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Re-Thinking Architectural Modernism in Contemporary Art: Jasmina Cibic, Dušica Dražić and Katarina Burin

Abstract: This paper analyses how three contemporary female artists approach Modernist architecture and its ideological context. Jasmina Cibic in her contemporary interdisciplinary installations addresses politization of architecture – both at the time it was conceptualised and now, when it is related to past political regimes. For Cibic, architectural objects are signifiers of larger narratives. This is how she approaches Slovenian trade fair that was supposed to be realised in 1941, but has never been, numerous renovations of the former summer residency of Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito, lack of documentation on the Pavilion of Kingdom of Yugoslavia at the 1929 World Expo and the Palace of Yugoslav Federal Executive Council. In the case of Dušica Dražić, the paper focuses on her work *New City*, a large maquette of a non-existing city that contains buildings chosen from projects that were actually built but eventually destroyed. Katarina Burin fabricates sketches, documentary materials, architectural scale models, technical drawings and furnishings which are aesthetically, technically and theoretically bounded to the architectural design of the 1950s, in order to create *Gesamtkunstwerk* which criticizes the absence of women from architectural history of the time.

Keywords: architecture; Modernism; contemporary art; female artists

By the end of the 1960s, Charles Jencks argued for systematisation of *architistics*, a new, absolutely necessary, field analysing how architecture communicates. Starting from semiotic studies of a sign and communication, Jencks defined “‘formemes, funcemas and techemes’ – those fundamental units of architectural meaning.”¹ But he soon highlighted that one cannot stop at the three traditional terms of architecture (form, function and techniques), since the “meaning of a word or sign is determined by all the matrices of which it is a part.”² Late Modernist architecture was firstly part and product of the economic depression caused by WWII, which had nuclear apotheosis, and ideologies that built the new post-war world after massive destruction. As it happens, these ideologies had changed and architecture gained a different context. Instantly, its meaning also changed.

¹ Charles Jencks, “Semiology and Architecture,” in *Meaning in Architecture*, ed. Charles Jencks and George Baird (London UK: Barrie & Jenkins, 1969), 17.

² *Ibid*, 24.

This paper is a discursive analysis of selected gallery works by Jasmina Cibic, Dušica Dražić and Katarina Burin, three contemporary artists who integrate changed meanings of architecture into their works. One method by which they do so is by creating scale models (maquettes) of chosen buildings. These objects have specific significance in all works, since none of the buildings presented by them still exists. Furthermore, inexistence of those buildings is diverse – some of them were never built, some were intentionally demolished, for some there is barely any documentation suggesting that they existed.

The process of translating scale models into contemporary art we would rather describe as ‘quoting’ instead of appropriation, since none of the works stopped at taking the form of models. They rather began there. The artists deliberately provide us with as much information on the buildings as possible, after studious and detailed research. Quoting – in all its modes, including allusion, parody, etc. – is a wider ontological and semantic process that is characterising not only textual narratives, but culture in general. Its presence in contemporary visual and interdisciplinary art is often connected to re-contextualisation and re-purposing of the initial function of intersected items, which draws influences from conceptual art. Thus, an architectural scale model that becomes an element of an art installation becomes a signifier, which exceeds the morphological and functional characteristics of the represented building. It becomes a semantic event, micro narrative, media-within-the-media that influences perception of the artwork and the information that it carries.

Jasmina Cibic: Architecture as export of national identity

Worlds Fairs’ pavilions are in focus of recent studies that point out the relation between architecture and international presentation of states. For example, American pavilions embodied American identity through fixating on white masculinity (World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893), female patriotism (Sesquicentennial International Exposition, 1926), ethnic pride (Chicago World’s Fair, 1933) and average citizens (World’s fair, 1939).³ Pavilions at the 1958 Universal and International Exposition in Brussels gained much attention, since this was the first World’s Fair after WWII. The Yugoslav pavilion (architect Vjenceslav Richter) was “an ideal image of Yugoslavia and a utopian vision of perfectly harmonious, planned social development.”⁴ The Federation’s six constituent republics were symbolised by six tensile arches supporting the pavilion’s airy and transparent construction. Even by its position it resembled Yugoslavia’s external politics, being placed near Portugal, Switzerland and Great Britain, away from the Soviet group. It was also placed away from an

³ See chapter “American Identity Pavilion,” 83–167, in *Meet Me at the Fair: A World’s Fair Reader*, ed. Laura Hollengreen et. al. (Carnegie Mellon University: ETC Press, 2014), including papers by Stephen Whitfield, Bridget Cooks, Constance Crompton, Lydia Mattice Brandt, Cheryl Ganz, Katie Uva and Nettrice Gaskins.

