

## Pregledni znanstveni rad

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### **Arhitekt i grad – dubrovački opus Nikole Dobrovića**

## Review scientific article

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### **The Architect and the City – Nikola Dobrović's Opus in Dubrovnik**

Članak obuhvaća pregled i analizu projekata obiteljskih vila i hotela arhitekta Dobrovića, nastalih u tridesetim godinama 20. stoljeća na području grada i okolice Dubrovnika. Vrlo izrazita funkcionalistička arhitektura, oblikovana kubističkom manirom, na tragu je suvremene interpretacije znakova dubrovačkih fortifikacija i kultiviranog kamenog pejzaža. Autor stoga zaključuje da dubrovački opus Nikole Dobrovića ne treba isključivo promatrati kao dio internacionalne trajektorije moderne arhitekture, niti samo kao njezinu egzotičnu mediteransku inačicu, nego i u kontekstu nekonceptualnih i bezvremenskih arhitektonskih zanimanja formom, konstrukcijom, materijalnošću, prostorom i mjestom.

*Ključne riječi:*

Nikola Dobrović; arhitekt; dubrovački opus

The article contains an overview and analysis of architect Nikola Dobrović's designs for family villas and hotels in the 1930s in and around the city of Dubrovnik. His highly functionalist architecture, designed in the cubist style, makes use of modern interpretations of the characteristics of Dubrovnik's fortifications and its cultivated stone landscape. The author concludes that Nikola Dobrović's opus in Dubrovnik should not be observed exclusively as part of an international trend in modern architecture or its exotic Mediterranean offshoot, but that it should be viewed within the context of the non-conceptual and timeless architectural interest in form, construction, materiality, space, and location.

*Key words:*

Nikola Dobrović; architect; opus in Dubrovnik

*Prostorna umetnost daleko  
nadmašuje sve ostale.  
To može verovati svaki  
arhitekt i svaki  
ljubitelj arhitekture.<sup>1</sup>*

*Nikola Dobrović*

*Spatial art far outstrips  
all others. Every architect and  
every lover of  
architecture can  
believe this.<sup>1</sup>*

*Nikola Dobrović*

## 1. I STARI I NOVI DUBROVNIK

Kao baš sve u vezi s Nikolom Dobrovićem, i kontekst njegova dolaska u Dubrovnik – ranih 1930-ih – bio je prilično neobičan. U novinskim člancima prikupljenima u knjižici znakovita naziva *Dubrovnik bez maske, uzaludni napori i teška razočaranja*<sup>2</sup>, općinski konzervator Kosta Strajnić opisao je kako je pozvao mladog arhitekta da objasni

## 1. DUBROVNIK, OLD AND NEW

Just as with everything else connected to Nikola Dobrović, the context of his arrival in Dubrovnik, in the early 1930's, was fairly unusual. In a series of newspaper articles collected in a booklet tellingly entitled *Dubrovnik Unmasked, efforts in vain and serious disappointments*<sup>2</sup>, municipality conservator Kosta Strajnić describes how he invited the young archi-



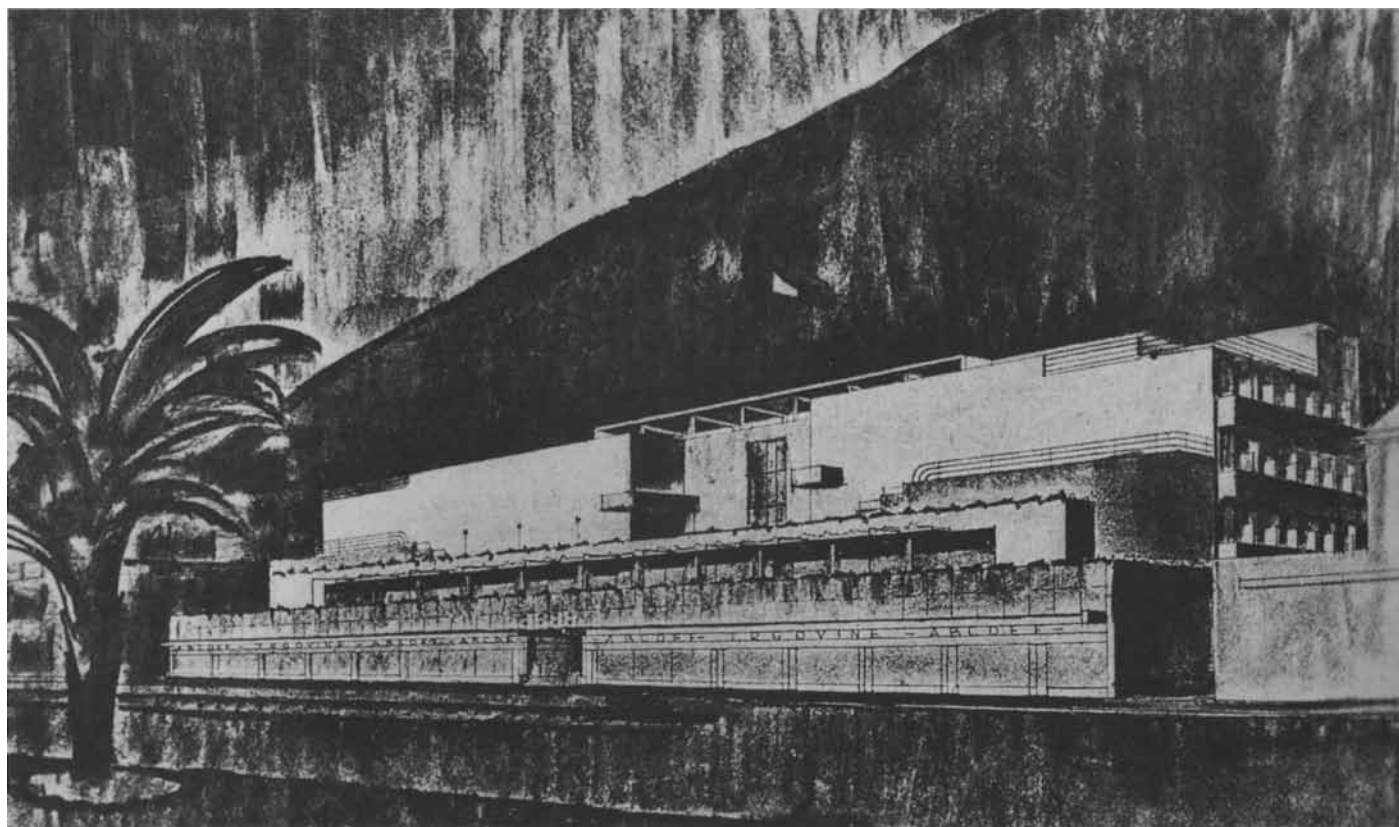
Dubrovnik, pogled sa Srđa, razglednica s početka 20. stoljeća

Dubrovnik, view from Srđ, early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard

javnosti i vlastima što je to moderna arhitektura. Naime, Dobrović je bio najmlađi u grupi intelektualaca koja je ustala u Strajnićeovu obranu na suđenju koje je protiv njega pokrenuto zbog oštre kritike upućene projektantu hotela *Excelsior* na Pločama, u neposrednoj blizini „starog“ Dubrovnika. Kad je Strajnić historicistički projekt javno ocijenio umjetnički nekvalitetnim i neprikladnim s obzirom na važnost Dubrovnika, projektant ga je tužio za uvredu. Usprkos intervenciji kipara Ivana Meštrovića, arhitekata Josipa Plečnika i Ede Šena te slikara Jovana Bijelića i Petra Dobrovića – arhitektova starijeg brata, sud je Strajnića proglasio krivim, da bi viši sud u Splitu tu odluku poništio.

A da bi zorno predočio kakva bi to arhitektura bila prikladna za „novi“ Dubrovnik, Strajnić je u

tect to explain to the public and the government what modern architecture was. Dobrović was the youngest among a group of intellectuals who had stood in Strajnić's defence during court proceedings initiated against him for his sharp criticism of the designer of the Hotel *Excelsior* in Ploče, in the immediate vicinity of "old" Dubrovnik. When Strajnić publicly rated the Historicist project artistically substandard and inappropriate considering the importance of Dubrovnik, the designer sued him for slander. Despite intervention from sculptor Ivan Meštrović, architects Josip Plečnik and Edo Šena, and painters Jovan Bijelić and Petar Dobrović – the architect's older brother – the court found Strajnić guilty, however the high court in Split later overturned this decision.



Kursalon, Pile, 1929. Perspektivni pogled s Pila i perspektivni izgled prve kavanske terase.

Kursalon, Pile, 1929. The prospective view from Pile and the prospective appearance of the first café terrace.

