Jasna Galjer

Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti
Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
Ivana Lučića 3
HR - 10000 Zagreb

"Architecture and Freedom," or How Attitudes Became Form at Trigon 69

„Architecture and Freedom", ili: kako su stavovi poprimili formu na Trigonu 69

ABSTRACT

The topic of this paper is the "Architecture and Freedom" exhibition staged in 1969 at Künstlerhaus Graz as a key example of architectural representation. It was a radical venture into the field of conceptualising architecture, analogous to the contemporary curatorial experiments of Harald Szeemann, who relativised the boundaries between architecture, visual media and critique, counterculture, mass media, and conceptual art. Twenty-seven projects by *Superstudio*, *Coop Himmel(b)lau*, Hans Hollein, and other protagonists of radical architecture were submitted in response to an open call to design a hypothetical city in the year 2000, illustrating that exhibiting architecture had indeed become a discipline that accommodated a plurality of platforms, strategies, contexts, and actors. Thus, visitors were invited to record their impressions in a computer system, which projected those recordings into the exhibition space. Using the methodological apparatus of architectural history, critical theory, and cultural studies, the article explores the politics of representation and interpretation of architectural space within the framework of experimental curatorial practices. The aim is to contextualise the exhibition within the framework of radical and experimental curatorial practices and to reinterpret the specific ways in which architectural representation narrated specific cultural values.

Keywords: Trigon 69, "Architecture and Freedom", architecture exhibition as environment, experimental curatorial practice, conceptualisation of architecture

SAŽETAK

U tekstu se analizira izložba "Architecture and Freedom" održana 1969. u okviru manifestacije Trigon 69 u Künstlerhausu (Graz) kao ključni primjer radikalnih tendencija u arhitektonskim izložbama. Polazište je teza o radikalnom pristupu konceptualizacije arhitekture, koji je analogan suvremenim kustoskim eksperimentima Haralda Szeemanna. Zajedničko im je relativiziranje granica između arhitekture, vizualnih medija i kritike, kontrakulture, masovnih medija i konceptualne vizualne umjetnosti. Na izložbi je predstavljeno dvadeset i sedam projekata između ostalih grupe *Superstudio*, *Coop Himmel(b)lau*, Hansa Holleina i drugih protagonista radikalne arhitekture, koji nude odgovore na temu zadanu natječajem; vizije grada 2000. godine, potvrđujući da je izlaganje arhitekture multidisciplinarno područje koje objedinjava brojne platforme, strategije, kontekste i aktere. Tako su posjetitelji pozvani da svoje dojmove zabilježe u računalni sustav koji je te podatke projicirao u izložbeni prostor. Na osnovi metodoloških pristupa povijesti arhitekture, kritičke teorije i kulturalnih studija, u tekstu se analizira politiku reprezentacije i interpretacije arhitektonskog prostora u okviru eksperimentalnih kustoskih praksi. Cilj je kontekstualizirati izložbu u okviru radikalnih i eksperimentalnih kustoskih praksi te reinterpretirati specifične načine na koje je arhitektonsko prikazivanje konstruiralo narativ specifičnih kulturnih vrijednosti.

Ključne riječi: Trigon 69, "Architecture and Freedom" arhitektonska izložba kao environment, eksperimentalna kustoska praksa, konceptualizacija arhitekture

Introduction

At the time of the Cold War and the Eastern-Western Bloc divide, events like the Trigon (1963-1995) – a biennial exhibition organised in cooperation by Austria, the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, and socialist Yugoslavia – were exceedingly rare. In addition to the specific political circumstances, the innovative concept of the exhibition may also be viewed in the context of experimental artistic and curatorial practices. Although the historiography of art has explored Trigon's historical tradition, a lack of interest has been noted in contextualising the exhibition within the framework of experimental artistic and curatorial practices of the late 1960s.[1] Paula Burleigh writes about the Trigon exhibitions of 1967 and 1969[2] in her paper "Exhibitions against Architecture" and rightfully emphasizes their radical concept; however, she only describes some of the exhibits on display. She has not attempted an analysis of the "Architecture and Freedom" exhibition within the context of the radicalisation of critiques aimed at the institutionalised framework of the representational discourse of architecture. The aim of this article is therefore to offer an analysis of the Trigon 69 as a case study and to demonstrate that this exhibition precedes the strategies of other examples of global renown. Symptomatically, it has not yet been noted that the keywords "landscape", "environment", "media", "counterdesign", and "politics" – which Emilio Ambasz has used to define how the famous 1972 MOMA exhibition "Italy: A New Domestic Landscape"[3] was conceived – might equally apply to Trigon 69. The conceptual art of the late 1960s posed a radical departure from traditional forms of artistic expression. The dynamic character and complexity of these forms coincided with experimental curatorial practices and presentation models, which were most frequent in the period between 1969 and 1972 and characterised by a dramatic change in the curator-artist relationship, as artists were invited to incorporate their installations into the displays. Documentation, performances, film, symposia, publications, and other means of presenting were included as integral parts of exhibitions, which resulted in the greater flexibility of the exhibition as a medium. Its boundaries grew more fluid, while the interrelationships between the

1.