⁴ Maroje Mrduljaš, “Synthesis in Croatian Architecture: 1947–1965,” in *Bauhaus Networking, Ideas and Practice*, ed. Jadranka Vinterhalter (Zagreb: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2015), 319.

offered place beside the Spanish pavilion, since Yugoslavia “refused any association with Francisco Franco’s fascist regime.”⁵

However, in focus of Jasmina Cibic’s works are pavilions that did not survive up to this day as the Yugoslav pavilion from 1958. In the centre of *Building Desire* (2015) is a pavilion of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from the 1929 World Expo in Barcelona. This pavilion was the last international presentation of the country that became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on October 3, 1929. Designed by renowned architect Dragiša Brašovan, the pavilion had a sharp angle, similar to a water-cutting beak of a ship, which was “a popular motive in expressionist architecture.”⁶ It was made of wood in order to “indirectly promote wood industry as economic factor,”⁷ and aimed to crate a successful presentation, which would “motivate development of national industry and renewal of rather weak economic relationships with Spain and, in this way, also with large number of developed countries of Central and South America.”⁸ Brašovan created the pavilion which “promoted connection of traditional building and modern architecture, in order to contribute to the creation of authentic identity.”⁹ It received many awards; however, there is very little documentation to prove that the pavilion existed at all. There are no images of the interior, whose sole purpose was to be looked at, while several surviving images of the exterior don’t give us definitive insight into its form.

For that reason, Cibic presents the pavilion as a re-constructive scale model in 1:7 ratio, made from several pieces that are re-arranged in the video *The Pavilion*. She focuses on the façade of the object, since as “a metonym for architecture as a whole, the façade is an element most invested with political and cultural meaning.”¹⁰ Cibic correlates the black and white stripes of the façade to the ideology of Modernism and the shift between two national ideologies, built through political and personal desires. She finds these stripes similar to Herman von Helmholtz’s optical illusions which here define presentation of the entire nation and its biggest achievements at the World Exposition. The stripes are also reminiscent of the camouflage of naval warships, attributed to Norman Wilkinson, which is also based on optical illusion.

The façade of the pavilion is similar to that of the villa for Josephine Baker by Adolf Loos,¹¹ an unrealised project from 1927 for which complete documentation

⁵ Kimberly Elman Zarecor and Vladimir Kulić, “Socialism on Display: The Czechoslovak and Yugoslav Pavilions at the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair,” in *Meet Me at the Fair: A World’s Fair Reader*, ed. Laura Hollengreen et al. (Carnegie Mellon University: ETC Press, 2014), 228.

⁶ Aleksandar Kadjević, “Život i delo arhitekta Dragiše Brašovana (1887–1965),” *Godišnjak grada Beograda* 37 (1990): 155.

⁷ Aleksandra Stamenković, *Architecture of Serbian and Yugoslav National Pavilions at the International Exhibitions 1900–1941* (PhD dissertation, University of Belgrade, 2017), 218.

⁸ *Ibid*, 213.

⁹ *Ibid*, 226.

¹⁰ Jasmina Cibic, transcript of monologue from *The Pavilion*, 2015, 6’43”, in Jasmina Cibic, *Building Desire* (Novi Sad: Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, 2016), 90.

¹¹ Cibic also made reference to Loos’s concepts in an earlier work, *The Object of the Spectacle* (2011).

has been preserved, as Loos used to destroy most of his archives only after adequate execution of the projects. This villa is significant for its interior distribution of space which was designed in such way that all the gazes are pointed towards the performer Baker. According to Beatriz Colomina, works by Le Corbusier and Loos are specific pedagogy of vision that attempts to teach viewers a way of looking and perceiving, so that the buildings themselves are machines for viewing. Le Corbusier used buildings as cameras to frame exterior, while Loos focused on special viewing angles in his semi-levelled and theatrical interiors.¹² Cibic presents Brašovan's pavilion as visual metaphor of time in history when significant narrative of Europe had been constructed and architecture enabled us to perceive it.