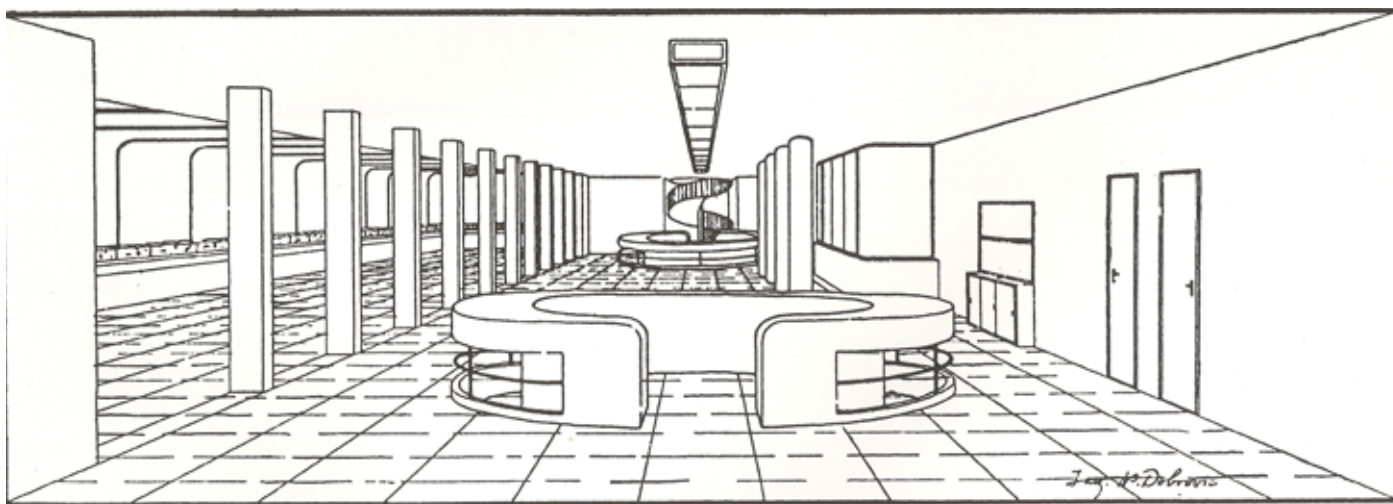
istoj knjižici objavio Dobrovićev alternativni projekt za *Kursalon*, hotel s bazenom na Pilama. *Kako bi se investitor odgovorio od historicističke gradnje*<sup>3</sup>, Dobrović je predložio radikalnu kuću-stroj, a drama o modernoj arhitekturi u Dalmaciji nastavila se:

Dobrovićevi crteži velike građevine s ravnim krovom, širokim slijepim zidovima i stepenasto izmaknutim terasama u neposrednoj blizini najmonumentalnijeg dijela dubrovačkih zidina izazvali su neočekivanu buru u kulturnoj javnosti. Prva javna polemika u Dalmaciji o odnosu „nove“ arhitekture i „stare“ urbane strukture, između Strajnića i splitskog novinara Vinka Brajevića, sakupljena je u drugoj zabavnoj knjižici naslovljenoj *Misli o čuvanju dalmatinske arhitekture*<sup>4</sup>. Mišljenja izražena s „progressivne“ i „konzervativne“ strane nastavila su se periodički pojavljivati u sličnim raspravama sve do naših dana. Nikola Dobrović ušao je u Dubrovnik s projektom kojem nije bila suđena realizacija, ali na zaista „velika vrata“.

Nakon školovanja i uspješne prakse u Pragu, potom serije uspjeha na projektnim natjecanjima u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji, Dobrović se trajno nastanio u Dubrovniku oko 1933. godine. Do kraja desetljeća uspio je tamo sagraditi niz kuća-strojeva, koje da-

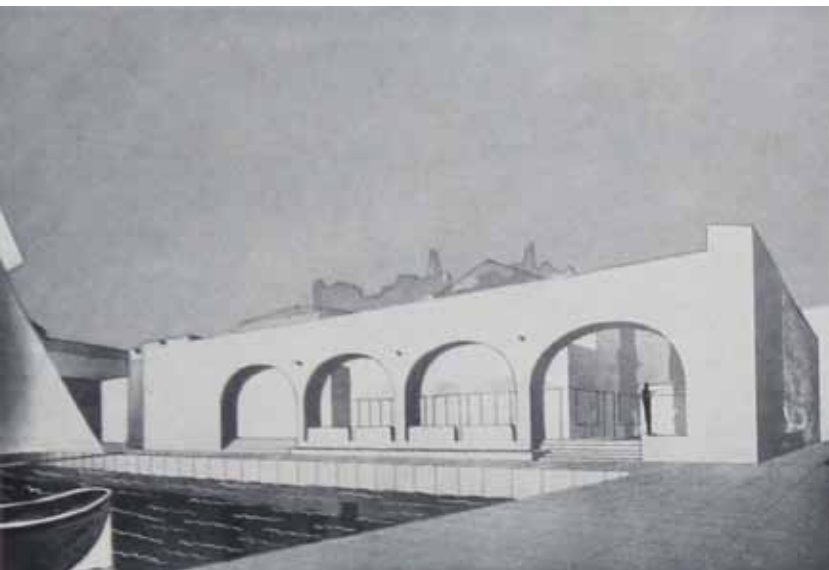
In order to clearly portray the kind of architecture that would be appropriate for the “new” Dubrovnik, Strajnić, in this same booklet, published Dobrović’s alternate project for *Kursalon*, a hotel in Pile with a swimming pool. *In order to dissuade the investor from Historicist construction*,<sup>3</sup> Dobrović suggested a radical house-machine, and the drama of modern architecture in Dalmatia continued:

Dobrović’s drawings of a large building with a flat roof, wide blind walls, and gradually offset terraces in the immediate vicinity of the most monumental part of Dubrovnik’s walls caused an unexpected commotion among the cultural public. The first public discussion in Dalmatia on the relationship between “new” architecture and “old” urban structures, between Strajnić and Split journalist Vinko Brajević, are collected in a second entertaining booklet entitled *Thoughts on the Preservation of Dalmatian Architecture*.<sup>4</sup> Opinions expressed from the “progressive” and “conservative” side have continued to appear periodically in similar discussions until our own time. Nikola Dobrović entered Dubrovnik with a project that was not destined to be realized. Despite this, his entrance was truly grand.



Kursalon, Pile, 1929. perspektivni izgled prve kavanske terase

Kursalon, Pile, 1929. the prospective appearance of the first café terrace.



Natječajni projekt Gradske kavane u nekadašnjem arsenalu, prva nagrada, 1932. Pogled iz luke i prema luci iz do danas zazidanog krajnjeg desnog luka arsenala.



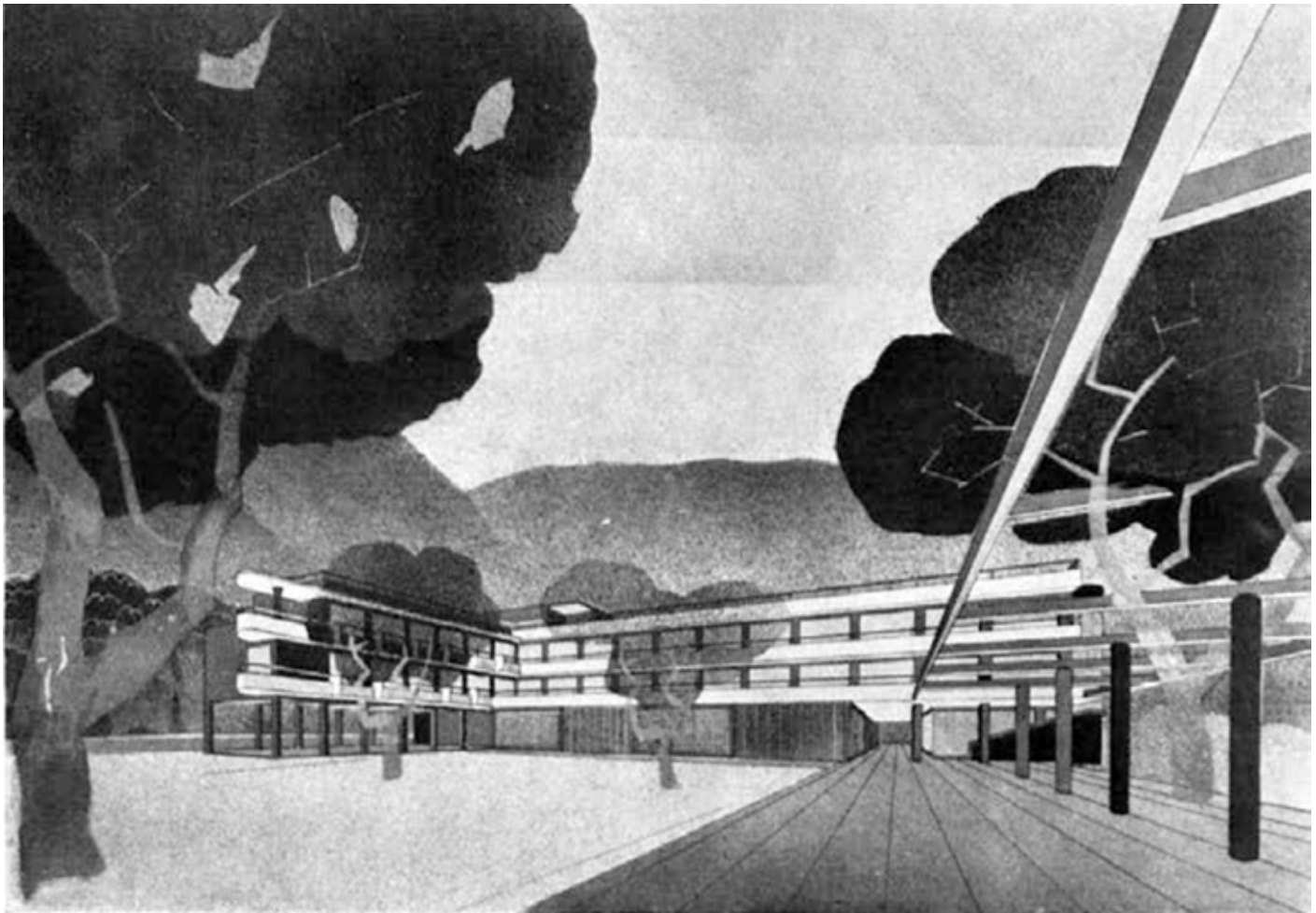
Public tender for the design of Gradska Kavana in the former arsenal, first place, 1932. View from the harbour and towards the harbour from the walled far right arch of the arsenal.