Trigon 67; Ambiente/Environment, exhibition catalogue (design: Horst Gerhard Habel; source: Private collection of the author)

Trigon 67; Ambiente/Environment, katalog izložbe (oblikovanje: Horst Gerhard Habel)

artistic concept, the objects on display, and the means of presenting them grew in importance. Within the context of the dematerialisation of art and the exploration of new communication models, the exhibition catalogue sometimes took on the role of exhibition, statement, and programmatic framework. A characteristic example is the 1970 edition of the English magazine *Studio International*, which featured the works of artists selected by six invited art critics. The artists were assigned several pages in the magazine on which they decided how to present their works. Boris Groys defined the situation at the end of the 1960s as the demystification of the production of art exhibitions and the discovery of the new role of the curator as a mediator in exhibition shaping, production, and dissemination: "The distinction between art object and simple object becomes insignificant here. Instead, what becomes crucial is the distinction between a marked, installation space and unmarked, public space."[4] One of the earliest examples of this is the "When Attitudes Become Form" exhibition held in Bern, London, and Krefeld between March and September of 1969. In addition to Land Art and conceptual art, the event showcased the various tendencies of anti-formal American art, the Italian *Arte Povera* movement, and the works of Joseph Beuys and his followers from Germany. Since the authors were personally involved in displaying their work, their presence at the exhibition resulted in a specific exchange of information and cultural influences – in essence, the establishment of a new form of international artist network.

Trigon Biennale as a case study of experimental curatorial practice

Trigon was envisioned as an implicitly political cultural manifestation from its very inception. The Trigon "Biennale" was initiated in 1963 by Hanns Koren, the head of the Styrian government at the time, and the Styrian provincial government and the city of Graz continued to organise the event until 1995. It is therefore not a coincidence that right from the very first exhibitions the concept of Trigon reflected the attempt to break down the boundaries present in the artistic conventions of the time, which predominated in the small, bourgeois Styrian town of Graz, oriented towards traditional cultural values. Such relativisation of boundaries implicitly applied to the political divides and territorial boundaries drawn after 1945 between countries which had, prior to the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, belonged to the same cultural sphere. Linking Austria, Italy, and Yugoslavia within Trigon aimed to raise awareness of a shared space of cultural production, to foster this production in the contemporary political circumstances, and to bring together a range of media used for artistic expression, as well as an interdisciplinary approach. This initiative was preceded by the international New Tendencies movement – a significant contribution to the relaxation of boundaries in the areas of experimental, collaborative, and interdisciplinary artistic practices – held in Zagreb from the early 1960s. The name refers to a series of five exhibitions held in the period 1961-1973, symposia, and publications which led to the establishment of an exceedingly vibrant participant network, linked by a neo-avantgarde programmatic framework. The network of young authors and artist collectives included, among others, the French GRAV (Groupe de rechérche d'art visuel); the Italian Gruppo N, Gruppo T, Gruppo 63, Operativo R, and Azimuth; the Spanish Equipo 57; the German Zero and Effekt; and the Dutch Nul and Compos 68. The participation of the US Anonima Group and the Soviet group Dvizheniye attests to the fact that the New Tendencies was not an exclusively Western European movement. In addition to representatives of the local community, the movement also involved a number of student groups that had emerged in university computing centres (in Madrid, Vincennes, and Buenos Aires). They shared an interest in visual research in the area of socially

