

BRANKO KINCL, BORKA BOBOVEC

PORTRAITS OF ARCHITECTS, FROM TEXTS BY ANDRIJA MUTNJAKOVIĆ

PORTRETI ARHITEKATA, IZ ZAPISA ANDRIJE MUTNJAKOVIĆA

AUTHOR OF THE CONCEPT AND EDITOR:
BORKA BOBOVEC



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Author of the concept and editor: Borka Bobovec
Reviewers: Branko Kincl, Zlatko Karac
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Andrija Mutnjaković, Fellow of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, has authored a number of monographs on the life and work of architects and builders of Croatian origin (Diocletian, Juraj Dalmatinac, Lucijan Vranjanin, Pope Sixtus V, Frane Petrić, Kornelije Budinić, Josip Picman, and others). He has thereby significantly contributed to the formation of Croatian architectonics, as well as added new information on the life and work of several Croatian architects, belonging to global architectural avant-garde.

The theoretical monograph entitled *Portreti arhitekata, iz zapisa Andrije Mutnjakovića* (*Portraits of Architects, from Texts by Andrija Mutnjaković*) includes 43 scientific or cultural essays, chosen by the author of the concept and editor Borka Bobovec. They have been written in the form of monograph studies on selected Croatian architects, associated artists and art historians of exceptional personalities, who have left a distinguished mark in the Croatian architecture of the period from 15th–21st century. Among them, there are portraits of those architects, artists and art historians, who have built the most part of their creative oeuvre into the ambient of the city of Zagreb. Selected texts were published either as forewords to books or as articles in professional and public periodicals, or they were presented in radio or television shows. We may find unpublished texts here as well, available to the public for the first time.

This work is characterised by a clear genre profile and a precise methodological approach usually present in chrestomathies, i.e. it consists of critically selected texts, topically chosen and divided. The approach used in analysing individual architects is literary dynamic and interesting – pronouncedly scientific and factographic on occasion, and essay-like and culturally marked in other cases. Mutnjaković's writing style in selected texts

has developed over decades of his active publicist activity; thereby, his lively and capturing literary style of interpreting serious topics of scientific research provenance in a clear and interesting fashion has only been repeatedly confirmed. The language belongs to the time when original texts were written, and so does bibliography, quotation references and similar scientific elements, with a thorough composition and expertly design.

The monograph is a product of the collaboration between the author of the concept and the author of selected texts, which are a result of Andrija Mutnjaković's yearlong theoretical and research activity. The book in a certain way synthesises and comprises his complete tribute to shaping critical biographies and forming a personal understanding of the importance of the leading personalities in Croatian architecture. Same as all other great national syntheses in a certain field, the book offers many new scientific insights, added by the author's novel systematisation of previously published texts and pieces of information, which have hereby gained final critical confirmation and verification. This excellent theoretical scientific work with a potent cultural underlying concept tackles valuable factography from the Renaissance until today, unknown or unrecognised so far, and offers the author's distinctive interpretation thereof – reflexive and intuitive on occasion, but also inspirational and directing for future researchers. The interpretation style he uses, present not only in this, but also in many other earlier monographs, has positioned him as a classic figure of our architectural thought.

The monograph consists of three characteristic parts: it begins with Epistles, which include epigraphic literature, to which personal observations have been added. This part includes Juraj Dalmatinac, Pope John Paul II, Frane Petris, Pope Sixtus V, Fran Vranjanin and Lucijan

Vranjanin. What follows are essays, including scholarly analyses of the life and work of selected authors. In Essays, Miroslav Begović, Bogdan Bogdanović, Kornelije Budinić, Srebrinka Gvozdanović Sekulić, Drago Ibler, Viktor Kovačić, Boris Magaš, Andre Mohorovićić, Juraj Neidhardt, Josip Picman, Friedrich von Schmidt, Vladimir Turina, Ivan Vitić and Ante Vulin are discussed. Sketches, as associations to the essence of authors' architectonics, form the third part of the book. Nikola Bašić, Mirko Benazić, Bernardo Bernardi, Borka Bobovec, Zlatko Bourek, Zdravko Bregovac, Julije De Luca, Igor Emili, Julije Golik, Carlo and Domenico Fontana, Branko Kincl, Dominik Kunkera, Velimir Neidhardt, Budimir Pervan, Vlado Petrićević, Jože Plečnik, Ante Roca, Jerko Rošin, Aleksandar Srnec, Zdenko Stržić, Franjo Zvonimir Tišina, Šime Vulas and Ernest Weissmann are tackled here.

Every spoken or written word, drawing, sketch, model or some other manner of architectural expression reflects a unique mental process in creating spatial concepts. The intention of the book is to introduce the public to the key creative characteristics of the oeuvres of selected Croatian architects. The majority of the documentation related to the oeuvres of the aforementioned recent architects forms a part of the collection of the Croatian Museum of Architecture of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb, and is useful for a broader familiarisation with their contribution – through life and creativity – to the development of architecture in Zagreb and Croatia. The original concept of this monograph, authored by Borka Bobovec, is an exceptionally valuable and a rather innovative professional and scholarly tribute to the insight that written medium may contribute to the development of both spatial awareness and culture. In the Croatian context, this bears special and specific weight.