nas prepoznamo kao djela herojskog perioda moderne arhitekture s određenom „dodanom vrijednošću“. Njegov *umjetnički jezik* Theo van Doesburg opisao je *regionalno izvedenim*<sup>5</sup>. Istodobno je za Kostu Strajnića njegova arhitektura bila *najsuvremenija, u najboljem smislu te riječi*<sup>6</sup>.

Dobrovićeva su izvedena djela u Dubrovniku i okolici<sup>7</sup> ova: *spomenik Viktoru Dyku* na otoku Lopudu (1932.), *Grand hotel* s parkom na Lopudu (1932.-36.), *Vila dr. Naprsteka* u Srebrenom (1937.), *Vila Rusalka* na Boninovu (1938.), dogradnja Vile Wolff *Opus X* i tri armiranobetonske pergole *Parnassos-Olympos-Kosmos* u njezinu vrtu u Uvali Lapad (1939.), *Vila Vesna* na Lopudu (1939.), *Vila Adonis* na Drugom konalu (1939.-40.), *Hostel Ferijalnog saveza* na Lapadu (1940.) i *Vila Svid* u Zatonu (1940.). Obiteljske kuće nazivao je „vilama“ i nadijevao im imena iz staroslavenske i grčke mitologije sam arhitekt. Uz nabrojene novogradnje, Dobrović je 1937. godine izravnao kameni pod u atriju gotičko-renesansne *Palače Sponza*, decentno ga istaknuvši iz povijesne strukture umetanjem paralelnih traka iz

After his schooling and successful training in Prague, and following a series of successes on project tenders in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Dobrović moved permanently to Dubrovnik around 1933. By the end of the decade, he had succeeded in building a series of house-machines there, which are today recognized as the work of a heroic period in modern architecture with a particular “added value”. His *artistic language* was described by Theo van Doesburg as *regionally executed*.<sup>5</sup> To Kosta Strajnić, his architecture was simultaneously *the most modern, in the best sense of the word*.<sup>6</sup>

Dobrović’s works executed in Dubrovnik and its surroundings<sup>7</sup> are as follows: The *Monument to Viktor Dyk* on the island of Lopud (1932), the *Grand Hotel* and park on Lopud (1932-1936), the *Villa of Dr. Naprstek* in Srebreno (1937), *Villa Rusalka* at Boninovo (1938), the adaptation of Villa Wolff *Opus X* and three reinforced-concrete pergolas *Parnassos-Olympos-Kozmos* in its garden in Lapad Bay (1939), *Villa Vesna* on Lapad (1940), and *Vila Svid* in Zaton (1940). He called family houses “villas” and gave them na-



Grand hotel na Lopudu, ilustracija teksta Koste Strajnića „Savremena arhitektura Jugoslovena, Nikola Dobrović i njegovo značenje”<sup>8</sup> prevedenog u ljubljanskome časopisu „Arhitektura”, br. 4, 1932. iz češkog časopisa „Architekt”, br. 10, 1930.

The Grand Hotel on Lopud, illustration of a text by Kosta Strajnić entitled “Modern South Slavic Architecture, Nikola Dobrović and his significance”,<sup>8</sup> translated in the Ljubljana journal “Arhitektura”, issue 4, 1932, from the Czech journal “Architekt”, issue 10, 1930.

crnih oblutaka, te je zatvorio jedan bočni luk atrija betonskim zidom izbušenim staklenim prizmama.

Dubrovački opus Nikole Dobrovića treba promatrati niti isključivo kao dio internacionalne trajektorije moderne arhitekture, niti samo kao njezinu egzotičnu mediteransku inačicu, nego i u kontekstu nekonceptualnih i bezvremenskih arhitektonskih zanimanja formom, konstrukcijom, materijalnošću, prostorom i mjestom. Brojnost projekata stisnutih u kratkom periodu i na homogenom teritoriju osigurava kvantitativne uvjete za takav pristup, a vremen-

mes from old Slavic and Greek mythology. In addition to the enumerated structures, in 1937 Dobrović flattened the stone floor in the atrium of the Gothic-Renaissance *Sponza Palace*, modestly emphasizing it from the historical structure with the addition of parallel lines of black pebbles. He also closed one of the lateral arches of the atrium with a concrete wall drilled through with glass prisms.

Nikola Dobrović’s opus in Dubrovnik should be observed neither as part of the international trajectory of modern architecture exclusively, nor as

ska udaljenost s kojih te projekte promatramo već je dovoljna da bismo djela funkcionalističke arhitekture mogli gledati istim očima kakvim gledamo barokne crkve, srednjovjekovne zidine, antičke ruševine i prirodne pojave koje tek nalikuju arhitekturi.

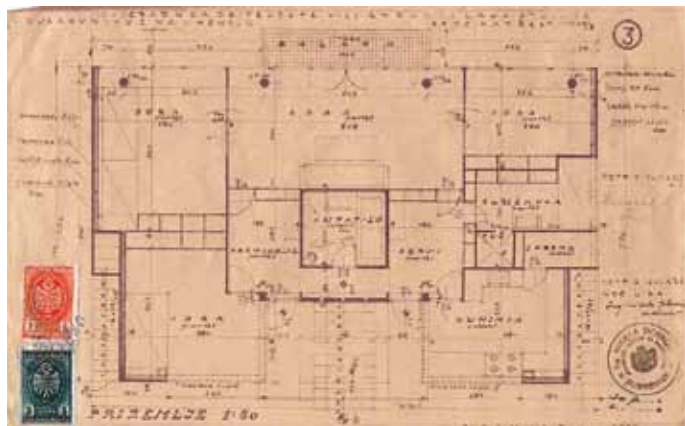
*Arhitektura nije ništa drugo,  
no logični izraz dispozicije  
i primenjenih konstruktivnih elemenata.  
Zgrada svojim uravnoteženim formama,  
ritmom svojih linija i zidnih površina odgovara pot-  
puno svojoj svrsi i svojim izgledom uresno će dopuniti  
svoju okolinu na Drugom Konalu.<sup>9</sup>*

*Nikola Dobrović*

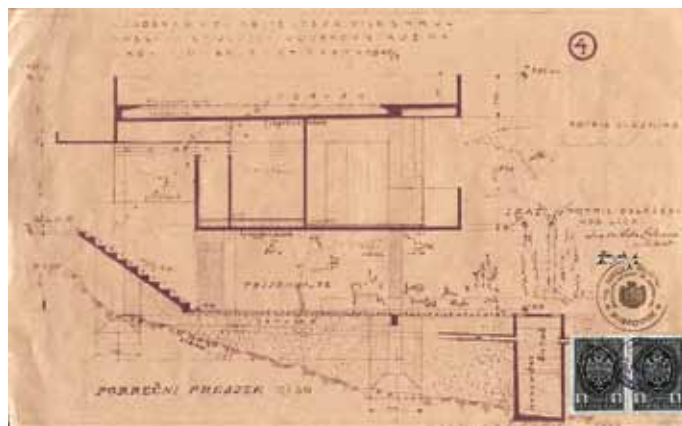
its mere exotic Mediterranean interpretation. It should be viewed in the context of non-conceptual and timeless architectural interest in form, construction, materiality, space, and place. The number of projects compacted into a short period across a homogenous territory ensured the quantitative conditions for such an approach, and the temporal distance from which we observe these projects is already significant enough for us to observe these works of functionalist architecture with the same eyes we use to observe Baroque churches, Medieval walls, ancient ruins, and natural occurrences that only appear architectural.