2.
Trigon 69; Architecture and Freedom, detail of the display (source: *Arhitektura*, no. 105, 1970, p. 44)

Trigon 69; Architecture and Freedom (Arhitektura i sloboda), detalj postava
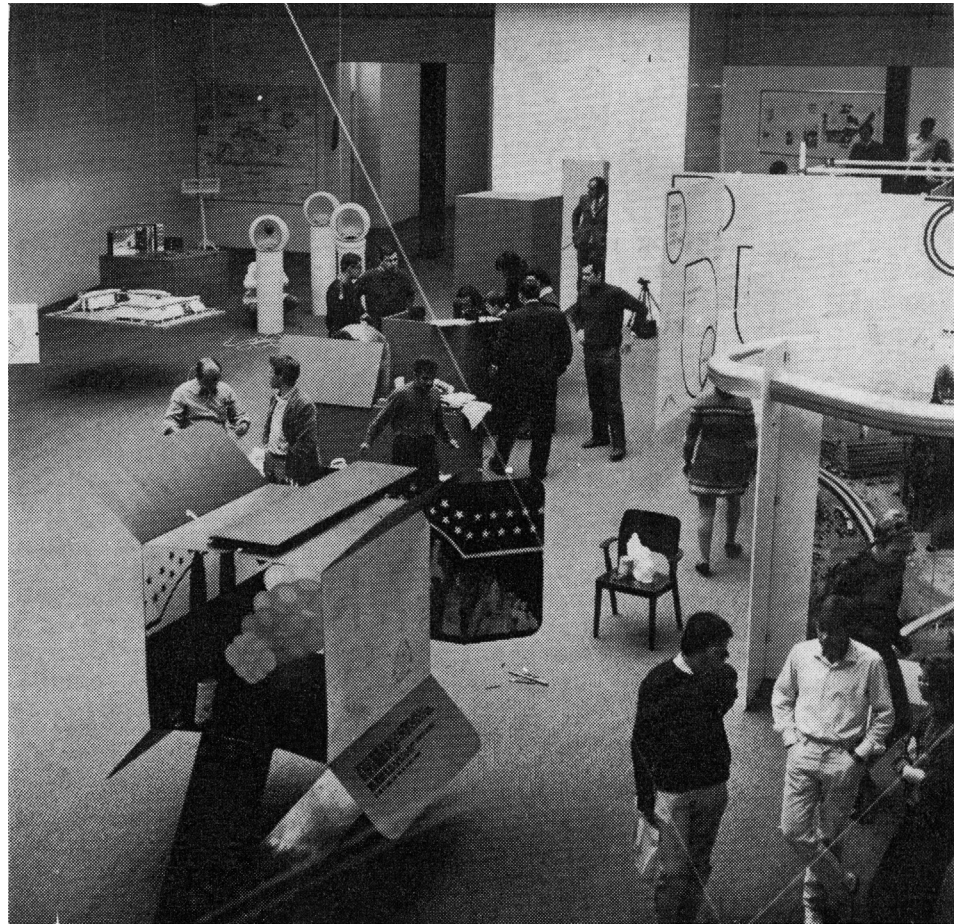
engaged art and wanted to take on key roles in the plastic-spatial renewal of the environment, particularly in lending shape to the urban environment. These attempts were also reflected in their explorations of the opportunities afforded by combining science and technology, where the focus lay on "programming" the work of art and its exact structure.

