

MODERNISM VERSUS POSTMODERNISM AS AN IMPETUS TO CREATIVITY IN THE WORK OF ARCHITECTS MILENIJA AND DARKO MARUŠIĆ

*Dijana Milašinović Marić*¹, University of Priština, Faculty of Technical Science, with a temporary head office in Kosovska Mitrovica, Department of Architecture, Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia

Marta Vukotić Lazar, University of Priština, Faculty of Philosophy, with a temporary head office in Kosovska Mitrovica, Department of History of Art, Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia

In light of the development of contemporary Serbian architecture in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the work of the team of architects Milenija and Darko Marušić is indicative of trends in Serbia's Belgrade architectural scene. Their substantial and affirmed architectural activities encompass a series of issues and themes related both to the changes in Serbian architecture permeated with dialogues between modernism and postmodernism in the last decades of the twentieth century and to the specificity of the author's contribution based on the personal foothold around which their architectural poetics weaves. The context of postmodernism, particularly the Neo-Rationalist European current, has been a suitable ambience in the genesis and upgrade of their creativity. It can be considered through several typical themes on the Modernism versus Postmodernism - relation, starting from the issue of contextuality as determination, through duality, mutual dialogue as an impetus, attitude about the comprehensiveness of architectural considerations based on the unbreakable link between the urbanism and architecture, and on the issues of urban morphology the theme oriented towards both the professional community and the wider public, but also towards architecture itself - its ethics and aesthetics, which are equally important themes for them.

Key words: modernism versus postmodernism, duality, Serbia, Belgrade school of housing, contextuality.

INTRODUCTION

In light of the development of contemporary Serbian architecture in the activities of the architect couple Milenija and Darko Marušić², there is a series of themes important for considering the development trends and changes in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries (criticism of modernism, breakthrough of ideas of postmodernism, new wave in re-examining postmodernism trends, critical regionalism, neo-modernism, etc.) (Frampton, 2004: 294; Šuvaković, 1995: 119-123; Jencks, 1985: 21-31). Although their work has never explicitly belonged to a particular architectural style or group of styles, this team of architects has been visibly present in Serbian architecture from the 1970's to date. Their characteristic method of analytical, patient and thorough construction in line with current events has always secured them a place amongst those

² **Milenija Marušić**, (maiden name Jovanović, Valjevo, 1941), architect. She graduated from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, in 1965. She was employed at the Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia (IAUS) in Belgrade from 1965 until her retirement in 2011, where she passed the professional path to the title of leading architectural designer and expert adviser. Melanija is a member of the ULUPUDS Section for Architecture and a member of the Academy of Architecture of Serbia. She deals with the design, research, education and popularisation of architecture.

Darko Marušić (Omiš, Croatia, February 1, 1940 — Belgrade, April 16, 2017), architect, designer. He was employed at IAUS from 1966 until 1973, then at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade (1973-2005) where he built his academic career, becoming a full professor. From 2006, he was engaged at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture in Niš. He was Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, 1998-2000. In 2000, Darko was acting dean. In the period 1996-1999, he was manager of the Summer School of Architecture in Petnica near Valjevo. He was a member of the ULUPUDS Graphic Section, member of the Academy of Architecture of Serbia and a member of the BINA Authors Team. He dealt with design, research, education and professional activities in the domain of popularisation and affirmation of creativity in architecture

¹ Kneza Miloša 7, 38220 Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia
dijanam.maric@gmail.com

architects whose works are recognized as an example of current trends and interpretations of the artistic, ethical and aesthetic relationships towards modernist and postmodernist architecture. Along with their own theoretical attitudes, which found their first foothold in the themes of the European postmodern neo-rationalism, in the *Tendenza* group and, later, also in the theoreticians and critics Heinrich Klotz and Kenneth Frampton, they have cultivated their own specific architectural language. They have a thoughtful and built up attitude permeated with plural codes, and with issues of urban morphology and urban aesthetics, thereby cultivating a profoundly contextual architectural attitude where architectural structures visualize the properties of place (Klotz, 1995; Frampton, 2004).