*The architecture is nothing more than the logical expression of disposition and applied constructive elements.  
The building, through its balanced forms,  
the rhythm of its lines and wall space,  
is perfectly suited to its purpose,  
and its appearance will make a decorative addition to  
its surroundings on Drugi Konal.<sup>9</sup>*

*Nikola Dobrović*



*Vila Adonis, tlocrt srednje etaže („prizemlja”), 1939.  
Villa Adonis, floor plan of the middle floor (“ground floor”), 1939.*



*Vila Adonis, poprečni presjek, 1939.  
Villa Adonis, transverse cross-section, 1939.*

## II. KONSTRUKCIJA I FORMA

Poprečni presjek Vile Adonis manifest je funkcionalizma prilagođen lokalnim uvjetima. Volumen podignut nad otvorenim trijemom na četirima armiranobetonskim stupovima svojim stražnjim dijelom naslonjen je na vrtni dolac. Armiranobetonska konstrukcija, trakasti prozori, ravan krov, iskustvo prostora u horizontalnim i vertikalnim smjerovima: lako prepoznamo Le Corbusierova načela nove arhitekture<sup>10</sup>. No ima u ovom presjeku i sasvim originalnih tehnoloških refleksija. Krovna armiranobetonska ploča upuštena je između masivnih greda; nad tako nastalim plitkim bazenima bio je izveden sekundarni drveni pod, a prostor između punio se vodom koja je služila kao toplinski izolator. Takav dvostruki pod nije se dugo održao ni na jednom od Dobrovićevih ravnih krovova. Najmehaničkiji as-

## II. CONSTRUCTION AND FORM

The transverse cross-section of Villa Adonis is a manifest of functionalism adjusted to local conditions. The rear part of the volume raised above an open portico on four reinforced concrete columns leans upon the garden bed. The reinforced concrete construction, elongated windows, flat roof, the effect of the space in horizontal and vertical directions: it is easy to recognise Le Corbusier's principles of new architecture.<sup>10</sup> However, this cross-section also features technological considerations that are entirely original. The reinforced concrete slab of the roof is lowered between two massive beams; above the shallow pools created in this manner, there is a secondary wood floor, and the space between is filled with water, which serves as insulation. This kind of double floor did not last long



Vila Adonis, trijem, 2011.

Villa Adonis, portico, 2011.





Vila Adonis, pogled s donjeg doca i prolaz pod kućom s trijema na gornji dolac vrta i dvostruki ulaz u kuću, 2011.  
Vila Adonis, pogled s donjeg doca i prolaz pod kućom s trijema na gornji dolac vrta i dvostruki ulaz u kuću, 2011.

pekt njegovih strojeva za stanovanje tako je podbacio, hrabar eksperiment neuspio u pionirskim uvjetima izvedbe i održavanja.

I tlocrt Vile Adonis ilustrira radikalni funkcionalizam: podjela konstrukcije na nosive i nošene elemente, minimalna potrošnja suvremenih materijala, racionalna dispozicija. Kupaonica u centru stana, poput nekog prostornog negativa, služi kao regulator tlocrtne organizacije, ostatak prostorija podijeljen je monier pločama i ugrađenim ormari- ma. Kao u nekom strojarskom nacrtu, svi parametri potpuno su određeni. Princip *Existenzminimuma* primijenjen je mehaničkom preciznošću, kao da se radi o projektu socijalnog stanovanja. Pa što onda čini minimalno dizajniranu obiteljsku kuću vilom?

on a single one of Dobrović's flat roofs, and thus the most mechanical aspect of his house-machines failed, a brave yet unsuccessful experiment in pioneering conditions of execution and maintenance.

The floor plan of Villa Adonis is also an illustration of radical functionalism: the division of the construction into bearing and borne elements, the minimal use of modern materials, a rational disposition. The bathroom in the centre of the flat, like some sort of spatial negative, serves to regulate the floor plan's organisation, and the remaining spaces are divided with monier panels and built-in cabinets. Like in some sort of engineering diagram, all of the parameters are completely defined. The principle of *Existenzminimum* is applied with



Vila Adonis, centralna soba, 2011.

Villa Adonis, central room, 2011.



Vila Adonis, trijem, 2011.

Villa Adonis, portico, 2011.

Prožetost s prirodom raskošno dimenzioniranih vanjskih „prostorija“. Suzdržani životni stil ovisi o klimatskim uvjetima, a prostorno bogatstvo prožeto je logikom niske potrošnje. Dobrović nije bio jedini arhitekt svoga vremena kojeg je zavelo blještavo mediteransko sunce – tako je uostalom i rođena vapnenobijela arhitektura primarnih volumena s oštrim kutovima na kojima se svjetlost ne ogiba.

mechanical precision, as if it were a social housing project. What, then, makes a minimalistically designed family house a villa?

It is pervaded with the nature of luxuriously dimensioned exterior “spaces”. A measured lifestyle depends on climatic conditions, and its spatial wealth is infused with the logic of controlled consumption. Dobrović was not the only architect of his time to be seduced by the bright, Me-

Ozna simetrija koju primjećujemo na pročeljima, donekle i u tlocrtu te i drugih Dobrovićevih vila, neuobičajena je u funkcionalističkom izrazu onog vremena. U ranoj kritici Dobrovićeva dubrovačkog perioda Marina Oreb prepoznala je formalnu vezu s lokalnim arhitektonskim nasljeđem<sup>11</sup>. Uistinu, simetričan raspored unutrašnjih prostorija podsjeća na tipični tlocrt s centralnim salonom i po dvije sobe sa svake njegove strane dubrovačkih gradskih palača i ljetnikovaca i čitave množine manjih i većih kuća duž istočne obale Jadrana, sve do palača na Canal Grande, bez obzira na stoljeća njihove gradnje ili njihove stilske osobine<sup>12</sup>. Bez sumnje, Dobrović je tijekom svojih dubrovačkih godina posjetio puno takvih kuća i stanova, a osim simetričnosti njihovih pročelja, sigurno je primije-

diterranean sun – thus was born the pure white architecture of primary volumes with sharp corners that do not diffract light.

The axial symmetry we find on the facades, and therefore both in the floor-plan and in Dobrović's other villas, is unusual in the functionalist expression of his time. In an early criticism of Dobrović's Dubrovnik period, Marina Oreb recognized his formal relationship with local architectural heritage.<sup>11</sup> In truth, the symmetrical layout of interior spaces with two rooms on either side of a central salon is reminiscent of the typical floor plan of Dubrovnik's city palaces and summer homes, as well as of a multitude of houses along the eastern coast of the Adriatic stretching all the way to the Canal Grande, regardless of the century of their construction or their stylistic characteristics.<sup>12</sup> Do-



*Dubrovačke zidine, razglednica s početka 20. stoljeća*

*The walls of Dubrovnik, early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard*

tio i suštinsku prilagodljivost njihovih jednostavnih tlocrta različitim kontekstima i mjerilima.

Za njega, naime, arhitektonsko naslijeđe nije pripadalo zamrznutoj povijesti – u njemu je vidio bezvremensku potvrdu vlastitih nastojanja.

*Pri podvojenosti svetla i senke kruta stereometrijska tela i isecci dubrovačkih bedema deluju suro, oštro i odbojno. Tmurno vreme utiče da dođu do izražaja njihovi prelivni usled tonalne povezanosti prostora, do umekšavanja bridova i ivica... poučna je bezornamentalnost, zatim primena kamena malog formata da bi zidno platno izgledalo veće i moćnije, kao i niz drugih „nepisanih zakona“ arhitektonskih kompozicija.<sup>13</sup>*

Nikola Dobrović

brović doubtlessly visited many such houses and flats during his years in Dubrovnik, and aside from the symmetry of their faces, he surely also noticed the inherent adaptability of their simple floor plans to various contexts and measures.

To Dobrović, architectural heritage did not belong frozen in the past – in it, he saw a timeless confirmation of his own aspirations.