Although Trigon was initially conceived as an overview of recent developments on the art scene, almost from the outset the public began to view it as an exhibition of selected works from the participating countries. Its popularity grew exponentially and it became necessary to introduce a radical departure from the initial concept. In 1967, Wilfried Skreiner became director of Graz's Neue Galerie and took over the curatorial concept of Trigon. Spatial exploration was chosen as the theme of the "Trigon 67" exhibition – a cutting edge topic among the contemporary neo-avant-garde art practices. This decision propelled the hitherto marginal exhibition into the very focus of experimental curatorial practices. The exhibition bore the symbolic title of "Ambiente/Environment" and hosted 15 artists. It was designed by the architects Günther Domenig and Eilfried Huth, who had exhibited their well-received *Stadt Ragnitz* project at the Forum Statdpark in Graz the year before. Domenig and Huth staged the exhibition as an itinerary in which the exterior, the interior, and the space "between" the site-specific installations, spatial sculptures, and environments was treated as an integrative element. The entrance pavilion was interpolated as a special spatial accent. These "Doors of Perception" were intended to guide the visitors into the wider area of multimedia presentation. The pavilion was spiral in
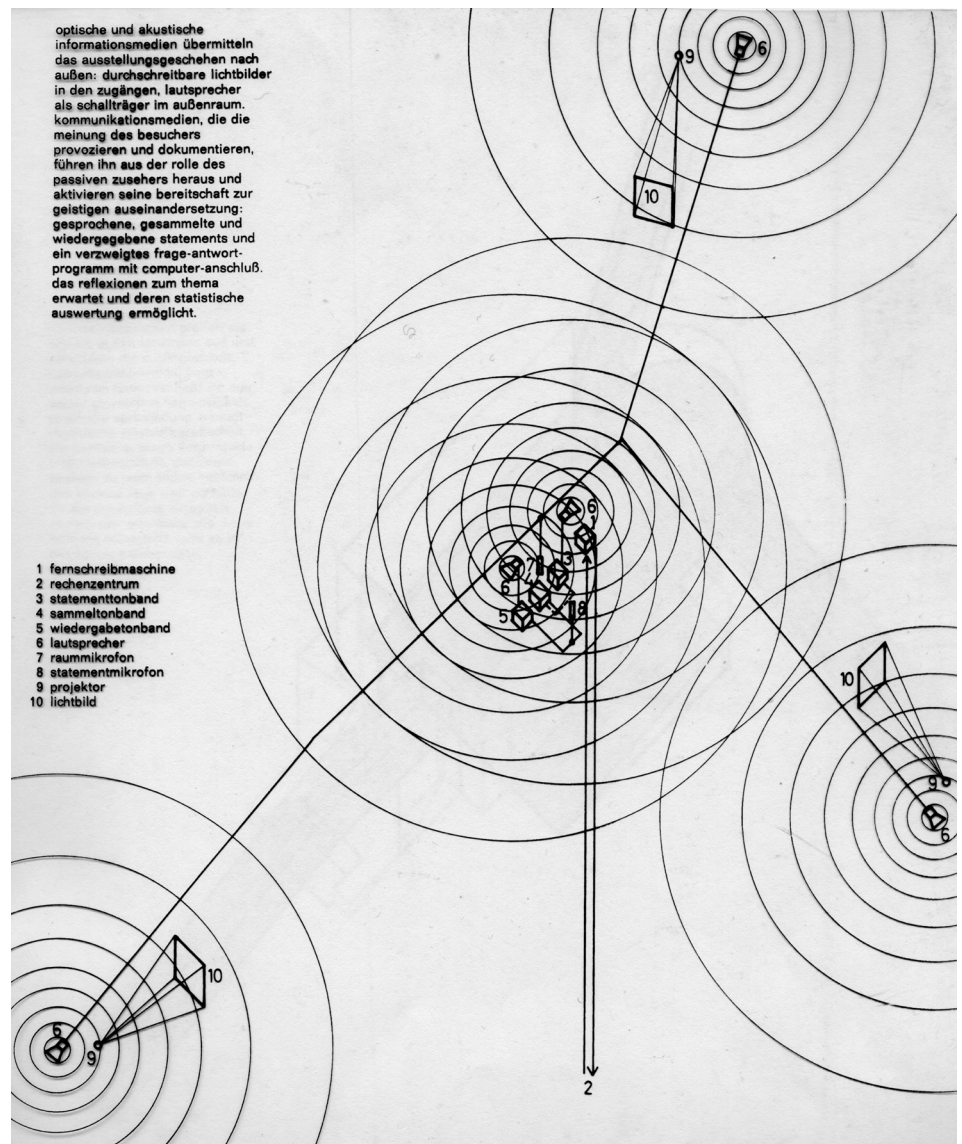
shape, covered by curved plastic membranes, and unmistakeably evoked the impact of hallucinogenic drugs on the creative process – a concept familiar to the public of the 1960s. A winding path linked the various installations and guided the visitors from one to the next, cancelling out the neutral spatial concept of the "white cube" in keeping with the contemporary neo-avantgarde critique directed at the institutionalised framework of artistic expression. Along with the concept and staging of the exhibition, the catalogue also possessed the features of a statement. The graphic designer Horst Gerhard Habel designed it to resemble an artist's book, containing completely personalised features on the individual installations. In addition to this book / theoretical object, a separate publication with documentation was meant to provide detailed information that would be easily understood.