The phenomenon of architect couples in the history of architecture is a modern one, since the twentieth century, both in the world and in Serbia. Amongst the prominent teams of architects that have made significant shifts in the world of architecture is the famous team *The Four* from Glasgow: Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife Margaret Macdonald, together with Herbert McNair and Frances Macdonald, Margaret's sister. At the turn of the 20th century, working in the spirit of Art Nouveau, they affirmed a specific total design and created a recognizable expression famous across Europe and America. There is also the example of the couple Alison and Peter Smithson, who, designing in the Brutalist spirit in the 1950s, initiated a powerful criticism of the functionalist categories of the *Athens Charter* through their artistic exhibition and architectural activities, advocating far more complex architectural principles of urban development than the simplified interpretation and *idealism of the old guard* of modernists: Le Corbusier, Gropius, etc. (Frampton, 2004: 74-77, 263-271). The couple Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown created an aristocratic type of populism of specific American postmodernist expression. They were wrongly understood due to their polemicality and were often attacked, amongst other reasons, because of their support of the banal architecture of Las Vegas (Jencks, 2007: 57). In the late 20th century, there were also several teams of architect couples in Serbia such as: Ljiljana and Dragoljub Bakić, Stana and Branko Aleksić, Sofija and Nedeljko Borovnica, etc., who created their works in Late-Modern architecture, in the structuralist and Brutalist manner. Different tendencies are noticeable in the body of work by the couple Darko and Milenija Marušić, who were present in the architectural scene of the former Yugoslavia and Serbia for almost fifty years. Their activities stand out because of their unique and specific poetics, permeated with a humanistic dimension, ethics and contextuality, as well as a characteristic plural expression of the last decades of the twentieth century, which is a reflation of a constant professional dialogue between postmodernist pluralism and specific unambiguity in the simplified and rigid interpretation of modernism in architecture.

The activities of the Marušić team have been singled out in overviews of Yugoslav and Serbian architecture, although mainly individual buildings, while their body of work as a whole has not been completely investigated, neither has it been properly valorised (Milašinović Marić, 2002; Perović, 2003; Bogunović, 2005; Manević, 2008; Milašinović Marić,

2010; Mitrović, 2012). The many prestigious professional awards and recognitions they have won indicate their outstanding contribution in the domain of architecture and urbanism, and is a professional confirmation of their architectural attitudes in a wide circle of colleagues and in the profession (October Award of the City of Belgrade, 1981; Award from Newspaper "Borba", 1993, 1998; Grand Prize from the Serbian Union of Architects for overall creativity, 1993; Annual Award from the Serbian Association of Architects, 2000; "Ranko Radović" Award, 2008; "Aleksandar Šaletić" Award, 2008; recognitions from the Salon of Architecture, 2003, 2008; April Award, 2012, etc.).

DUALITY, DIALOGUE AS AN IMPETUS

Since the first years of their studies at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, Milenija and Darko Marušić met together both as a couple and professionally. Through dialogue, they weaved their attitudes and visions into the process of learning, gaining knowledge, practical work and advancement, cultivating the specificity of duality, the plural flow based on directed communication about issues of architecture. The ambience of the Faculty of Architecture of Belgrade during their studies (1960-65), with its cultivated foothold in modern architecture based on the theoretical postulates of Bauhaus, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright, was affirmed by professors: Uroš Martinović, one of the creators of New Belgrade, Stanko Mandić, a modernist who cultivated regionalism, and Nikola Dobrović, an architect of powerful personal authority who was a Czech lecturer in the history of modern architecture and an uncompromising proponent of modern architecture. Those professors provided the Marušić couple the starting basis for architecture as a link between the "artistic" and the "research", which was based on technical knowledge, on the foundation of which they further upgraded their theoretical knowledge. They continued to cultivate the multi-layered approach to architecture which they adopted at the Faculty with the support of the Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia (IAUS) and according to the guidelines of the charismatic director of the Institute at that time, Milorad Macura, a faithful follower of Le Corbusier's architecture and a proponent of the comprehensiveness of architecture and space through theoretical consideration which he called *Spaciology* (Janakova Grujić, 2010: 41, 235-238).

Milenija and Darko Marušić appeared on the Serbian architectural scene in the 1970s at the time when the influences alternated between Brutalism, structuralism and the breakthrough of postmodernism based on a powerful revision of rigid modernist attitudes. They came with an already formed idea about the aesthetics of architecture as a humanistic discipline based on the ethnicity of both the architect as an individual and the profession as a whole (Bogunović, 2005: 954-957; Milašinović Marić, 1999: 54). An almost romantic infatuation with the role of architecture and the architect as a cultural leader in the creation of new spaces for man on a human-scale has marked the totality of their lives and work.

