The Utopia of Reality: Realisms in Twentieth Century Architecture and Beyond

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A·U·R· Architecture Utopia Realism
Edited by Petar Bojanić, Ljiljana Blagojević and Vladan Djokić

International Scientific Conference | 3rd-4th October 2013
Organised by University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture

Exhibition “IVAN LEONIDOV· PROJECTS” | 3rd-24th October 2013
Organised in partnership with Schusev State Museum
of Architecture, Moscow

Book of Abstracts | Exhibition Catalogue
A·U·R· Architecture Utopia Realism
Architecture Utopia Realism

International Scientific Conference
Organized by: University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture

Amphitheatre of the Faculty of Architecture
3rd-4th October 2013
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Director, Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University

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Schusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscow, Russia

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Polytechnic of Milan, Italy

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Conference Volunteers

Students of the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture:

Veljko Dinić, Mihailo Mandić, Ivana Marjanović, Aleksandar Pavlović, Katarina Petrović, Iris Puzović, Miloš Stojković, Uroš Stojadinović and Katarina Škrbić
Conference and Exhibition Programme

Thursday 3rd October:

Conference Opening
17:00-17:15
Vladan Djokić
Dean, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture

17:15-17:30
Petar Bojančić
Director, University of Belgrade, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory

Keynote Lecture Introduction
Renata Jadrešin-Milić
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture

Keynote Lecture
17:30-18:15
Fritz Neumeyer
Technische Universität Berlin
Beyond Escapisms and Affirmation: Utopia and Realism Revisited

18:15-18:45
Discussion

IVAN LEONIDOV: PROJECTS
Exhibition Opening
19:00-19:15
Ljiljana Blagojević
Vice Dean for Research, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture

19:15-19:45
Irina Korobina
Director, Schusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscow
Friday 4th October:

Introductory Lecture
10:00-10:15

Ljiljana Blagojević
University of Belgrade
Architecture Utopia Realism

Session 1
Chaired by:
Marija Milinković

10:15-10:45

Silvia Malcovati
Polytechnic of Turin
The Utopia of Reality: Realisms in Twentieth Century Architecture and Beyond

10:45-11:15

Alessandro de Magistris
Polytechnic of Milan
(Soc)Realism(s) in Practice: Re-reading the Soviet Experience in the 1930s

11:15-11:45

Discussion

11:45-12:15

Short Break

Session 2
Chaired by:
Aleksandar Kušić

12:15-12:45

Krunoslav Ivanišin
IVANISIN, KABASHI, ARHITEKTI
Place (Space) Non-Place

12:45-13:15

Ivana Wingham
University of Brighton
Architecture is a Form of Drawing

13:15-13:45

Discussion

13:45-15:00

Break
Session 3
Chaired by:
Dragana Čorović

15:00-15:30
Tijana Vujošević
University of Western Australia
Frank Lloyd Wright and Libertarian Utopia

15:30-16:00
Aleksandar Kušić
University of Belgrade
Encountering the Real: Belgrade Architecture as Cognitive Mapping

16:00-16:30
Luka Skansi
University IUAV, Venice
Manfredo Tafuri and the Critique of Realism

16:30-17:00
Discussion

17:00-17:30
Short Break

Conference Résumé
17:30-17:45
Ljiljana Blagojević
University of Belgrade
AUR: Closing Remarks

Session 4
Chaired by:
Ljiljana Blagojević

Keynote Lectures
17:45:18:30
Keller Easterling
Yale University
Extrastatecraft

18:30-19:15
Reinhold Martin
Columbia University
Horizons of Thought

19:15-19:45
Discussion and Conference Closing
The Utopia of Reality: Realisms in Twentieth Century Architecture and Beyond

Abstract: The notion of realism, which appeared in the theoretical debate on architecture in the early thirties of the twentieth century, when the "realistic" assumptions proposed on the occasion of the first congress of soviet writers in Moscow in 1934 were claimed as the "official" creative method and were subsequently adopted by all artistic disciplines, appears immediately as an ambiguous notion, straddling between idealism and ideology, innovative research and historicist formalism. The failure of socialist realism and the crisis of its architectural image, emphatic and monumentalist, clearly shows the utopian character of the realist "dream," but also, in a way, its imaginative power in striving to build a better world. Maybe that's why after the Second World War the question of realism comes again into discussion, especially in Italy, as an alternative to the modern paradigm, no less utopian, which was seeking absolute laws in defining form and space.

Ernesto Nathan Rogers first in 1962 devotes an issue of Casabella to the USSR, and a few years later he wrote a book eloquently entitled Utopia of Reality, entrusting to architects the task to "transform reality in its deepest essence, in the moral and political, as well as in the didactic and pedagogical fields." Realism thus returns to the core of the theoretical discussion on architecture, both in relation to the emerging postmodern American proposals, and mainly in relation to the architecture of the Tendenza.

The paper proposes a survey on the realisms of twentieth century as a tool to reflect on the current state of architecture: after the excesses of the postmodern populism, the disillusionment of the "Architettura Razionale" and the dialectics reconstruction — deconstruction, a new spectre of "Realism" seems in fact nowadays haunting Europe, and also in architecture emerges, again, the interest in a return to reality, to build a better world. Maybe is realism of today's great utopia?

Keywords: Utopia, Realism, Italian architecture of the post-war period, Tendenza, postmodernism, New Realism
Biography: Silvia Malcovati is Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture and Design of the Polytechnic of Turin, where since 2003 she has been teaching and researching. She was born in Milan (1969), studied architecture in Milan (1987-90) and Barcelona (1991-93) and graduated in Milan with Giorgio Grassi. Gets a Post-graduate grant from the Italian Ministry of Education and Scientific Research for a work at the ETH, Zurich, Switzerland (1994-95), is awarded the Ph.D. in Architectural Composition at the IUAV in Venice (1999) and gets a post-doc grant at the Polytechnic of Milan (1999-2001). Since 1994 she worked at the university as an assistant and then as a lecturer at the Polytechnic of Milan (1999-2000) and the Polytechnic of Turin (2002-2003). She has organized conferences, seminars, research projects and curated exhibitions and publications.

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