The never-realized 1941 Ljubljana trade fair by architect Vinko Glanz features in the form of crystal scale models (images 1, 2), produced by the local Rogaška crystal factory in Slovenia, within Cibic's work *Situation Anophthalmus Hitleri* (2012).¹³ Glanz was one of the leading ideologues of state architecture who aimed to articulate the new state within architecture itself. The crystal models were contextualised with the encyclopaedic presentation of blind beetles *Anophthalmus Hitleri*; species endemic to Slovenia that was named in 1937 by a Hitler admirer, entomologist Oskar Scheibel. Images of the beetles were produced by over 40 international entomological scientific illustrators who made the drawings without seeing the blind beetle, but based on its Latin name and their knowledge on entomology. The whole process illustrates how a specific historic and ideological contextual situation influences perception of an object and meanings given to it.

In addition to the scale models, architecture also figures in Cibic's short films, the medium preferred by ideologies. *Framing the Space* (2012) focuses on Vila Bled, the former summer residency of Yugoslavia's president Josip Broz Tito that underwent numerous re-designs. *The Fruits of Our Land* (2012) is a recreation of the 1957 parliamentary meeting that resulted in the selection of artworks which present Slovenian identity and are thus ideologically suitable to be placed in the newly-built People's Assembly. The script is a stenographic transcript of the Commission's meeting, recently discovered among Glanz's posthumous archive. In the film, the scale model of the People's Assembly is deconstructed. For Cibic, both architecture and films are tools for disseminating ideology through images.

To what extent architecture has the capacity to represent a State, is the theme of Cibic's film *Tear Down and Rebuild* (2015), which focuses on the Yugoslav Federal Executive Council (Savezno izvršno veće – further in text SIV).¹⁴ While the inexistent

¹² See Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994).

¹³ Later developed into installation *For Our Economy and Culture* at the Pavilion of Slovenia at 55th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia (2013).

¹⁴ *Tear Down and Rebuild* is the last segment of Cibic's project *Spielraum* that includes exhibitions *Give Expression to Common Desires* and *The Nation Loves It*. For analysis of the whole installation/ exhibition, see Sonja Jankov, "Totalitarnost modernističke arhitekture," (in Croatian), *Pogledaj.to*, October 9, 2015, <http://pogledaj.to/arhitektura/totalitarnost-modernisticke-arhitekture/>, acc. April 30, 2017.

pavilions are presented from the objective distance of a researcher, governmental buildings that still exist in changed socio-political contexts are personified in Cibic's works. Architecture becomes the governmental body that tears down and rebuilds political narratives. The Palace of SIV (1947/1954–62) was the first building in what was to become New Belgrade, the new symbolic capital of new Federation which had intentions to become a Balkan Federation. Built at a time when hundreds of thousands people were homeless due to the war, "New Belgrade was intended to be a symbol of Yugoslav unity, the administrative heart of the new state, and the model socialist city. But it was also supposed to mediate the country's international position."¹⁵

All these ideas were contained in the first building and presented by it. Numerous ceremonial and conference halls of the Palace of SIV "represented Yugoslavia and its republics."¹⁶ Its architecture is the metonym "of changes that took place in the political and ideological domain,"¹⁷ of New Belgrade and of the new state project. In contrast, *New City* by Dušica Dražić approaches different aspect of Modernism.

Dušica Dražić: *New City* created from demolition

Unlike New Belgrade that was built during (or even instead of) post-war rehabilitation, *New City* (2013) by Dušica Dražić is made of 46 buildings/complexes that were demolished by various city councils after being proclaimed failed projects. The installation is a large maquette¹⁸ (images 3, 4) which gathers these buildings into a city, referring to the global, 1960s Modernist trend of creating entirely new cities, such as Brasília and New Belgrade. As these cities were built in very short time, it took at least 30 years to see whether they were successful projects. If not completed within this period, a city gave its inhabitants an insufficient and unfinished frame for residing there. On the other hand, too early closure and completion of a city becomes obstacle to further changes, development and innovations.¹⁹ For that reason, the experimental concepts of new cities, usually chosen for their ideological suitability, often proved to be failure.