After having worked independently for a short time, they began their career in architecture together, participating

in anonymous architectural and urban planning competitions. Out of twenty nine architectural and urban planning competitions in which they participated as a team or in cooperation with other architects of their age or younger (Milan Lojanica, Predrag Cagić, Nedeljko and Sofija Borovnica, Milan Miodragović, Nada Tankosić and Željko Gašparović, Ljiljana Blagojević, Đorđe Alfirević and A. Čarapić), they won twenty three prizes (8 first prizes, 6 second prizes, 4 third prizes, 5 honorary mentions and 1 special prize), which is a remarkable achievement and covers a time span between 1966 and 2012. This indicates the topicality and undoubted vitality of the ideas and energy which the Marušić team expressed over almost half a century, and also confirms the well-foundedness of their architectural attitudes by which they have consistently overcome changes in styles and other challenges (Milašinović Marić, 2007:10). Their awareness of the perseverance of timeless architectural postulates in harmony with personal choice and upgrading is also noticeable in their work.

BELGRADE SCHOOL OF HOUSING

Their determination for developing residential architecture arose naturally out of the circumstances in their professional work. In the sixties, seventies and early eighties of the twentieth century, competitions were mainly announced for residential complexes, residential blocks in New Belgrade and for satellite settlements. Between ten and several thousand apartments were built in Belgrade per year (Kulić, 2002: 15, 27; Mecanov, 2009: 113-140). Their first prize won at an internal competition for blocks 61 and 62 (Figure 1) in New Belgrade in 1968 (together with M. Miodragović) ensured that their designs were materialized (1972-76). It was an architectural elaboration of an already developed urban concept of large and rhythmically distributed outlines as a part of the plan adopted in 1965, drawn up by municipal urban planner Josip Joško Svoboda, which limited and directed their work to some extent (Marušić, 1972: 125-133). They designed two types of step-like apartment blocks with apartments of different sizes in the spirit of Brutalism. The division into a living room and night zone, as well as a circular connection, characterized their approach to organizing the apartments known as the *Belgrade apartment*. The two-sided oriented two-wing building was a shift in functional design, and also one of the clearer examples of organizing two-wing buildings in Serbian multifamily housing. The couple Milenija and Darko Marušić expressed their own attitudes to urban composition and the architecture of large groups of residential buildings in their design for the northern part of blocks 61 and 62 (1975, Figure 2), which was not materialized. In this design, they expressed an incompact concept of grouping and positioning the blocks, thinking about the buildings as smaller neighbourhood units, thus building an ambience with a recognizable identity. They introduced a series of guidelines directed towards the humanization of living. They actually criticised rigid modernist buildings, proposing a different morphology of residential block architecture in New Belgrade. In these designs, they affirmed and improved the organization of apartments, and they embedded the idea of the development concept that takes into account the needs of a household which change over time (Marušić, 1975: 79; Manević, 1974).

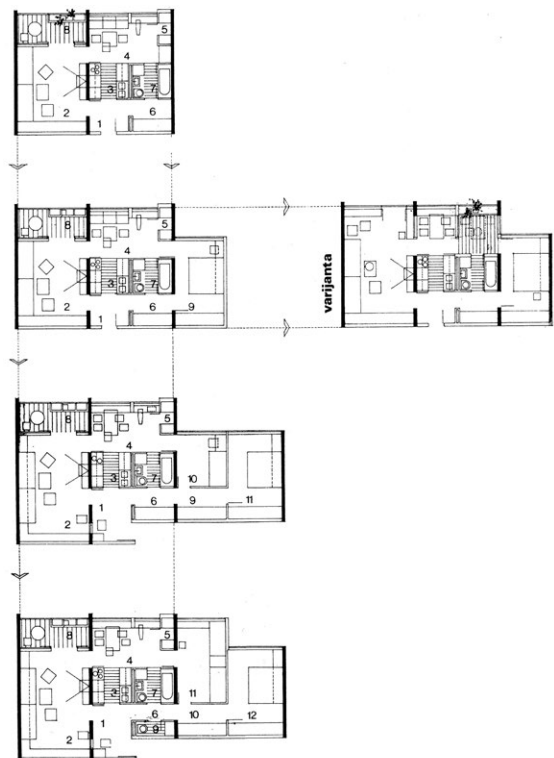


Figure 1. Blocks 61 and 62, New Belgrade, 1972-76
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)

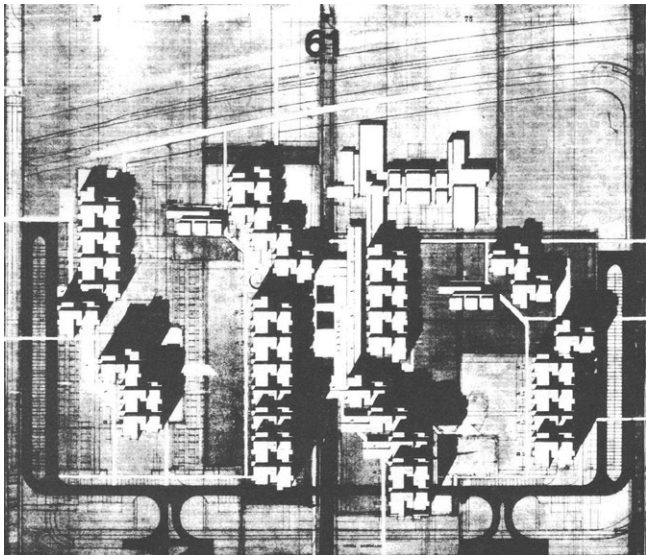


Figure 2. Blocks 61 and 62, northern part, New Belgrade, project, 1975
(Source: *Arhitektura urbanizam* No.74-77, 1975, p.79)