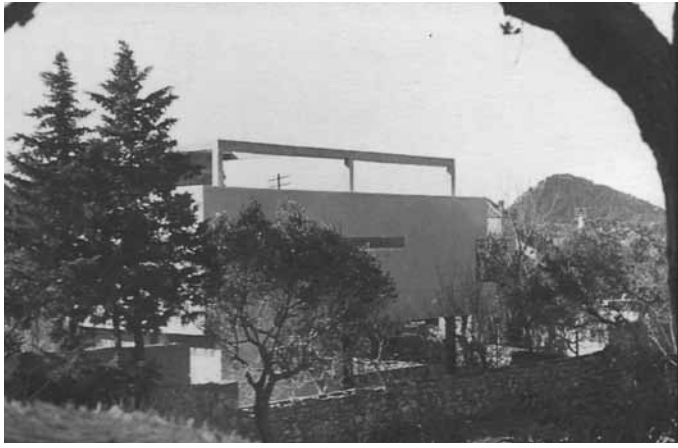
*Under ambivalent light and shadows, the rigid stereometric bodies and slots of the walls of Dubrovnik seem raw, sharp, and monstrous. The sombre weather amplifies their nuances as a result of the tonal connectedness of the space, softens their edges and borders... The lack of ornamentation is instructive, as is the use of small stones to make the canvas of the wall look larger and more powerful, as are a series of other “unwritten rules” of its architectural composition.<sup>13</sup>*

Nikola Dobrović



Vila u Srebrenom, 1937.

Villa in Srebrenom, 1937.



Vila Rusalka, 1938.

Villa Rusalka, 1938.

### III. KONTEKST I MATERIJALNOST

Invokaciju utilitarnih oblika dubrovačkih zidina u potvrdu moderne arhitekture možemo shvatiti istoiznačnom pozivanju mladog Le Corbusiera na *složenu, pravilnu i veličanstvenu međuigru prostornih tijela pod žarkim svjetlom atenske Akropole*<sup>14</sup>. Istina, Dobrović je ovdje citiran iz novinskog članka objavljenog tek godinu prije smrti, a da se ne radi tek o ornamentalnom potvrđivanju davno zaključenog opusa, dokazuju programatski tekstovi iz vremena prije početka gradnje ijednoga njegova dubrovačkog projekta:

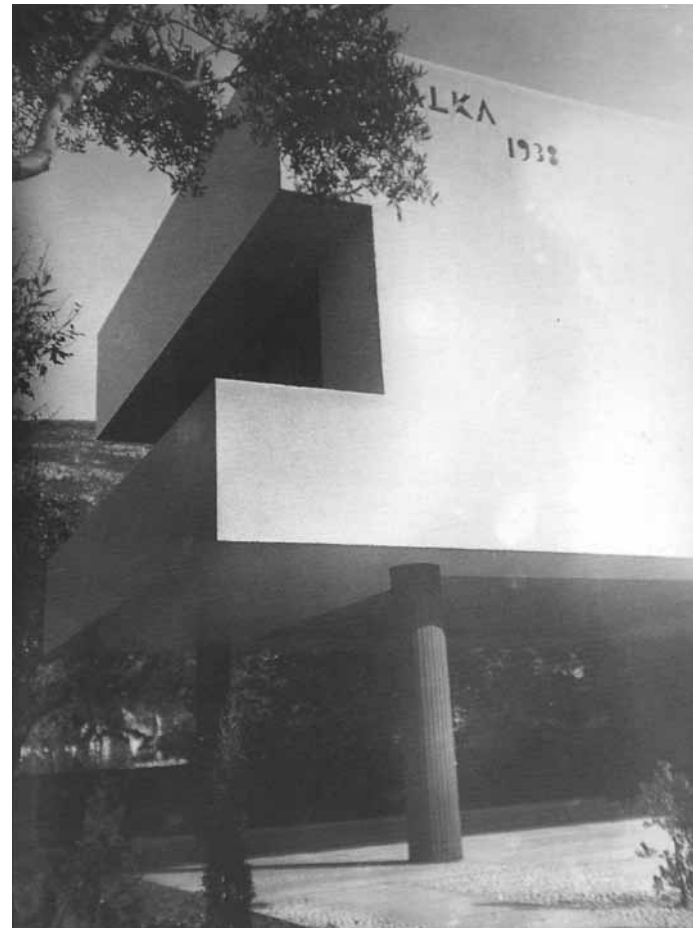
Kao u ranija vremena, arhitekti treba da se služe najmodernijim sredstvima, materijalom i konstrukcijama i da se pri tom rukovode istim duhom i pravilima urbanističkih i arhitektonskih principa kojima su se rukovodili svi stari majstori ovoga grada. Jedino na taj način moći će se stvoriti specifični dubrovački umetnički ambijent.<sup>15</sup>

Dobrović je principe funkcionalističke arhitekture svjesno prilagođavao posebnom, dubrovačkom kontekstu. Programatska funkcionalnost koju nalazimo u lagano zakrivljenim volumenima Grand hotela i prve vile u Srebrenom uskoro postaje samorazumljiv sadržaj arhitekture, kao što na stupove uzdignuti, profilirani i uglati volumeni Vile Ru-

### III. CONTEXT AND MATERIALITY

The invocation of the utilitarian forms used in the walls of Dubrovnik in a confirmation of modern architecture is analogous to young Le Corbusier's allusion to the *harmonious, uniform, and magnificent game of spatial bodies under the stark sun of Athens' Acropolis*.<sup>14</sup> Although Dobrović is here quoted in a newspaper article published only a year before his death, but his programmatic texts from before the construction of any of his projects in Dubrovnik serve as proof that this was no mere ornamental confirmation of a long-since completed opus:

As in olden times, architects should use the most modern tools, materials, and constructions, and in doing so should use the same spirit and rules



Vila Rusalka, 1938.

Villa Rusalka, 1938.



*Hostel Ferijalnog saveza, 1940.*



*Youth Association Hostel, 1940.*



*Vila Svid, pogled sa zapada, 2011.*

*Villa Svid, view from the west, 2011.*

salke i Vile Adonis zorno pokazuju. Što je prisutno u formi, nije suvišno u konstrukciji, pa su betonski podovi na trijemovima prekinuti trakama žala duž konstruktivnih serklaža u temeljima, a drvene palube umetnute između konstruktivnih elemenata na balkonima i ravnim krovovima.

Ožbukane površine prvih radova Dobrović je postupno nadograđivao varijacijama obloga i obzida, da bi na Hostelu Ferijalnog saveza, nadogradnji Vile Wolff i Vili Svid, razvio dvije sasvim posebne obloge. Prva iz u prirodi pronađenih oblutaka, već viđena na manjim površinama oko Vile Vesna, sad se proteže vertikalnim i horizontalnim površinama zidova, podova pa čak i stropova. Drugu čine ispupčene kvadratne kamene ploče u cementnom mortu s vodoravno i horizontalno neprekinutim, reljefno

of urbanism and architectural principles as all of the old masters of this city. This is the only way we can create a distinct artistic ambience for Dubrovnik.<sup>15</sup>

Dobrović consciously adjusted the principles of functionalist architecture to Dubrovnik's special context. The programmatic functionality we find in the modestly curved volumes of his Grand Hotel and his first villa in Srebreno were to soon become a self-explanatory part of his architecture, as is clearly shown by the raised, profiled, and angular volumes of Villa Rusalka and Villa Adonis. What is present in form is not excessive in construction, and so the concrete floors on porticos are intersected with tracks of pebbles along the constructive cerclage of the foundation, and the wooden decks



*Vila Svid, balkon prema moru, 2011.*

*Villa Svid, sea-facing balcony, 2011.*



istaknutim spojnica. Prekrivajući sve vanjske površine Vile Svid uzorkom pravilne mreže preko grube i nepravilne kamene površine, takva obloga pod jarkim mediteranskim suncem dematerijalizira njezin introvertirani volumen. Sasvim suprotno ranijim projektima podignutima na stupove, teška masa Dobrovićeva posljednjeg ostvarenja u Dubrovniku doslovno raste iz zemlje. Izražajna materijalnost ukorjenjuje modernu arhitekturu duboko u kontekst upravo ovoga grada.

Iz jednoga Dobrovićeva dopisa općinskom *Urešnom povjerenstvu*, u povodu žalbe susjeda na izgled još nedovršene građevine: *omražena boja armiranog betona nestat će pod oblogom od kamenih ploča... sa neprekinutim fugama, koje će stvarati novu površinsku lepotu, poput moderne tekstilne robe*<sup>6</sup>, očito je da je ta obloga

are placed in between constructive elements on the balconies and flat roofs.