New City by Dražić contains scale models of eight public housing projects and as many office buildings (some of which housed cultural institutions), plus three schools, a railway station, multi-level parking garage, a courthouse, hospital, cinema, entertainment facility, two swimming pools, stadium, airport, factory, jail, five hotels, three multifunctional buildings, three private houses and three shopping centres. This city, well composed by the standards of urban planning, provides plenty cultural and

¹⁵ Vladimir Kulić, "New Belgrade and Socialist Yugoslavia's Three Globalisations," *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 2, 2 (2014): 129–30.

¹⁶ Biljana Mišić, *Palata Saveznog izvršnog veća u Novom Beogradu: istorija građenja: od Predsedništva vlade FNRJ do Palate "Srbija"* (Beograd: Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture grada Beograda, 2011), 148.

¹⁷ Ibid, 144.

¹⁸ Architectural models and technical drawings were co-created by Dušica Dražić and Goran Petrović.

¹⁹ Rudi Supek, *Grad po mjeri čovjeka* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1987), 117.

leisure activities, as well as all necessary facilities for thousands of inhabitants. The buildings it contains were originally located in 30 cities from 12 countries. For each building, Dražić provides extensive details about the architects, initial functions, years of construction and demolition, technical drawings, data on their capacity, photographs, legal background and development of the situation, results of surveys among tenants when available, as well as importance for history of architecture.

Several buildings/complexes selected by Dražić were located in the same place and demolished one after another. In place of Brussels-North Railway Station (arch. F. Coppens, Brussels, constructed in 1846, demolished in 1955)²⁰ was built a bus station, later demolished to make way for the Centre International Rogier, popularly known as “Martini Tower” because of the neon advertisement on its facade (arch. Jaques Cuisinier & S. Lebrun, Brussels, 1958–2001). The building was considered iconic for Brussels because of its modern structure and the fact that it was built on occasion of the 1958 World’s Exposition. Beside offices, it housed the National Theatre and cultural centre. Despite a petition, it was demolished to make place for another office building. Dražić develops all these historic layers of one parcel, arranging them synchronically at different places on territory of the *New City*.

Petitions and protests marked several demolitions that took place in spite of them. In the case of public housing projects, those were the Heygate Estate (arch. Tim Tinker, London, 1974–2011), De Zwarte Madonna (arch. Carel Weeber, The Hague, 1985–2007) and the Red Roads Flats (arch. Sam Bunton/Glasgow Corporation, Glasgow, 1969–2017) which was the highest of such projects in Europe at the time. In all cases, tenants showed resistance, as large majority of them wanted to stay in the buildings. They would have to wait up to seven years for the new buildings to be finished and to pay for them, since only small percent, if any, was planned for the households with low income.

Many demolitions of buildings that Dražić had chosen were disapproved of by architectural communities. The Bankers Trust Building (arch. Andrews, Jaques and Rantoul / Proudfoot, Bird and Rawson, Des Moines, USA, 1891–1978) was “the first privately owned building to be placed on the Des Moines Registry of Historic Places.”²¹ It was removed from the registry due to a procedural error and subsequently demolished. Imperial Oil’s Ontario Regional Headquarters (arch. John B. Parkins Associates, Toronto, 1962–1990) received the 1964 Massey Medal for Architecture and an honourable mention at the Sao Paulo Biennial of Architecture and Design, but was nevertheless demolished to make space for a parking lot. Poltegor Centre B (arch. Sophia Szczesnowicz-Solowij, Julian Duchowicz, Jan Szymanski, Wroclaw, 1982–2007) was the highest building in Wroclaw at the top of which was the first post-Soviet, independent TV-station “Prywatna Telewizja Echo.” Demolition of the State Office Building Sidney (arch. Ken Woolley, Sidney, 1964–1997) was widely disputed, since it

²⁰ The source for all the information about the buildings (architects, location, year of construction and demolition) is Dušica Dražić, *New City Guide*, <https://dusicadrazic.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/newcity-drazic.pdf>, acc. April 30, 2017.

²¹ *Ibid.*

was a prime example of mid 60's Modernist architecture and the tallest skyscraper in Australia at the time it was finished.