One of the important themes of their interest crystalized during their work on these designs, as well as their own poetics which they built up attempting to harmonize and synthesize art, science and architectural techniques. It was in the field of an apartment's function, but also in the model of education at the Faculty of Architecture, that D. Marušić noticed the specificity of the Belgrade school of architecture, which he also promoted as the editor of a special issue of the prestigious journal *Arhitektura urbanizam* No.74-77 in December 1975. He made a research undertaking in the journal in four sections: The Environment of the Theme; Belgrade School of Architecture; Research and the Materialization; and Design, gathering brilliant architects, theoreticians, contemporaries, professors, practitioners in one journal issue (Mate Bajlon, Branko Aleksić, Milan Lojanica, Vladimir Bjelikov, Miša David, Mihajlo Čanak, Branislav Milenković, etc.). He showed the most successful, mainly materialized designs of the 1960s and '70s (Marušić, 1975). After a year of theoretically and practically dealing with this theme, D. Marušić designed the characteristic elements of the Belgrade apartment: the concept of continuous space enabled by a skeleton structural system; the organization of space by division into the living room and night zone; underlining the flow-circular scheme; joining living spaces; and flexibility. This is the development concept that takes into account different family needs and communication, etc. (Anđelković, 2013). Being constantly involved in joint professional and research work and thinking about the Belgrade school of housing, Milenija Marušić also made a similar contribution as an editor in the 1988 edition of the journal *Katalog stanova Jugoslovenske narodne armije (JNA)* / the Catalogue of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) Apartments. Given that, at that time, the JNA built apartments for its members across the then Yugoslavia, the specificity of the Belgrade apartment in this catalogue is recognized primarily because of the norms given for the minimum area of the residential and common spaces in residential buildings, which actually stemmed from the characteristics of the Belgrade housing scheme (Marušić, 1988).

ARCHITECTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN PLANNING

A powerful penetration of postmodernist ideas into the Serbian architectural space was felt at the end of the 1980s. Criticism of modernism, i.e. of its simplified interpretation through international style, often resulted in the vulgarization of modernism through ornamental expression. This was the time on the Serbian architectural scene when dialogues and debates were initiated and different themes became current again, resulting in important professional events: international competitions for the revitalization of New Belgrade (1986); a theoretical study entitled *Experiences of the Past* by Miloš Perović, (1985); and professional talks on modernist and postmodernist architecture held in the Urban Development Planning Centre (CEP) during the 1980s (Perović, 1985; Milašinović Marić, 1999:51-65). Themes related to urban morphology were also initiated: a return to the classical motifs of the city, streets, squares, atmosphere, diversity, and structure. The slogan expressing the new requirements placed before the architects was "Context, continuity, identity". New settlements with tendencies towards the humanization of modernism and towards dialogue with "Sitte's" classical urbanism were built as a result of the change in the course of building Belgrade. Examples of such settlements include the Banjica settlement (1971-78) designed by architects Slobodan Drinjaković, Branislav Karadžić and Aleksandar Stjepanović, where the residential blocks form a street in which pedestrian and vehicle traffic flows are segregated, according to the modernist humanization of the Smithson couple; Višnjička banja Residential Settlement (1978-82) designed by architects Ljiljana and Dragoljub Bakić, where the pedestrian and vehicle traffic flows are segregated within the blocks positioned circularly, but without forming city streets; or block 19a, (1975-81) designed by architects Milan Lojanica, Predrag Cagić, Borivoje Jovanović and Radisav Marić, a settlement that stemmed from the orthogonal scheme of New Belgrade with the buildings positioned diagonally and with the pedestrian spaces between long residential blocks. The dialogue of Modernism versus Postmodernism is clearly reflected in the design of the Cerak Vinogradi Settlement (Figure 3) for which Milenija and Darko Marušić won the competition in 1977 (with Nedeljko Borovnica) and which was materialized according to their design. Working on this design, they developed their own architectural credo by compiling theoretical postulates, drawing together knowledge about modernism and postmodernism, which fitted into the trends of the second modernism or neomodernism by its specificity. This trend is characteristic of the last decades of the twentieth century, which, after a short period of postmodernism as a form of re-examination, criticism and revision, became a specific continuation of the development modernist trends (Klotz, 1995).