The small Styrian town did not eagerly embrace radical artistic invention, and the concept of Trigon 67 as well as the content of the exhibition brought about highly divided reactions among the local population. Trigon's earlier editions can in no way be compared with the intensity of the revolt which abstract art caused in some members of the public and with the negative criticism Trigon 67 received.[5]
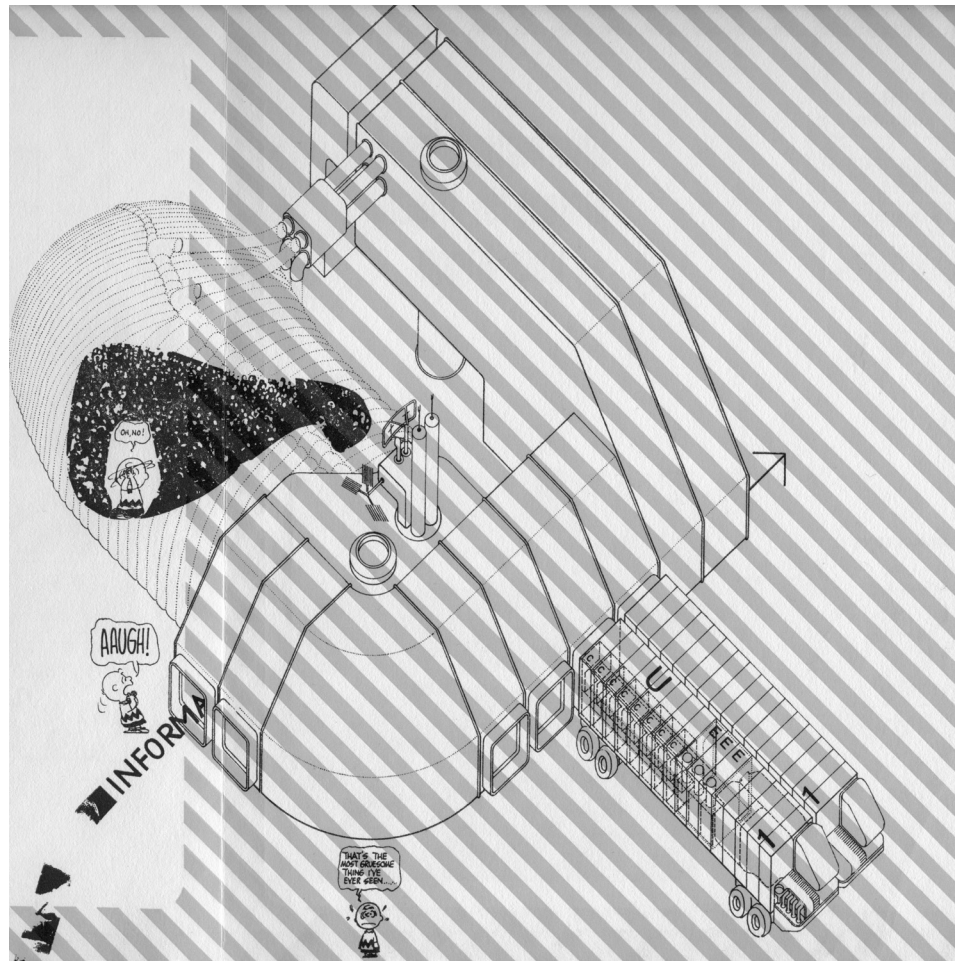
3.
Trigon 69: interactive map of the exhibition display from the exhibition catalogue (design: Horst Gerhard Habel; source: Private collection of the author)

Trigon 69; Interaktivna karta postava u katalogu izložbe (oblikovanje: Horst Gerhard Habel)

optische und akustische informationsmedien übermitteln das ausstellungsgeschehen nach außen: durchschreitbare lichtbilder in den zugängen, lautsprecher als schallträger im außenraum. kommunikationsmedien, die die meinung des besuchers provozieren und dokumentieren, führen ihn aus der rolle des passiven zusehers heraus und aktivieren seine bereitschaft zur geistigen auseinandersetzung: gesprochene, gesammelte und wiedergegebene statements und ein verzweigtes frage-antwort-programm mit computer-anschluß. das reflexionen zum thema erwartet und deren statistische auswertung ermöglicht.

1 fernschreibmaschine
2 rechenzentrum
3 statementtonband
4 sammeltonband
5 wiedergabetonband
6 lautsprecher
7 raummikrofon
8 statementmikrofon
9 projektor
10 lichtbild

Peter Nigst, *Information Island
project*

This was primarily because the earlier exhibitions had retained the conventions of art genres and the manner of their presentation, while the latest exhibition was simply too provocative for the local environment. Public reactions and formal reviews were very mixed, ranging from vandalism in attempts to destroy particular installations to demands that both Skreiner as the curator of the exhibition and Hanns Koren be removed from their posts. Skreiner defined these reactions as "Der Schock der Moderne."[6]

### Trigon 69 or how architecture became environment

Trigon 69,[7] dedicated to the theme of the city of the future in the year 2000, represented a step further in relativising the conventions of the exhibition as a medium and breaking down the traditional division of labour between the participants within the art system. In the context of radical ventures in the field of institutional criticism and the mediatisation of the exhibition, Trigon 69 was a characteristic example of architectural conceptualisation. It was expected that the exceptionally popular theme of radical architecture in combination with the turbulent events of 1968 would generate significant interest in the late 1960s, and thus over 100 artists competed for the opportunity to exhibit their work. The jury composed of Umbro Apollonio (Italy), Katja Ambrozić (Yugoslavia), Max Bill (Switzerland), Friedrich St. Florian (USA), Franca Helg (Italy), Friedrich Kurrent (Austria), Edvard Ravnikar (Yugoslavia), and Wilfried Skreiner (Austria) made a final selection of 27 artists.