The *New City* includes many buildings whose demolition processes were illogical, obscure and sometimes absurd. The Micheels House (arch. Paul Rudolph, Westport, 1972), a private residence, was to be put on the registry of protected buildings as a rare example of Modernist housing in the region, but was demolished in 2007. Odeon Cinema Elephant & Castle (arch. Erno Goldfinger, London, 1966–1988) was demolished a weekend before Monday on which it was to be registered as cultural heritage. Riverview High School (arch. Paul Rudolph, Sarasota, Florida, 1958–2009), an example of Sarasota Modernism style, was placed on both the local as the national registers, but had the same fate. An exemplary Brutalist achievement, Trinity Square shopping mall and car park (arch. Rodney Gordon, Owen Luder Partnership, Gateshead, UK, 1967–2010) was demolished and its pieces “where sold in specially designed tins for 5£ a piece, by the city council, which ironically confirms the importance of the building they tore down.”²² In some cases, the architects themselves intervened and made plans for adaptation, but to no avail, as in case of the Brutalist Pimlico School (arch. John Bancroft, London, 1970–2010). It had progressive design for its time, which was outdated after educational reforms.

In the *New City*, one can see achievements of the most eminent Modernist architects and movements. The city contains three buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright – a hotel, an office building and an entertainment facility that put two wrecking companies into bankruptcy and almost a third one, before it was demolished. The Metabolist movement is included with Hotel Sofitel (arch. Kiyonori Kikutake, Tokyo, 1994–2007) and Grand Prince Hotel AKASAKA (arch. Kenzo Tange, Tokyo, 1982–2011). These buildings were designed to be disassembled and improved with technically more advanced elements, which did not happen. They became landmarks of Tokyo and gained great cultural value.

In the *New City*, there are buildings that proved in time to be insufficient for their original cities, either due to population growth or technical outdated. The Hudson Department Store (arch. Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, Detroit, 1911–1998), the tallest of its kind in the world and the second largest in the USA at the time, became unprofitable due to drastically shrinking population. Several projects included in the *New City* had serious design errors that justified their demolition. The public housing complex Hulme Crescents (arch. Hugh Wilsom and Lewis Womersley, Manchester, 1972–1991) at first received several awards, as it was the largest housing project in Europe and it introduced under-floor heating in mass housing. However, it soon proved to have safety issues and only after two years it was declared fit for “adult only” habitation. Due to an unforeseeable oil crisis, the under-floor heating became unpayable and in a 1975 survey 96.3 percent of residents expressed a wish to be rehoused. “In 1984, [the] City Council stopped charging rent and it was eventually torn down in 1991.”²³

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Among the failed projects is Beograd's Bele Vode neighbourhood, also known as the Asbestos Settlement, finished in 1966 as temporary public housing. Asbestos, initially thought to be a beneficial building material, showed to be public health hazard. The 14 buildings were supposed to be abandoned after 10 years of use, but they were finally demolished between 2006 and 2011. Mass housing projects displayed in time "four problem dimensions: social, physical, financial and managerial. The social problems identified as the most important."²⁴ Public Housing Project Pruitt-Igoe (arch. Minoru Yamasaki and George Hellmuth, St. Louis, 1952–1972) failed victim of changed social circumstances. One part of the Project (Pruitt) was meant for African Americans, the other (Igoe) for Caucasian Americans, but the idea was not implemented as segregation was banned in the USA in 1955. Subsequently, the white population of the project quickly moved out, causing the vacancy problem. "In 1968 the department of housing advised not to live in the project and in 1971 about 600 people lived in 17 of the 33 buildings, while it had space for 2870 families."²⁵

One attempt at preserving public housing in Europe was the process of *résidentialisation* (turning housing into homes) which was in fact "privatization of public housing in Great Britain, a shift that culminated in Margaret Thatcher's 'right to buy' scheme of 1980."²⁶ This process was part of a larger project to reconfigure the relationship between the state and the economy at large. According to Alexander von Hoffmann, "the failure of public housing, although few seemed to realize it, was simply that the program by itself could not solve social problems, integrate society, or usher in a new high-rise urbanism."²⁷

Architectural projects that were declared failures for various reasons and demolished became new conceptual material for Dražić's work. She intentionally uses *détournement* (diversion, misappropriation, distortion) in meaning which occurs when signs are relocated. Although she chose more than just Modernist buildings, the concept of the work is rooted in the 1960s urbanistic and ideological trend of the new cities. "New Belgrade's global symbolism turned into an empty shell with no real meaning"²⁸ when international sanctions closed Serbia to international exchange in the 1990s. An empty meaning created with the demolition of 46 buildings/complexes gained new significance in Dražić's *New City*, which points towards tension between a concept of protected heritage and an open market. As in Cibic's works, *New City* is interdisciplinary analysis of multiple meanings of architecture, oppositions that create them and ways in which they are perceived.