Dobrović gradually added to the plastered surfaces of his first works with variations in coverings and wall linings, and in his Youth Association Hostel and his additions to Villa Wolff and Villa Svid, he developed two entirely new kinds of covering. The first is made of natural pebbles, already visible on smaller surfaces surrounding Villa Vesna, but now spreading across the vertical and horizontal surfaces of walls, floors, and even ceilings. The second are embossed square stone tiles in cement mortar with horizontally and vertically unbroken joints emphasized in relief. Covering all of the rough and irregular stone exterior surfaces of Villa Svid with a regular net pattern, the intro-



*Vila Vesna, panorama s krovne terase, vidi se plitki bazen nad kojim je nekad bio izdignut drveni pod 2011.*

*Villa Vesna, panorama from the roof terrace, the shallow pool which was once covered by a wooden floor is visible 2011.*



*Vila Vesna, fotografija iz 1958.*

*Villa Vesna, photograph from 1958.*

nastavak tradicije zaodijevanja konstrukcije *Bekleidung* Gottfrieda Sempera, kako su je shvaćali Otto Wagner te njegovi neposredni i posredni učenici. Primjena atektoničkog „odijela“ minijature Vile Svid, da bi se naglasile stereometrijske kvalitete kudikamo većeg volumena u sasvim različitom prostornom i vremenskom kontekstu – Generalštaba sagrađenog u Beogradu 1961. godine, premješta nas iz lokalnog diskursa prema univerzalnim vrijednostima.

Dobrovićev dubrovački opus pribjegava konceptualnim klasifikacijama. U širokom korpusu moderne arhitekture ističe se ne dogmatskim provođenje njezinih postulata nego vezanošću za po-

verted volume of the Villa is dematerialised under the bright Mediterranean sun. Entirely opposite to his earlier projects raised on columns, the heavy mass of Dobrović's final creation in Dubrovnik literally grows out of the ground, and its expressive materiality roots modern architecture deep in the context of the city.

From one of Dobrović's correspondences with the municipal *Design Commission*, on the occasion of a neighbour's complaint about the appearance of the unfinished building — “*the hated colour of reinforced concrete will disappear beneath a covering of stone tiles... with unbroken grouting, which will create a new surface beauty like modern fabrics*”<sup>16</sup> — it is apparent that this covering is an extension of Gottfried Semper's *Bekleidung* tradition of covered constructions as perceived by Otto Wagner and his direct and indirect students. The application of the atektonic “suit” of the miniature Villa Svid, in order to accent the stereometric qualities of the far and away larger volume in an entirely different spatial and temporal context – the Generalštab building in Belgrade in 1961 – moves us from a local discourse towards universal values. Dobrović's opus in Dubrovnik evades conceptual classifications. It stands out among the great corpus of modern architecture not only in the dogmatic application of its postulates but in its remaining tied to a specific context, even to the very extremes of stretched physical and rhetorical boundaries.

The Mediterranean climate literally penetrates the volumes of Villa Rusalka and Villa Adonis. In the classical placement of Villa Vesna on a steep, sea-facing slope, the terraced garden with a series of spatial profilings at its side both in front of and behind the house continues into a total panorama. However, Dobrović provided the best illustration of his Heideggeresque relationship towards location in his first work in Dubrovnik. Stretched between the earth and sky on the crossroads of a small path towards a tiny church in a typical Me-

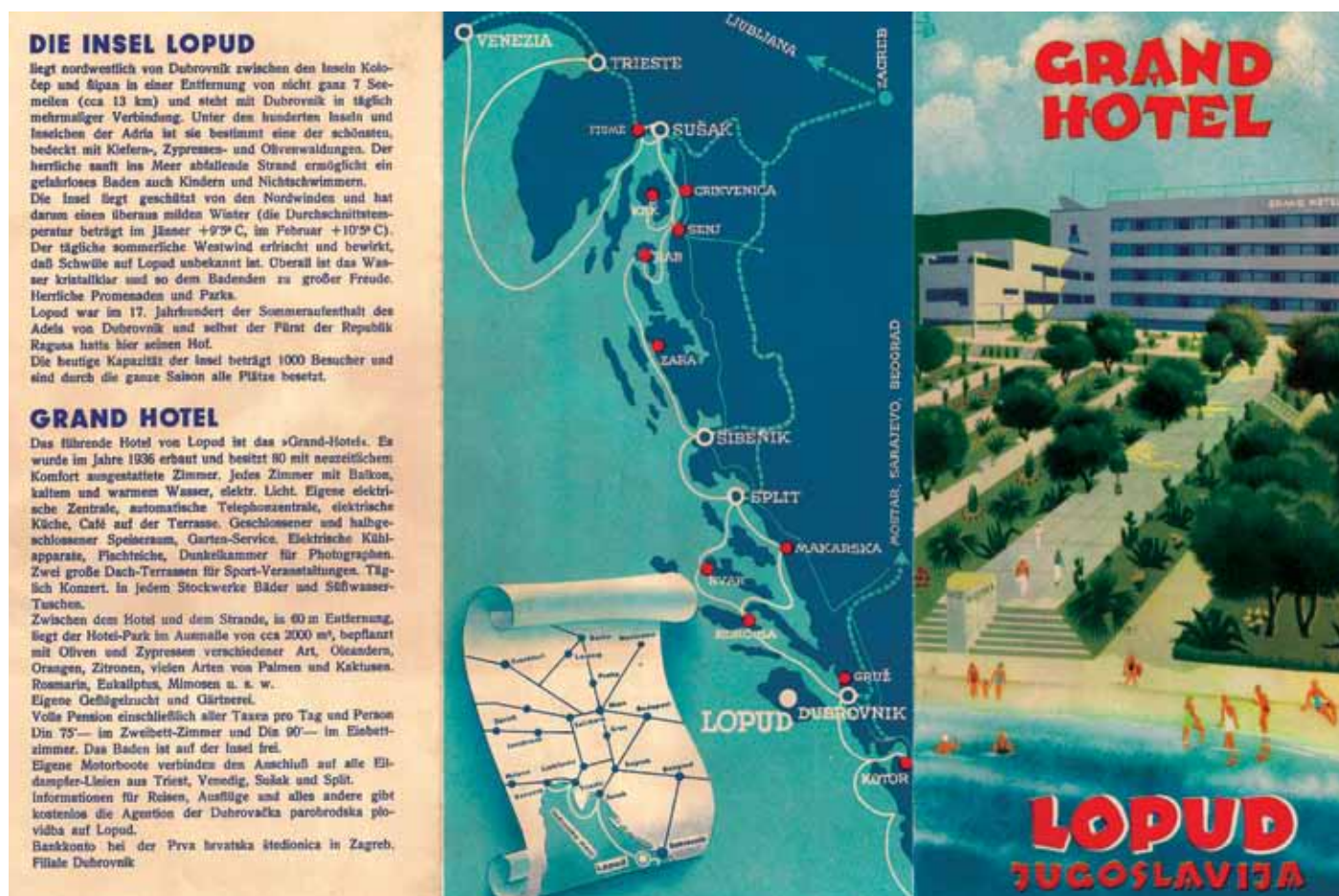


*Spomenik Viktoru Dyku, 1932. Monument to Viktor Dyk, 1932.*

seban kontekst do krajnosti rastegnutih fizičkih i retoričkih granica.

Mediterranska klima doslovno prodire kroz volumene Vile Rusalke i Vile Adonis. U klasičnoj situaciji Vile Vesna na strmoj padini okrenutoj moru, terasasti se vrt serijom prostornih profilacija sa strana, ispred kuće i nad njom, nastavlja u totalnu panoramu. No najbolju ilustraciju heideggerovskog odnosa prema mjestu Dobrović je dao već prvim izvedenim dubrovačkim djelom. Razapet između zemlje i neba na račvanju puteljka do sćušne crkve u tipičnom mediteranskom prizoru, visoki šuplji valjak spomenika Viktoru Dyku precizna je materijalizacija kasnije Norberg-Schulzove definicije klasičnog pejzaža<sup>17</sup>.

diterranean scene, the high, hollow cylinder of his monument to Viktor Dyk is a precise materialisation of Norberg-Schulz's later definition of the classical landscape.<sup>17</sup>