Seven of these were singled out for awards of equal standing: Georg Gsteu, an Austrian painter and architect; the architect duo Laura Mosso Castagno and Leonardo Mosso of Turin; Peter Nigst, a Viennese architect; Barna von Satory, an architect from Budapest; Georg Kohlmaier, an architect from Berlin; the young Austrian architect Hans Peter Schlosser; the Superstudio collective of Florence; and Radovan Delalle, the only architect from Yugoslavia to receive an award. This decision of the jury was a statement of sorts that there was no single work that dominated among the submissions. However, it could be observed that the selected works displayed a tendency towards techno-utopistic, total environments and megastructures, which represented a counterpoint to conceptual and theoretical works – the kind of architecture on the wane. In step with its name, the exhibition was a radical departure from all conventional ways of presenting architecture, while the "shock of the new" drew the observer in, turning him or her into a participant. The conventions of exhibiting architecture dictated that it should primarily follow the documentary model of presenting projects by means of displaying architectural models and paper drawings, while Trigon 69 rejected these conventions and assumed performative and autoreferential strategies that, like the visual arts, shaped architecture in the expanded field.[8] The authors enjoyed complete freedom in choosing how their work should be presented, and static exhibits were dismissed in favour of site-specific installations, screen images, and sculptural environments. An analogy with conceptual art could also be observed in the exhibition catalogue, conceived as an entirely independent artefact intended for mediatisation and only conditionally linked to the exhibition. It was a product of the attitudes prevalent in the 1960s that an idea may be defined with precision as an object of theory, but also in the form of a talk or a publication (a catalogue, an artist's book, or a manifesto). In addition, the aesthetic object no longer dominated the manner in which the work was presented. In this regard, the Trigon 69 catalogue was an excellent example of combining the function of a document, an artist's book, and superior graphic design. As in the staging of the

5.
Hans Hollein, *Pill and Spray from the "environmental control kit"* (source: *Trigon 69* exhibition catalogue)

Hans Hollein, *"Pilula i sprej", Instalacija za kontrolu okoliša*
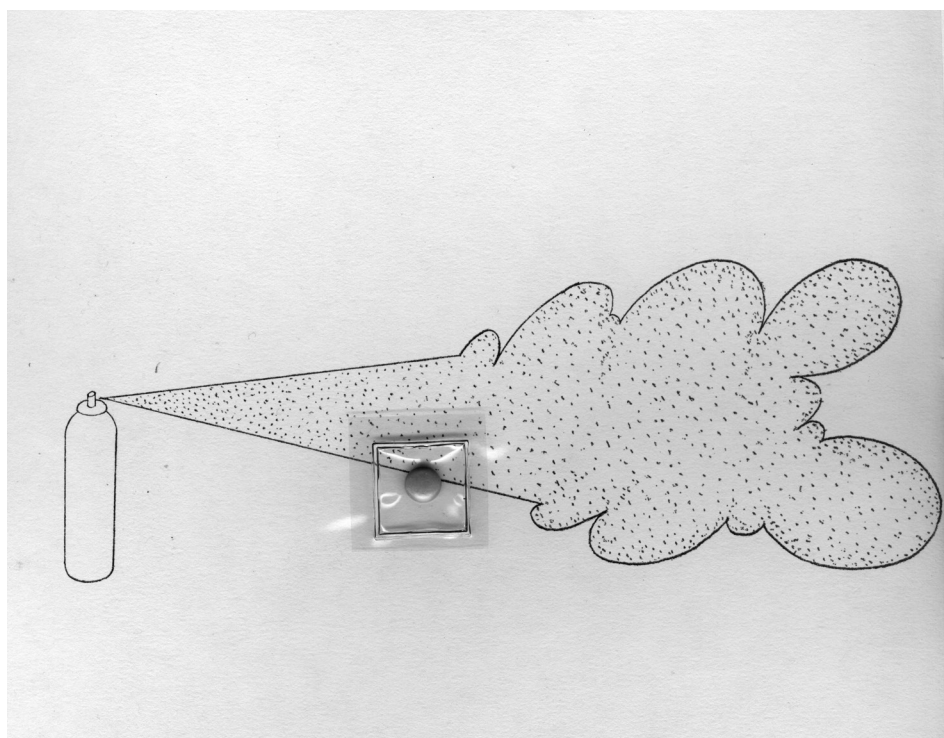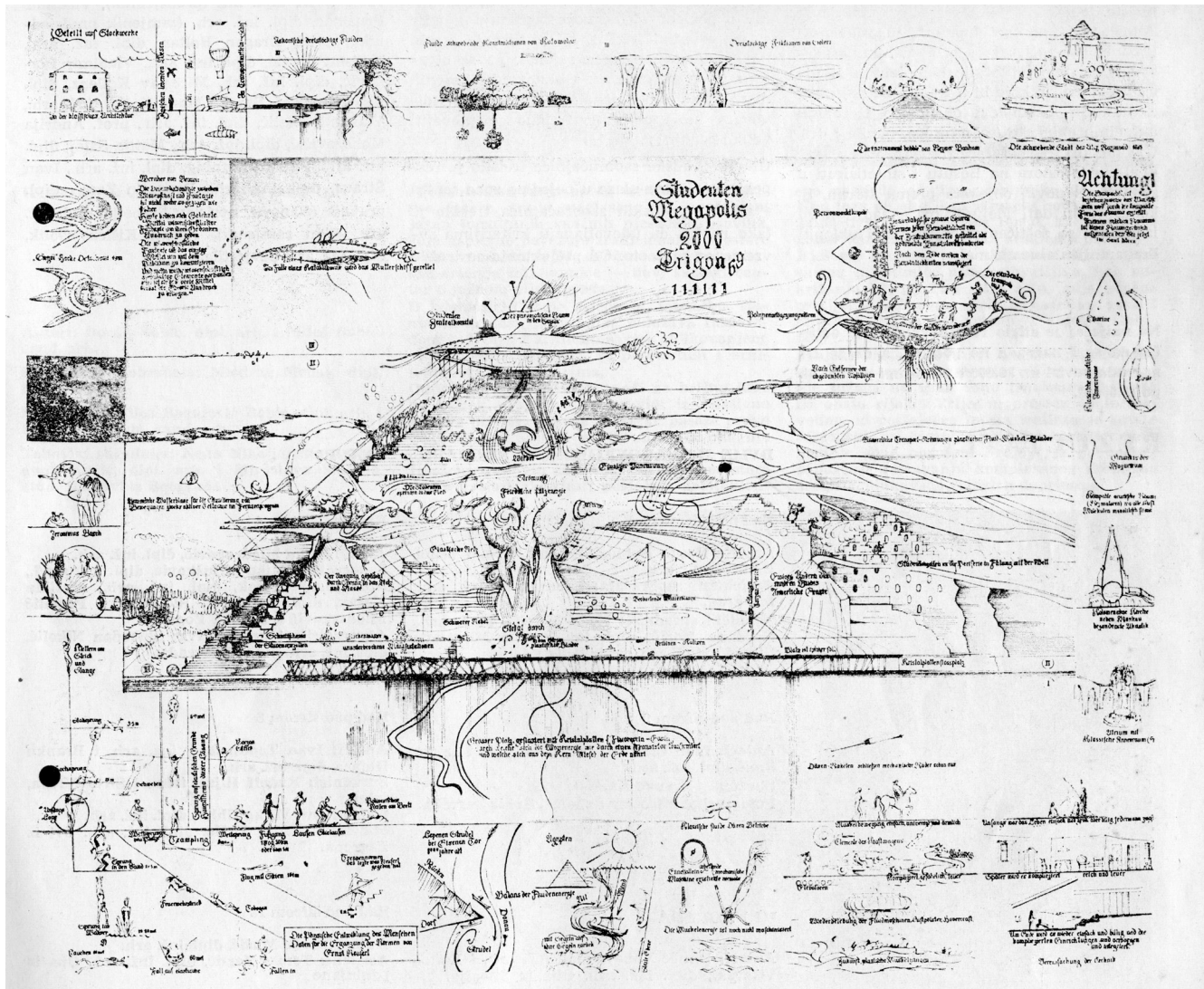
6.
Predrag Ristić, The *Student Megapolis 2000* project (source: *Arhitektura*, no. 105, 1970, p. 47)