²⁴ Gayle Epp, "Emerging Strategies for Revitalizing Public Housing Communities," *Housing Policy Debate* 7, 3 (1996): 565.

²⁵ Dražić, *New City Guide*.

²⁶ Kenny Cupers, "Human Territoriality and the Downfall of Public Housing," *Public Culture* 29, 1 (2016): 167.

²⁷ Alexander von Hoffmann, "High Ambitions: The Past and Future of American Low-Income Housing Policy," *Housing Policy Debate* 7, 3 (1996): 436.

²⁸ Kulić, "New Belgrade and Socialist Yugoslavia's Three Globalisations," 148.

Katarina Burin: New architectural history

Unlike Cibic and Dražić, who based their works on existing factography and documentation, Katarina Burin's recent work questions what is omitted in archives that were made at the time of tensions between national identities and international aspirations.

In series of exhibitions (2012–2015, image 6), Burin presents work by Czech-born architect Petra Andrejova-Molnár (1898–1977) and her collaborations with architects in Brno, Budapest, Prague, Vienna and Berlin. The exhibition includes biographies, scale models archival photographs, blueprints, documents and exhibition catalogues that contain texts by eminent contemporary historians of architecture, such as Sean Keller. The exhibition *Petra Andrejova-Molnár – Contribution and Collaboration* (2015) included works by Brno-based architect Bohuslav Fuchs (1895–1972) in whose studio Andrejova-Molnár worked from 1927 to 1929, assisting him on the project for Hotel Avion. The exhibition also displays work by Jaromír Krejčar (1895–1950)²⁹ in whose studio Andrejova-Molnár completed her knowledge in public buildings, assisting him on the project for Sanatorium Machnác in 1930. Furthermore, it presents the Red Cube House by Farkas Molnár, Andrejova's husband, designed for the first large Bauhaus exhibition in 1923. As the project was never realised, Burin created a scale model for this purpose. The other two contemporaries included in the exhibition are József Fischer (1901–1995) and Otto Eisler (1893–1968).

The exhibition displays Hotel Nord-Sud (1932–34), “culmination of Andrejova-Molnár's formative years that in many ways synthesises architectural trends of the time” (image 5).³⁰ This unprecedented achievement in architecture was characterised by an open structure that connected/separated interior and exterior only by glass. Built at the Yugoslav seaside near Zadar, the object was later destroyed during war. Exhibition *Hotel Nord-Sud 1932–34: Design and Correspondence* (2013) focuses on the furniture and interior design of the Hotel,³¹ which reflected the horizontal cantilever design of the building. The introductory text informs us how much of this lost or destroyed furniture “was reproduced according to the drawings and documents that remained.”³² Burin also focuses on Andrejova-Molnár's interest in screen structures as dividing elements between interiors and exteriors, which she applied in Czechoslovakian Pavilion for 1925 Paris Expo of Decorative Arts and Design. While designer of the pavilion was Josef Gočar, Andrejova-Molnár designed tapestries for its interior, as well as pedestals for ceramic displays.

²⁹ Jaromír Krejčar later designed Czech Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Exposition.

³⁰ Katarina Burin, *Between Brno and Budapest: The Work of Petra Andrejova-Molnár and Her Contemporaries*, exhibition catalogue, London: 1986, self-published as exhibition item in 2012, reprinted in *Contribution and Collaboration: The Work of Petra Andrejova-Molnár and Her Contemporaries* (Koln: Koenig Books: 2016), 11.

³¹ The exhibition also included design of the visual identity of the Hotel, as in case of Slovakian mountain chalet in Burin's later project *Pre-arranged Comfort* (2014).

³² Katarina Burin, introductory text for exhibition *Hotel Nord-Sud 1932–34: Design and Correspondence* (2013), Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston.