Grand Hotel, 1936. Stražnja i prednja strana onovremenog turističkog prospekta

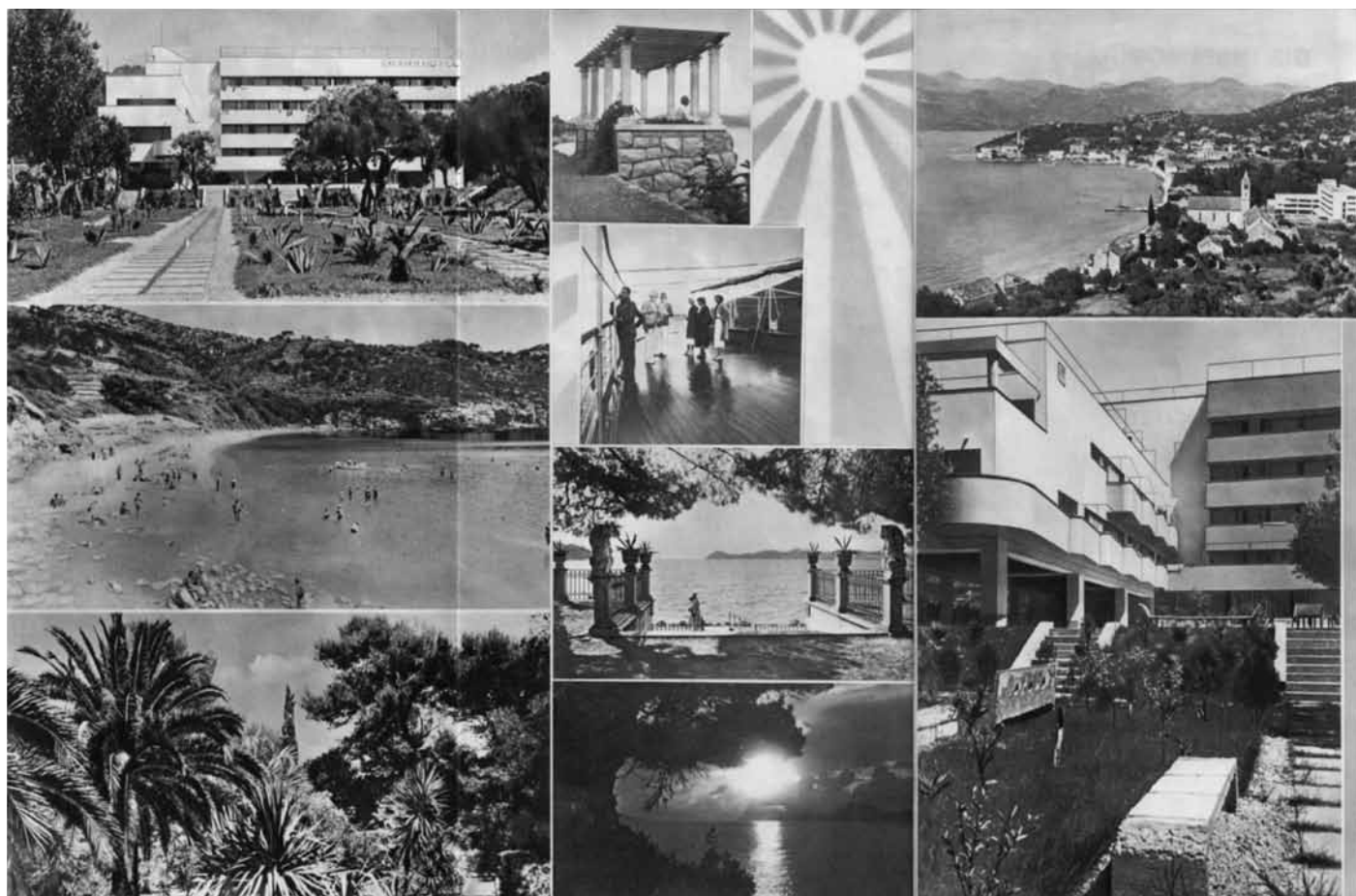
Grand Hotel, 1936. Back and cover of a tourist prospect.

*Pišem za one kolege koji su uvereni  
da u Dalmaciji ima još mnogo mesta, gde bi se u naj-  
kraće vrijeme novim graditeljskim metodama mogle  
stvoriti nove naseobine, daleko savršenije i poetičnije  
nego što je Dubrovnik.<sup>18</sup>*

*Nikola Dobrović*

*I am writing for those of my colleagues who are con-  
vinced that there are many more places in Dalmatia  
where new methods of construction could create new  
settlements in the near future, far more perfect and more  
poetic than Dubrovnik.<sup>18</sup>*

*Nikola Dobrović*



Grand Hotel, 1936. Unutrašnjost istog turističkog prospek-  
ta zorno prikazuje modernu arhitekturu u odnosu s osnov-  
nim fenomenom koji turiste privlači na otok

Grand Hotel, 1936. The interior of the same tourist prospect  
clearly shows the modern architecture in relationship with the  
basic phenomenon that attracted tourists to the island.

#### IV. PROSTORNA UMJETNOST, DRUŠTVENE PARADIGME I IDEJA GRADA

Gradnja Grand hotela bila je neviđena atrakcija, a njegovo otvorenje prijelomni trenutak u povijesti jednog sasvim malog otoka. Privatnim kapitalom bio je osiguran održiv razvojni potencijal prikladan veličini zajednice za nekoliko desetljeća. Proporciju utjecaja nove tehnologije ilustrira priča da je jedan od građevinskih radnika, porijeklom s obližnjeg poluotoka Pelješca, odnio armaturne koševе na uzgajališta kamenica i mušula i tako unaprijedio drevni način njihova uzgoja<sup>19</sup>. Grand hotel na Lopudu izrastao je iz lokalne sredine, jedini „uvoz“ bio je arhitekt visokog tehničkog znanja iz dalekog velegrada.

#### IV. SPATIAL ART, SOCIAL PARADIGMS, AND THE IDEA OF THE CITY

The construction of the Grand Hotel was an unparalleled attraction, and its opening was a turning point in the history of one small island. Private capital ensured sustainable development potential suitable to the size of the community for a few decades. The proportion of the influence of new technologies is illustrated by the story that one of the construction workers, from the nearby peninsula of Pelješac, brought the reinforcement cages to a mussel and oyster farm, thus improving the ancient method with which they were raised.<sup>19</sup> The Grand Hotel on Lopud grew out of the local environment, and the only “import” was an architect with high technical knowledge from a distant metropolis.



*Grand hotel, pogled iz zraka, prije 1970.*

*Grand Hotel, aerial view, before 1970.*

Možda mu je stoga i bila dozvoljena rijetko viđena ekstravagancija, da potpiše svoj rad: „N. DOBROVIĆ ARHITEKT“, u vlastitoj tipografiji, tridesetak centimetara visine, tik poviše hotelskog ulaza.

Odmaknutost od poprišta događaja vjerojatno mu je omogućila i to da prirodni kapital otočke sredine jasno sagleda. Hotel je zato orijentirao ne prema unutrašnjosti nego prema okolini, sagrađivši stroj za ljetni odmor u kojem je usko sve osim prozora. Na krovu hotela postavio je tenisko igralište s malim tribinama, a pred njim osno komponirao park s drvoredima vitkih tropskih palmi, pristupom preko panoramske terase i promenadom do hotelskog ulaza. U dinamičnoj kompoziciji hotela, parka i obližnjeg crkvenog tornja prepoznajemo sintezu nekoliko sastavnica, Dobrović ih je zvao „misaonim pritokama“<sup>20</sup> moderne arhitekture: lecorbusierovskog purizma u povezivanju duha ere strojeva s klasičnim vrijednostima mjesta, srednjoeuropskog funkcionalizma u smislu minimalnog dizajna i razmjerne zatvorenosti volumena, organske tradicija u mekom povezivanju s okolinom, *De Stijl* u namjeri stvaranja plastičnog totaliteta. Od projektiranog pejzaža do betonskog namještaja u hotelskim sobama, upravo to plastično jedinstvo čini Grand hotel najcjelovitijim djelom herojske, samouvjerene i optimistične, moderne arhitekture na istočnoj obali Jadrana.

Nažalost, tako vješto projektiran „održivi“ razvoj potrajao je svega par godina. Proturječnosti ubrzanog vremena modernizacije povezale su hotel s nizom nemilih događaja. Tijekom Drugoga svjetskog rata fašisti su tamo internirali Židove uhićene na dubrovačkom i širem području, da bi neposredno nakon rata komunisti oteli hotel otočkoj obitelji koja ga je sagradila. Kroz desetljeća državno-ideološkog masovnog turizma, manje zahtjevni gosti zamijenili su one čijem je uživanju u prirodi hotel bio namijenjen: tko bi više igrao tenis na ravnom krovu? Od devedesetih godina hotel je potpuno za-

Perhaps for this reason, he was afforded the rarely-seen extravagance of signing his work “N. DOBROVIĆ, ARCHITECT” in his own typography, thirty centimetres high, directly above the hotel entrance.

Distance from the scene of events likely allowed him a clear overview of the natural capital of the island environment. He thus oriented the hotel not towards the interior, but towards its surroundings, building a machine for summer holidays in which everything was narrow except for the windows. He placed a tennis court with a small stands on the roof of the building, and in front of this he composed a park with rows of slender tropical palms with an approach towards the hotel entrance across a panoramic terrace and promenade. In the dynamic composition of the hotel, park, and nearby church tower, we recognise a synthesis of a few component parts which Dobrović called the “cognitive tributaries”<sup>20</sup> of modern architecture: Le Corbusier’s purism in connecting the spirit of the age of machines with the classical values of a location, central European functionalism in the sense of minimalist design and moderately closed volumes, organic tradition in its soft connection with the environment, *De Stijl* in the intent on creating a plastic whole. From the designed landscape to the concrete furniture in the hotel rooms, it is this very plastic unity that makes the Grand Hotel the most complete work of heroic, self-confident and optimistic modern architecture on the eastern Adriatic coast.

