free position of the walls out of the structural grid gives the impression of moving panels and an "open free plan." " [5]

Referring to the fact that, at the same time, Mies van der Rohe have designed and implemented his project for the 20th century gallery in Berlin, the “Decision to declare a National Monument” was correctly stated that the Museum of the History is one of the most representative examples of the architectural creativity in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, which is at the level of the world achievements in the architecture of that time. [6] It is easy to agree with architect Mladen Jadrlic that the architects Magaš, Šmidhen and Horvat with their project of the museum, have accomplished one of the most valuable pieces of architecture that Sarajevo has at all. [7]

3 "Prostori su ekstrovertni, jasno orijentirani prema unutrašnjem vrtu. Devet stubova – vitka križolik stabla proturjece sopstvenoj stvarnoj funkciji jer izgledaju kao da probijaju, a ne podupiru. Slobodni položaj zidova mimo rastera odaje utisak pokretnih panoa i „otvorenog slobodnog plana.”"
3.2. The Opera and Ballet Building in Skopje

In 1969, in the middle of renovation enthusiasm, after the earthquake that devastated the North Macedonia capital, it was realized a project of Slovenian architects: Marijan Uršič, Stefan Kacin, Juri Princes and Bogdan Spindler. They have designed extravagant building of the Macedonian Opera and Ballet. The architectural competition obtained solution as a part of the project for the magnificent complex of the cultural centre, which has never been fully realized. The building itself has been under construction for more than 10 years, represents a different approach to modernist design from then mainstream and represents a step towards future, close to the deconstructivism which was yet not established and architectural design from the beginning of the 21st century, reminding to forms and aesthetics of Zaha Hadid or Daniel Liebeskind.

"One of the most beautiful and ambitious public buildings in the region owes somewhat to the late Berlin expressionism of the 1960s, but also anticipates free-form exploration in which the house and public space connected to the Vardar River become an integral whole." [5]

The monumental access to the building is arranged on the south side via the platform-square below which is located underground garage. The impressive foyers connect the halls, which had to meet the needs of drama, opera and ballet. The absence of colours and numerous different materials leaves huge concrete forms to create a dramatic dynamic complex that flirts with the organic symbolism transferred from the hilly relief of surrounding of the city.

3.3. The concert hall in Zagreb

The decision about construction of the Concert Hall “Vatroslav Lisinski” in Zagreb was made in 1957, mostly thanks to the engagement of the agile Mayor of Zagreb, Veceslav Holjevac. The construction begins based on the project of architects Marijan Haberle, Minka Jurkovic and Tanja Zdvorak, and the opening ceremony was in December 1973. It is located at the intersection of the two most important urban axes of the city and in the immediate vicinity of the City Government. By their positions, architecture and environment, these two buildings completely dominate the surrounding city area. The Concert hall has a great hall (1847 seats), a small hall (304 seats), four meeting rooms, a large functional lobby (an exhibition area of about 1888 m² horizontally and about 300 m² vertically) and

"Jedna od najljepših i najambicioznijih javnih zgrada u regiji ponešto duguje kasnom berlinskom ekspresionizmu 1960-ih, ali i anticipira istraživanja slobodnih formi u kojem kuca i javni prostor povezan sa rijekom Vardar postaju integralna cjelina."
three snack bars. [8] The volume of copper covered central hall emerges from the basic glass cubic structure, which frames representative lobbies and foyers and provides the possibility of live interaction from the interior towards the day and night views on the surrounding parks and wide avenues.

The sublime elegance of this true temple of culture is especially pronounced when the night lights make the festivities of the inner events visible, and creates the impression of an overflow of events into the surrounding city streets, squares and parks. An integral part of the hall complex is also the building of the Heritage Foundation discreetly located on the north side of the central part of the building. The halls were built accordingly to the highest standards of acoustics and until these days represent one of the best concert spaces in Europe. Monumental organs and their location on the central stage present personal identity and recognition of the hall, solemnly dominate in the interior of the great hall.