The settlement contains residential buildings, the settlement centre and the Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western neighbourhood centres, an elementary school, children's institution, and landscaping (1978-1987). The Cerak Vinogradi Settlement is the embodiment of the concepts that occupied them at that time in conceiving the space of new settlements: the issue of the humanization of collective housing; the formation of elements of urbanity

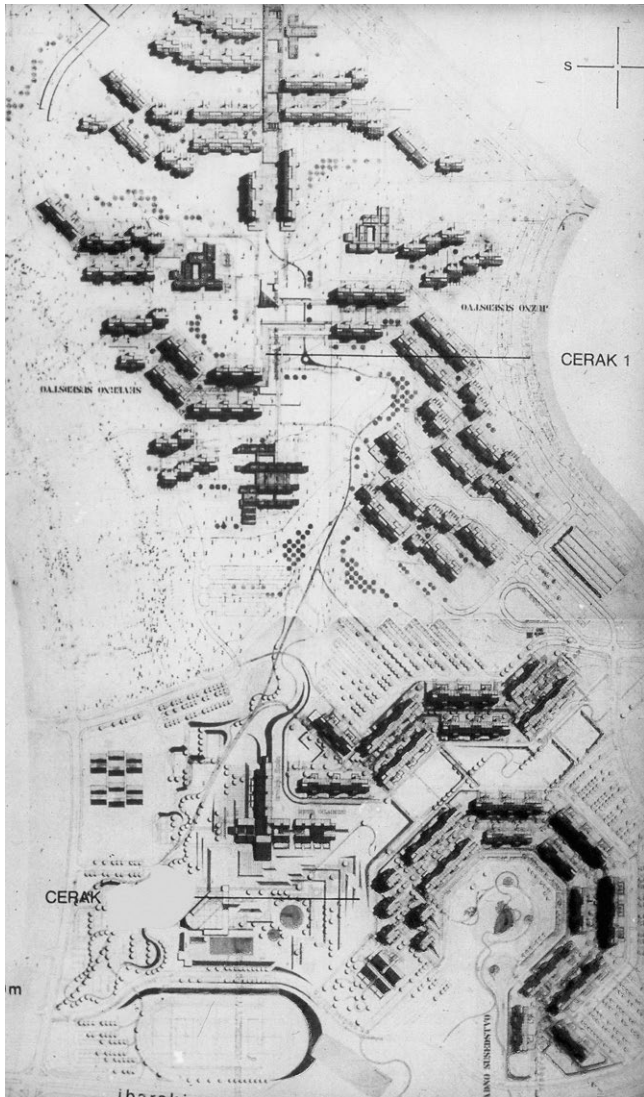


Figure 3. Cerak Vinogradi Settlement, Belgrade, 1978-1987
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)

in the newly built environments; relationships between the neighbourhoods; the design of pedestrian streets; the use of more familiar names and materials; and the creation of a vivid urban structure of living and working in a small city. Particularly characteristic is the urban composition in a circular form which organically stemmed from the morphology of the terrain and by which the location's inclination is managed and a small and specific urban ensemble formed, thus opposing the linear, radial or diagonal schematic models of modernist urbanism. They formed the

streets, taking into account the terrain's morphology, doing this separately for pedestrians and for vehicles. They were not slaves to literally copying the matrix of a post-industrial city. They avoided the traps of simplified and depersonalized modernism, particularly the interpretation that "*The house is a machine for living*", but they also avoided the rigid division of purposes and functions. They designed an authentic urban ensemble through this procedure whereby the buildings and their surroundings are integrally connected into a single concept. The incompactness of forms is a response to the uniformity of modernist architecture, while the pitched roofs and conventional bricks are opposed to the contemporary technology of prefabricated construction.

The design of the Cerak Settlement was the first design in the contemporary history of Serbian architecture which, owing to its comprehensiveness and the engagement of the Marušić couple, received protected status in 2014, as a valuable urban and architectural ensemble of the modernism epoch, this being a special recognition for the excellence of this achievement. The Cerak Vinogradi residential settlement is one of the materialized designs from the former Yugoslavia that has passed the selection for the big exhibition entitled "Yugoslav Modern Architecture (1945-1990)" to be held in the MoMA Gallery in New York in the spring of 2018 (Mučibabić, 2016).