Predrag Ristić, Projekt za *Studentski Megapolis 2000.*

exhibition, each feature was completely individualised in terms of design in order to emphasize the dynamics of the content. A computer was placed in the centre of the exhibition space and accorded the role of mediator between exhibits and visitors. This meant that Trigon 69 was one of the earliest occasions on which a computer was incorporated into an architectural exhibition. In addition, the awareness of the importance of new technologies (at the time) in architecture was undoubtedly reflected in the jury's decision that Peter Nigst, a young Viennese architecture student, should be one of the 7 award recipients of equal standing for his Information "Island" project. Contemporary exhibition and curatorial practices saw these technologies as revolutionary. They were employed to ask programmed questions and give further prompts when visitors responded, as well as provide responses to visitors' questions. The function of the computer was that of a structural architectural element – not simply an aid. There are very obvious analogies with Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a film which has meanwhile acquired cult status. Innovative use of technology could also be observed where a podium of sorts was mounted in the centre of the exhibition, giving each visitor access to a microphone and a loudspeaker to address those within the exhibition space, as well as in the surrounding

park. All data, including sound recordings, were stored on a server with the aim of gathering documentation on the exhibition, planned as a prototype for a travelling documentary exhibition on Trigon in the form of a mobile container. The author believed that taking the exhibition to viewers in Italy, Yugoslavia, and other towns in Austria would involve a much broader segment of the public and significantly extend the area where the exhibition was held. Nigst's project also included an interesting communication feature, whereby he appropriated the visual language of popular culture. The signifier was brilliantly represented by the iconography of the comic strip *Peanuts*, featuring Charlie Brown. *Peanuts* enjoyed worldwide popularity at the time of the exhibition, and its humour and autoirony were universally understood.