Despite her legacy, Andrejova-Molnár never existed, except as fabrication of Burin. All documents and archival photographs that present Andrejova-Molnár with her contemporaries, scale models, drawings and place of these works in architectural history are factography created by Burin. Her work is thus similar to works by contemporary authors who create fictive personalities as a form of critique. In 1997, Cornelia Sollfrank created 300 fake female artists by creating fake accounts and personal domains, and remixing existing websites to create their artworks. Sollfrank's work was a response to Hamburger Kunsthalle's open call for a net art exhibition *Extension* and critique of women's invisible presence in contemporary art scene. Burin questions meta narratives which created historic archives, omitting unknown number of architects and designers. Burin's position here is similar to a restorer who repairs damages and recreates completely erased pieces of an image, guessing their content from the context. Only, in this case, the damage occurred in the documentation of history. Her authoritative, documentary displays are also critique of 'progressive' time which did not allow many specialists to develop their practice. One of them is Franziskas (Fran) Hosken (1918–2006).

One of the first women to receive a degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Hosken threw away a seemingly successful career. A pioneering architectural photographer and archivist, Hosken was establisher of Hosken Inc. (1951–1963), which produced jewellery and furniture, and was author of several studies about urban planning. From the 1970s, after many failures to further develop her design practice, Hosken becomes known in history only as a female rights activist. Burin focuses on the obstacles that influenced this change in career, as well as on recreating approximately 25 unique Hosken's works of design documented in Harvard's archives.

As furniture pieces recreated by Burin lack the official Hosken's stamp, the exhibition highlights distinction between Modernist aspirations and their contemporary reception. In contemporary living, Modernist furniture appears mostly in the form of collectibles. Displayed in a gallery space, these pieces play with the boundary between reproduced design and contemporary art. For that purpose, Burin adds a segment with contextual 1950s furniture designed and produced solely by herself. As in the 1950s, when Hosken Inc. worked, the process of standardisation in design had begun, Burin contrasts Hosken's achievements to standardized opinion on what a woman's role is. In Burin's practice, interdisciplinary contemporary art becomes an interpretation of insufficient and closed archives, which are nevertheless authoritative source of knowledge. Architectural history in her works both masks an absence of reality and "bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum."³³ But, as Jean Baudrillard notes, "the web of artificial signs [is] inextricably mixed up with real elements"³⁴ as it is in Burin's work.

³³ Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," in *Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford University Press: 1988), 170.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 178.

Concluding remarks

For Jasmina Cibic, architectural objects are signifiers of national myths, their construction and fall. Her approach includes research, performance, film, installation, totality of exhibition space, product design and textile design that result in *Gesamtkunstwerk* that is a hybrid form of curatorial, artistic and scientific research and production. The project *New City* by Dušica Dražić is more than well researched contemporary artwork – it is a specific history of architecture and guide to urban planning and design, different to those in textbooks. One can read from it about projects that existed, but also about changes in land value, about how a number of buildings were perceived as cultural heritage by communities and architectural associations but were nevertheless demolished.

While Cibic and Dražić focus on architecture that existed as a concept or as an actual object, Katarina Burin uses existing architecture to make convincing completely fabricated architectural biography and works. She does so by purpose of presenting ideology behind Modernist macro narratives. In her recent work, Burin blurs the boundary between real and fabricated documentation, by purpose of showing that women were present in architectural Modernism, even though they have not been a topic of a more profound research, at least not until recently. As much as from works by Cibic and Dražić, one can learn a lot about Modernist architecture from Burin's works.

Having a similar interdisciplinary approach in presenting the totality of Modernist architecture, these three artists present architecture as the signifier of complex socio-political issues. Their works show how the power which contemporary art has to interpret these semantic layers is perhaps greater than the power that built and demolished Modernist architecture.



Illustration 1: Jasmina Cibic: *Untitled I* (National Displays), 2012, crystal, soil, *Anophthalmus Hitleri* beetles, courtesy of the artist