The Marušić couple also expressed their architectural attitudes in smaller designs from that time, such as a villa in Opatija (1984-5), which they designed together with Josip Pilasanović (Figure 4) for a high military official. The intersection of the modern organization of a villa and architectural design in the spirit of the postmodern age, with reminiscences of a classical architectural repertoire, contextually correspond to the ambience. The integration of the villa into the landscape underlined by the shape of the garden and the marina was achieved by organic arched forms and the volume of the villa of Mediterranean whiteness (Mladenović, 1989: 21-24). Their smaller designs also include a double-family home in Dedinje, at the Venac site (1990-91) which was not built, but in which they dealt with the concept of duality consistently implemented in the functional organization and design. Continuing the initiated theme of playing with architecture, through the issues of identity, links between architecture and urbanism and housing of higher standard, the Marušić couple designed and built the Cvečara residential group (1990-1993, together with Željko Gašparović, Figure 5) in Topčider Square in the early 1990s. Their knowledge and experience were summarized in the Cvečara settlement, while a fresh and exemplary model of an elite housing type with emphasized elements of comfort, humanism and suitability was created. The free-standing buildings positioned in an urban manner in three parallel rows with pedestrian paths, stairways and accesses indicate the authors' comprehensive architectural method. The atmosphere and richness of the ambience are emphasized by well-studied architectural elements: windows, doors, balconies, bay windows, railings, columns and pergolas, with a series of details on which the architects insisted. Everything is integrated in a proportional manner, while diversity is underlined by a nuanced play of details on the building facades (Milašinović Marić, 2002: 113; Marić, 2015: 76-77).



Figure 4. Villa in Opatija, Croatia, 1984-5
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)



Figure 5. Cvečara residential group, Belgrade, 1990-93
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)

CONTEXTUALITY

Being essentially contextual, the architecture of the Marušić team has always been different and new and a response to the issues of the urban, the architectural, the contemporary and the humane. The mixed residential and office building in Bulevar oslobođenja in Novi Sad (1989-1998, Figure 6), architecturally designed in the spirit of neomodernism, is a meaningful and articulate example where they, led by the idea of forming a multi-layered living ambience, based the concept, design and materialization of the building on the relationship with the existing surroundings, thus creating a space evoking the architectural history of Novi Sad. The higher quality of housing units adapted to the age structure of the beneficiaries, and it is ideally divisible according to the transformation of families according to the generation rhythm. The one-storey annex of the main building, with a colonnade, provides an additional urban quality of the semi-open block, and also provides continuity with the contents and the idea of a street with shops (Milašinić Marić, 2000: 89-91).

Early in the third millennium, the Marušić team produced one of the most poetic buildings in the Serbian architecture of that time, an exceptional example of the silent and unobtrusive elegance of the edge construction design in Belgrade and Serbia. This is a mixed residential and office building in King Aleksandar Street (1989-2000, Figure 7)

designed as one of five buildings in a new residential block, within the then-current concept according to which multiple meaning and multi-layerness (characteristics of the urban milieu) can be achieved by the language used by different authors in their urban planning concept (Milašinić Marić, 2000: 85-87; Kovačević, 2003: 54-55; Marić, 2015: 82-83). The poetic and visual quality of the design, almost an ode to their many years of working together, is in a completely reduced concept of a dual code, like two harmonized languages which interweave, talk with each other and harmonize themselves in each segment of architectural thinking. On its street side, the building brings the sense of reduced calmness: two buildings, two entrances, two different organizations of apartments inside them. Contrary to the delicate and fine weaving on the face of the building, the courtyard side of the building is concave, expressive, bending in one segment around the existing tree, as if the authors wanted to point out another parallel flow in the life of the city through a deconstructive procedure.



Figure 6. Mixed residential and office building, Novi Sad, 1989-1998
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)

Milenija and Darko Marušić have remained deeply tied to the Cerak Vinogradi Settlement throughout their professional activities. In 2004, they designed the Multifunctional Centre and Orthodox Temple (Figure 8), conceived with the intention to round off the concept of a small city with commercial/business and spiritual content, but these designs were not materialized. The Master Plan of Belgrade (1985, 2003) envisaged the Multifunctional Centre as one of the seven big centres in smaller urban ensembles, with plural contents such as mega supermarkets, restaurants, entertainment, recreation and offices to be located at the edge of the settlement conceptually deriving from a triangle-shaped plot, within the context of place and time. The use of contemporary materials: metal panels, as well as inox and wooden panels, indicates a new architectural layer in space which they once again designed using postmodern language. The elongated ship-like volume of the Multifunctional Centre and an office tower that rounds off the composition indicates a neomodernistic procedure, as well as elements of deconstructivism in architecture. The Orthodox Temple they designed was to be located in the centre of the settlement, in accordance with the principles of contextuality and in harmony with the time. They designed an archetypal form of a church-house with a frontage on which the church bell vertical is emphasized. By its simplicity and modesty, the cubic, purified form of the building with calm lines and while limestone facade indicates their attitude that spirituality must not be disturbed by a pretentious form.



