Alen Žunić

# Diskurzivna metoda projektiranja u opusu arhitekta Aleksandra Dragomanovića

## Doktorska disertacija [sažetak]

# Discursive Design method in the Work of the Architect Aleksandar Dragomanović

## Doctoral Dissertation [Summary]

Architect Aleksandar Dragomanović (Banja Luka, 1921 – Zagreb, 1996) was one of the key authors of Croatian post-war modernism. His oeuvre, which has not received much attention and which was identified only with this research, contains more than 100 works (competition entries, projects, studies, and 24 realizations) created between 1948 and 1995. Dragomanović is an architect whose volume of work and paradigmatic importance of several of his buildings puts him among the elite group of great professors of Zagreb school of architecture, so the research of his oeuvre bears the significance of a 'missing link', since Viktor Kovačić, Hugo Ehrlich, Alfred Albini and Neven Šegvić – his predecessors and professors at the Faculty's department of architectural compositions – have already been fully analyzed, so this study is significant for understanding the genesis of main directions of development in *Zagreb school of architecture*.

The dissertation has evaluated and extrapolated several of Dragomanović's buildings in Zagreb of prominent value (partly co-authored with R. Nikšić and N. Kučan): *Modna kuća* in Praška street, *NaMa* department store in the district of Trnsko, *SRCE* complex, Children's Institution in the district of Sopot, and the *SDK* building in Grada Vukovara street. His particular contribution can be seen in the development of the contemporary typology of department stores, office buildings and schools, buildings that had a great impact on the profession at the time they were created. Also, Dragomanović's creative process is characteristic for the *discursive design method*, prominently rational in concept and of consistent analytical process, in which the functional purity, thoughtfully engineered construction solutions, and nuanced minimalist design with the attributes of the best abstract compositions – stand in an inseparable correlation.

The discursive design method in Dragomanović's work relies on three discursive characterizations (most evident in the design of his department stores). The first is linked to floor layout solutions, which are flawlessly functional, zoned and standardized. They are created as a result of an exact intellectual process. In almost all examples, Dragomanović reduces plans of department stores to two pure geometrical forms – a square and a rectangle which are always created on a modular network. Parallel to the rational and exact floor layout network which defines the function layout, there is also a clear construction system of pronounced engineering purity, consistency in the selection and compatibility of materials, elaboration of details, thoughtful simplicity, and total technological feasibility. The structure of his department stores always contains a skeletal system with a non-supporting membrane of the façade. The supporting system of pillars is always laid on a square network. The third and final characteristic that is created as a parallel, inseparable process along with the already mentioned two, is the gesture of visual composition. It is never merely an artistic reflex *sui generis*, because Dragomanovic's forms in their aestheticism and minimalism are apparent and clearly derived (or are created in an interaction) from a previously organized spatial system and the influence of bearing structures (often visible and fitted into the visual expression).

Dragomanović's architecture contains strong reflections of Dutch experiences from 50's and the 60's (particularly Bakema and Van den Broek) and Scandinavian architectural role models which he, using his own solutions and visual language, has transferred and established on the Croatian architectural scene, as his personal contribution to the international contextualization of our architecture. He was also the recipient of the lifetime achievement awards *Viktor Kovačić* (1986) and *Vladimir Nazor* (1988). His educational influence on more than 40 generations of students at the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb (1949-1991) is also indispensable, particularly through the innovative course *Basics of Architectural Design* that he founded in 1972, which still lives to this day.

[Translated by Silvije Nosić]

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Aleksandar Dragomanović jedan je od ključnih autora poslijeratne hrvatske moderne čiji opus broji više od 100 djela (natječajnih rješenja, projekata, studija te 24 realizacije) nastalih u rasponu 1948.-1995. Dragomanovićev stvaralački prosede odlikuje se diskurzivnom metodom projektiranja izrazito racionalne koncepcije i dosljednoga analitičkog postupka, u kojoj su funkcionalna čistoća, inženjerski promišljena konstruktivna rješenja i profinjeno minimalističko oblikovanje u neodvojivoj korelaciji. Osobiti njegov doprinos vidljiv je u razvoju tipologije suvremenih robnih kuća, poslovnih zgrada i škola. U njegovoj su arhitekturi prisutne snažne refleksije na nizozemska iskustva 1950-ih i 1960-ih godina te na skandinavske arhitektonske uzore. Nezaobilazan je i Dragomanovićev pedagoški utjecaj na više od 40 generacija studenata zagrebačkoga Arhitektonskog fakulteta (1949.-1991.).