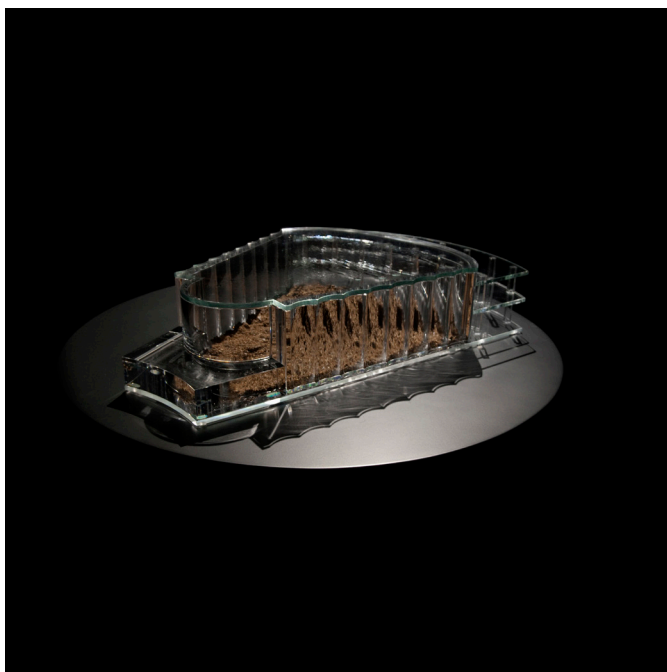


Illustration 2: Jasmina Cibic: *Untitled II* (National Displays), 2012, crystal, soil, *Anophthalmus Hitleri* beetles, courtesy of the artist

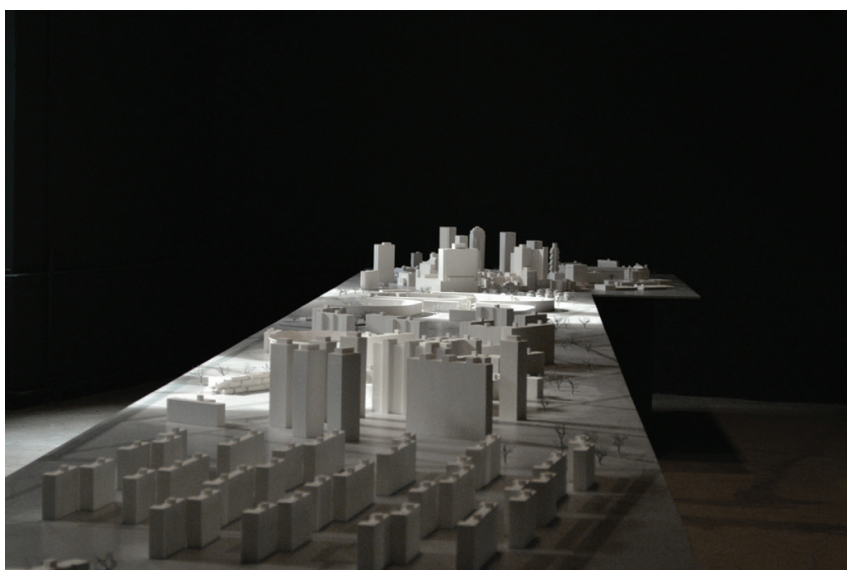


Illustration 3: Dušica Dražić: *New City*, 2013, photograph by Wim Janssen

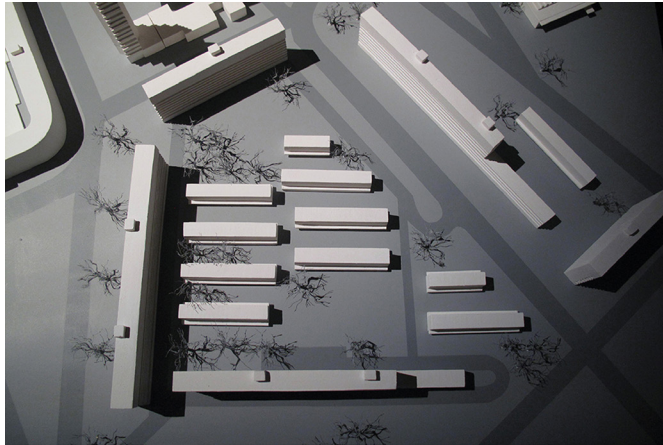


Illustration 4: Dušica Dražić: *New City*, 2013, detail.
(Heygate Estate, London, architect Tim Tinker, built in 1974, demolished in 2011)



Illustration 5: Katarina Burin: *Hotel Nord-Sud*, 1932–34/2012, detail from exhibition *Andrejova-Molnár Papers*, 2012, Ratio 3, San Francisco. Image courtesy of the artist and Ratio 3, San Francisco



Illustration 6: Katarina Burin: *Andrejova-Molnár Papers*, 2012, installation view, Ratio 3, San Francisco. Image courtesy of the artist and Ratio 3, San Francisco

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Article received: March 24, 2018

Article accepted: April 10, 2018

Preliminary report – Short Communications