Figure 7. Mixed residential and office building, Belgrade, 1989-2000
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)

Architects Milenija and Darko Marušić had a unique opportunity to deal with public buildings in their design for the Metals Bank in Novi Sad (1999-2007, Figure 9). This exceptional building is an embodiment of their architectural credo recognized in: the expression of contextuality, and logic in the architectural and urban structure; duality between two panels interwoven into a harmonious ensemble; dialogue between modernism and postmodernism; the care for precision and detail; aesthetic and artistic considerations based on knowledge and the communicativeness and openness of the architectural form; as well as recognized

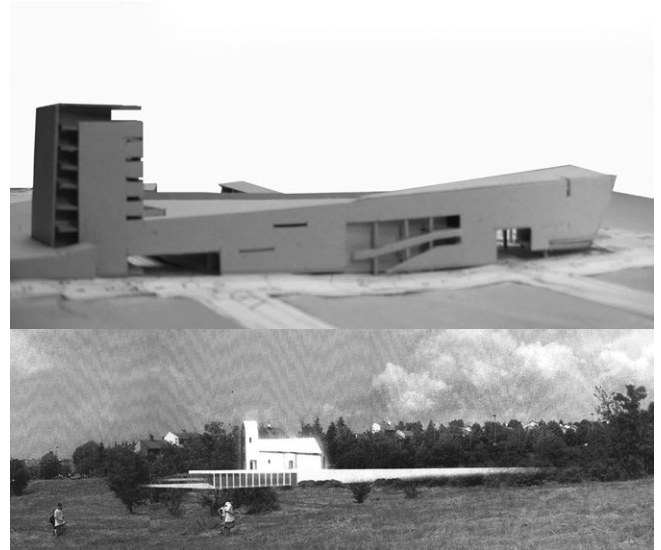


Figure 8. Multifunctional Centre, Orthodox Temple, Belgrade, projects, 2004
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)

in a fully implemented architectural idea. The contextuality of the Metals Bank is expressed in a volumetric, almost sculptural form with two wings in stone panels that wrap the tender glass body of the building in a dialogue between the modern and traditional urban settings. The archness, movement and expressiveness of the building carries the observer, whether looking at it from the outer side of the building or experiencing it from the inside, into the world of artistic experience of space, thus confirming the thesis about architecture as an artistic discipline (Kovačević, 2007: 21). Architecture as an *imprint of place in time* is the initial and has remained the final idea of this building (Milašinović Marić, 2007:11).

The “Blue Bird” kindergarten (2009-2011, Figure 10) in the Cerak Vinogradi Settlement, the last in the series of built buildings designed by the Marušić couple, is particularly binding and stimulating in a symbolic and specific way. The site of the kindergarten as a visual and essential development point of the settlement ensemble is a result of a concept inspired by the Swedish proverb which says that “a child is taught by other children, the teacher and the professor”. Dealing with these *three teachers* of a child growing up, the Marušić couple designed a kindergarten composed of two segments with an interconnection, a playground and a skating rink organized around the existing olive tree as the central point. The courtyard was conceived to encourage children to play and be in contact with nature, with active interaction as a part of a comprehensive architectural concept. For them, the theme was challenging, but there was much enjoyment in designing a space for children. The contextuality, and plurality as a stimulating dialogue and an open communication with the beneficiaries – children, are the components of architecture stemming from everything the architects couple had done previously, but they were expressed in a completely different, fresh and original consonance between the two authors (Marušić, 2012: 81-91).