Sadly, this skilfully designed “sustainable” development lasted only a few years. The contradictoriness of the accelerated speed of modernization connected the hotel with a series of unfortunate occurrences. During the Second World War, the fascists interred Jews there who had been arrested in Dubrovnik and its vicinity, only for the hotel to be confiscated by the communists immediately after the war from the island family that had built it. Through a decade of state-ideological mass tourism, less demanding guests replaced those for who-







*Grand hotel s parkom u  
rekonstrukciji, 2011.*

*Grand Hotel and park under  
reconstruction, 2011.*

pušten, a s ponovnom promjenom društvene paradigme uslijedili su prijepori oko vlasništva. U procesu (re)privatizacije, Grad Dubrovnik iskoristio je pravo prvokupa spomenika kulture i potom hotel prodao investitoru za kojeg se možda smijemo nadati da obnovom neće potpuno uništiti to svjedočanstvo vjere u bolja vremena, koja za Grand hotel još nisu nastupila. Turbulentna je povijest utopijsku kvalitetu Dobrovićeva dubrovačkog opusa samo naglasila.

Vrtovi su vitalni urbanistički dijelovi savremenog i budućeg suptropskog grada koji u nedostatku zelenila, voća i povrća treba da teži za proširenjem i spajanjem što većih zelenih površina. Nekadašnji

se enjoyment of nature the hotel had been intended: who would play tennis on the flat roof anymore? Since the 1990's, the hotel has been completely abandoned, and with new changes in social paradigm came disputes over its ownership. In the process of (re-)privatization, the city of Dubrovnik used its right to buy monuments of culture, and then sold the hotel to an investor whose reconstruction we can perhaps hope will not completely destroy this testimony to faith in better times, which have still not found the Grand Hotel. Its turbulent history has only emphasized the utopian quality of Dobrović's opus in Dubrovnik.

Gardens are vital urban works of the modern and future sub-tropical city, which, for a lack of



*Grand hotel, prilaz iz parka, 2011.*

*Grand Hotel, park entrance, 2011.*

vlasteoski vrtovi, u svoje vreme simboli intimne odvojenosti privilegovanih, treba da se u duhu savremene demokratske urbanistike i u okviru novog integralnog gradskog prostora sastave sa opštim zaštitnim zelenim pojasom i tako stave u službu narodu. O njima treba voditi strogo računa pri postavljanju urbanističke osnove novog Dubrovnika.<sup>21</sup>

U zaključku poslijeratne studije o dubrovačkim renesansnim dvorcima, Dobrović je predložio povezivanje njihovih bujnih vrtova s javnim zelenim pojasom oko grada u zidinama. Premda formulirana u ideologiziranom kontekstu prve godine nakon socijalističke revolucije, ideja *savremene demokratske urbanistike* zanimljiv je doprinos urbanističkom planiranju Dubrovnika. U tom svjetlu, Dobrovićev prijeratni opus, iako namijenjen *intimnoj odvojenosti* vlasnika koji niti su bili pretjereno bogati niti su u maloj dubrovačkoj sredini bili posebno *privilegovani*, možemo sagledati kao namjeravanu cjelinu, retroprojekciju Novog Dubrovnika kao vrtnoga grada.

Pred Grand hotelom dinamična prostorna kompozicija povezana je s ostvarenjem javnog interesa. Zašto je hotel povučen s rive u dubinu parcele? Da bi se uspostavila *kultura postavljenih odnosa* koja se opaža u pokretu<sup>22</sup>. Tomu svjedočimo svaki put kad uplovljavamo u lopudsku luku ili prilazimo hotelu preko komandnog mosta, pa promenadom paralelno izmaknutom iz osi parka, promatrajući niz otvorenih parkovnih niša s armiranobetonskim namještajem u njima.

Ako je demokratska betonska klupa u parku Grand hotela ostvoreni fragment *savremene demokratske urbanistike*<sup>23</sup>, prostornu umjetnost Nikole Dobrovića možemo shvatiti društveno kritičnom u mjerilu krajolika i u mjerilu grada. Mogli bismo reći, u smislu održivog prostornog i urbanističkog planiranja. Održivog niti samo u ekološkom aspektu minimiziranja utjecaja na okoliš niti samo u razvojnom aspektu razumne upotrebe raspoloživih izvora. S vremenske udaljenosti od gotovo stotinu

greenery, fruits, and vegetables, should aim to join and expand park surfaces as much as possible. In their time, the noble gardens of the past were symbols of the intimate seclusion of the privileged, and in the spirit of modern, democratic urban planning and in the framework of new integral city spaces, these gardens should become a part of the protected green belt and thus placed in the service of the people. Strict care should be taken to include them in the creation of the basis of the urban planning of the new Dubrovnik.<sup>21</sup>

In the conclusion of his post-war study of Dubrovnik's Renaissance castles, Dobrović suggested connecting their lush gardens with the public green belt around the walled city. Although formulated in an ideologised context in the first year after the socialist revolution, the idea of *modern democratic urban planning* is an interesting contribution to Dubrovnik's urban planning. In this light, Dobrović's pre-war opus – although intended for the *intimate seclusion* of its owners, who were neither particularly rich nor especially *privileged* in the small community of Dubrovnik – can be viewed as an intended whole, a retro-projection of the New Dubrovnik as a garden city.

In front of the Grand Hotel, a dynamic spatial composition is connected with the realization of public interest. Why is the hotel recessed from the seafront by the width of the plot? In order to establish a *culture of determined relations* seen in motion.<sup>22</sup> We witness this every time we sail into Lopud harbour or approach the hotel from the bridge, or from the promenade which is equally removed from the axis of the park, observing a series of open park niches with reinforced concrete furniture.

If the democratic concrete bench in the Grand Hotel's park is a realized fragment of *modern democratic urban planning*,<sup>23</sup> the spatial art of Nikola Dobrović can be seen as socially critical in its measure of the landscape and of the city. This could be said in the sense of sustainable spatial and urban planning, and not only sustainable from an ecological standpoint of minimizing effects on

godina, Dobrovićevu arhitekturu možemo razumjeti kao retorički održivu u puno širem smislu: u njezinu odnosu sa starim i novim slojevima dubrovačkoga kultiviranog pejzaža.

Da prostorna umjetnost doista nadmašuje sve ostale, lako je povjerovati krećući se kroz arhitekturu ovog arhitekta i ovoga grada.

*U spomen na moju Mary i mog đeda Kruna, moderne u modernim vremenima.*

Krunoslav Ivanišin, Dubrovnik, svibanj 2013.

the environment, nor solely in its developmental aspect of the conscientious use of available sources. From a temporal distance of nearly a hundred years, Dobrović's architecture can be understood as rhetorically sustainable in a much broader sense: in its relationship with old and new layers of Dubrovnik's cultivated landscape.

It is easy to believe that spatial art truly surpasses all others moving through the architecture of this architect and this city.

*In memory of my Mary and my grandpa Kruno, modern people in modern times.*

Krunoslav Ivanišin, Dubrovnik, April 2013

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2. Kosta Strajnić: Dubrovnik bez maske: uzaludni napori i teška razočaranja, *Dubrovnik: piščeva naklada*, 1930.
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- 1 Nikola Dobrović: Osvrt na temu ambijent, *Arhitektura* 90, Zagreb, 1965, p. 7.
- 2 Kosta Strajnić: *Dubrovnik bez maske: uzaludni napori i teška razočaranja*, *Dubrovnik: piščeva naklada*, 1930.
- 3 Kosta Strajnić: *Dubrovnik bez maske*.
- 4 Vinko Brajević, Kosta Strajnić: *Misli o čuvanju dalmatinske arhitekture*, Split: *Novo doba*, 1931.
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19. Stijepo Bogdanović u filmu *Novi Dubrovnik Nikole Dobrovića*, scenarij Krunoslav Ivanišin i Ana Marija Habijan, režija Danko Volarić, Zagreb: HTV, 2002.
20. „Misaone pritoke” je podnaslov četvrtog od pet udžbenika (*Savremena arhitektura 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*) koje je N.D. izdao kao redovni profesor Arhitektonskog fakulteta u Beogradu
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- 19 Stijepo Bogdanović in his film *Novi Dubrovnik Nikole Dobrovića*, screenplay by Krunoslav Ivanišin and Ana Marija Habijan, directed by Danko Volarić, Zagreb: HTV, 2002.
- 20 “Cognitive tributaries” is the subheading of the fourth of five textbooks (*Savremena arhitektura 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*) published by N.D. as a full professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade.
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