3.4. Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade
The Museum in Belgrade was built in 1965, on the banks of the Sava River opposite the Belgrade fortress and as a part of the New Belgrade urban plan. The project of architects Ivan Antic and Ivanka Raspopovic was selected as a result of the architectural competition, announced in 1960. The building entrance is via a covered passarella and from the park of statues, whose authors are famous Yugoslav sculptors of modernity. Above the rectangular, glass bounded ground floor, rises up 6 mostly full cubes that are rotated 45 degrees, so they cantileverly extend above the primarily ground floor plan. Daylight introduction into gallery spaces varies from lateral to zenithal by the sloping, glazed roof corners of mentioned cubes. The height of the space follows the needs for organizing different types of exhibitions. The placement of vertical communications in the central area aloud a completely open spatial concept, which parts, through established views on the river and Kalemegdan fortress, create an attractive and authentic interior. Milan Popadic states that materialization in white stone and glass, with the emphasized modular scheme, contributes to the crystal-morphological impression and became the determinant of the visual identity of the building. [9]

3.5. Archaeological Museums in Zadar and Split
Mladen Kauzlaric is an architect who creates two pearls of museum architecture in the old towns on the Adriatic coast (Figure 3). With their modern architectural approach, buildings design is quite opposite to their archaeological orientation and content. Architecture by its simple purity is discreet scenography that emphasizes the basic theme and gives importance to the artefacts. This is a design whose intention is not to compete with the beauty, meaning and importance of museum settings or surrounding environment, but to support it in an unobtrusive way. At the same time, the building establishes harmonious relationships with an extremely sensitive and significant external context.

"The museums of Mladen Kauzlaric in Zadar (1964 - 1972) and Split (1954 - 1976) develop a specific identity by articulating relationships with their place. And these are incredibly privileged places: the corner of the decumanus and the forum, between monuments of the first category – churches of St. Donat and St. Mary in Zadar, while in Split it is a terraced Mediterranean landscape on the slopes of Marjan." [10]  

5 „Muzeji Mladena Kauzlarica u Zadru (1964. - 1972.) i Splitu (1954. - 1976.) upravo artikulacijom odnosa sa svojim mjestom razvijaju specifikan identitet. A radi se o nevjerojatno privilegiranim mjestima: ugao decumanusa i foruma, između spomenika 1. kategorije - Sv. Donata i Sv. Marije u Zadru, dok je to u Splitu terasirani mediteranski krajolik na padinama Marjana.“
The museum building in Zadar closes the complex of the Benedictine monastery and forms a good part of square’s facade on the opposite to the most famous historical landmark of Zadar, the church of St. Donat. The ancient square with archaeological remains was used as an urban prelude for the building and its contents. With its stone facade, proportion and shape, the museum building continues the sequence of historical layers of buildings from different periods of the city's existence. The quiet monumentality of modernist architecture solves the facade of the square in a suggestive and powerful way, but at the same time creates a gentle connection with the surrounding objects as an example of sophisticated thinking and relationship with a sensitive historical context. Besides its architectural value, the urban contribution is impressive in solving the narrowest urban fabric of Zadar, where Roman Decumanus and Cardo meet, as well as the Forum space. [11]

![Figure 3. Archaeological museum, Zadar 1972, arch. Mladen Kauzlaric](image)

On the example of the museum in Split, we can realize the same kind of sensitivity towards a natural context and wonderful Mediterranean environment and landscape. White modernist simplicity in contrast to surrounding greenery creates harmonic composition. The quality of the architecture of both buildings is confirmed by the fascinating timelessness and universal aesthetics, which after almost 50 years seems surprisingly vital and quite contemporary in its architectural expression.

4. Conclusions
The beginning of the socialist society in Yugoslavia was marked with influences from the USSR and it was the extreme danger of moving towards the direction of the darkest of Bolshevik totalitarianism. After 1948 and the break of political connections with the Soviet Union, parallel with social changes in the late 1950s, and increasingly later, with obvious blessing of the majority of the system structures, state and society opened the space for the dominant influences of the Western culture and changed the kind of socialist environment by the help of the art. The insistence on the importance of the art and opening to the outside influences acted enlighteningly on the whole of society and created a sense of social extroversion and prosperity so opposed to the Eastern Europe behind the "Iron Curtain". The role of modern architecture was incredibly important as the visual materialization of the social intentions and for the internal and international presentation of the proclaimed new, modern and open society. Modernist ideas in the architecture and urbanism were recognized as complementary to the
ideas for making of “socialism with a human face”. The dramatic impetus to the development of the art and reflection of its importance was the forming of top cultural institutions with enormous relevance for the society and accordingly the construction of their facilities. In addition to the social importance, there was a clear indicator of the achievements of Yugoslav architecture and a reflection of the high aspirations in the architecture of modernity. The design of cultural buildings was one of the architectural reflections of social conditions in socialist Yugoslavia that can be used for historical and social studies of previous times.

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