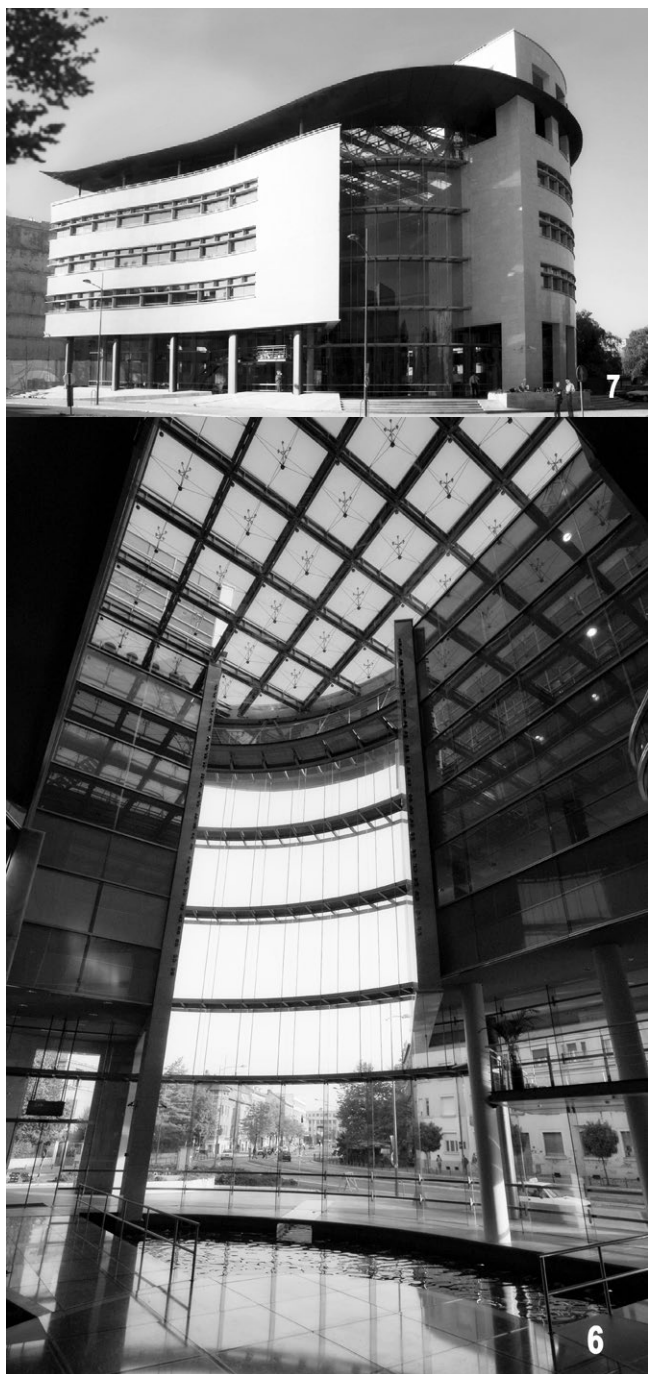


Figure 9. Metals Bank, Novi Sad, 1999-2007
(Source: From documentation of Milenija Marušić)

CONCLUSIONS

The substantial and affirmed architectural body of work by architect couple Milenija and Darko Marušić is, by its specificities, characteristics and themes, an indicative example for interpreting trends in Serbia's Belgrade architectural scene in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Being essentially plural, their work, as a reflection of the time, is based on several footholds: theory, well-founded dialogue between modernism and postmodernism, and personal poetics in which "belief" is based on the contextuality, humanism and ethics from which they have drawn the stimuli for different and diverse creations and interpretations. From



Figure 10. "Blue Bird" kindergarten, Belgrade, 2009-2011
(Source: The documentation of Milenija Marušić)

the very beginning of their career in architecture - their first designs for blocks 61 and 62 in New Belgrade, they have taken the path of thinking about contextuality and searching for their own identity, with the idea of finding a universal model of humane space for man, whereby they have constantly listened for the pulsing of contemporary trends that alternated in the second half of the twentieth century. The design for the Cerak Vinogradi Settlement indicates the architectural paradigm shift (postmodernism, neomodernism) at all stages of development and over time, as well as the strength of the professional and social responsibility of these architects, which stemmed from the ethics well-founded in their personal commitment. The Marušić couple has created examples of exemplary architecture in the field of housing both with regard to their architectural design, contribution to the development, and affirmation of the Belgrade school of housing with regard to their relationship towards architecture and its role in society.

The plurality of the dialogue between modernism and postmodernism stemming from the spirit of time is also woven into their attitude towards the double meaning. It reflects their activity which constantly pulsates through interwoven and winding flow based on the ethics of respect for the persons and their individuality. The openness for communication, for the public and for criticism comes from this milieu. Furthermore, the meditation and contemplation stemming from the links between architecture and art are also noticeable in their architecture.

There are few personalities in contemporary Serbian architecture who have achieved such remarkable success in the field of architecture in the Serbia architectural space, cultivating a dose of poetics and enthusiasm in parallel with rational and functional perfection and a well-thought-out

concept. They have created their works between two poles: the modern and the traditional; and the modernist function versus the surroundings postmodernistically harmonized with man. Milenija and Darko Marušić have always been different, original, relentlessly consistent and in love with architecture. Their activities confirm the thesis that modern architecture and urbanism in their questioning, re-examination and contestation have no alternative because the modern architectural and urban structures, like modern art, music and theatre, are reflections of our time in which proper models and answers have to be found.

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