One of the most radical ventures into the field of conceptualising architecture was the work of Hans Hollein. Similarly to other contemporary art experiments, the result of this process was a complete dematerialisation of the object. The pill signified the basis of architecture, while the spray evoked the freedom of architectonic intervention in space and the hologram defined an imaginary three-dimensional space casting laser beams. Hollein's thesis of "Alles ist Architektur"[9] on the omnipresence of architecture in shaping the environment was rendered more precise by defining architecture as communication. In that regard, it was supposed to foster new experiences, like the pill. Allusions to opening up to new sensory experiences under the influence of LSD, omnipresent in popular culture in the late 1960s, clearly placed Hollein's "disappearing architecture" in the field of expanded consciousness. Another Trigon 69 participant, Predrag Ristić, wrote a detailed account of the exhibition[10] that included an intriguing comparison between Hollein's project and Reyner Banham's and François Dallegret's *Environment-Bubble*, published in the *Art in America* magazine in 1965.[11] This drawing of a transparent plastic dome with an air-conditioned interior accompanied Banham's essay criticising the typical American lifestyle. According to Ristić, both projects shared the aim of "deceiving" our senses by stereotelevision projection to create a desired effect.

The *Student Megapolis 2000* project by Belgrade architect Predrag Ristić falls into the category of envisioning the city of the future as a megastructure. The starting point was a critique of the totalitarian city as a symptom of the totalitarian society. The techno-utopian and phantasmagoric character of his visionary architecture was intensified by the literary quality of the text in combination with subtle drawings. The author expressed his belief that student cities would one day remain the only places of freedom and, like Noah's arks of the future, become the centres of science, "a spacecraft or a refuge from the cataclysm of slavery and destruction." Ristić's predictions carried additional weight within the socialist setting of Yugoslavia, where student centres were the focal points of "controlled" freedom of political and cultural expression.

The most poetic work on display at the exhibition, the project of young architect Hans-Peter Schlosser, also received an award. "The City is not a Mountain" was a critique of obsolete urbanism and refuted everything that a city was not or ought not to be (made of wood, shaped like a grid, etc.), wondering if the city of the future would be a nightmare. Based on McLuhan's reflections on the significance of information which was turning the world into a "global village,"[12] Schlosser's response was a poetic architectural vision of inspired visual potential. In terms of composition, the modular structure shaped mountains and valleys into an exceptionally harmonious union of the built and natural environment.

Origins in the avantgarde architecture of the 1920s may be most clearly observed in the project of Johann Georg Gsteu, whose exhibit was a rare example of feasible architecture at Trigon. Gsteu designed skyscrapers based on the mathematically predictable combinations of mobile elements, calling to mind projects by Mies van der

Rohe in 1919 and 1920. The difference between the two was that Gsteu's modular system was composed of mobile units, universally applicable at all levels ranging from skyscrapers, houses, and apartments to furniture and children's toys. Gsteu was also among the few authors at the exhibition who did not reflect on architecture in terms of theory and philosophy. His approach was analytical, guided by combinations of elements ranging from geometric to completely free shapes and creating intriguing expressive constructions. These were not specific projects; instead, they were manifestations of ideas on the organic and humanistic principles of contemporary architecture, which reflected Gsteu's connection to the dominant tendencies of the exhibition, as did the mathematical combining which afforded the possibility of employing computer technology. Another exhibit to receive an award, the project of Leonardo Mosso and Laura Mosso Castagno, was also based on experimentation with computer technology in architecture. Their project of the programmed city territory employed the categories of a language system to define architectural structure. The slogan "architecture and freedom" was interpreted as binomial "exploration and the freedom of programming," whereby the authors referred to the endless possibilities of adapting architectural formations to the contemporary way of life. The ultimate goal was *architettura aperta*, in accordance with Umberto Eco's definition of the "open work,"[13] which was an all-encompassing ecological system of moderated relationships between man and the environment. In other words, architecture transitioned from individual projects to acquiring the dimensions of a comprehensive transformation of the urban entity and global environment into a dynamic system. The work exhibited at Trigon acquired an additional dimension within the context of the Mossos' activities at the time of the exhibition. This was particularly reflected in the methods the duo employed in their work with students at the *Politecnico di Torino*, where the 1960s saw the introduction of a radical pedagogy open to exchanging experiences with the Ulm-based *Hochschule für Gestaltung* as well as new additions to the art scene such as the Arte Programmata, the Zero group, and GRAV.[14] It is therefore not surprising that the Mossos took part at the international symposium titled "Computers and Visual Research" held as part of the *Tendencies 4* exhibition in Zagreb in 1969, delivering a talk titled "Computers and Human Research: Programming and Self-Management of Form."[15] Their attempts to reprogram the human environment into a total environment were a perfect fit for the symposium programme. The symposium saw the society as being on the verge of a new revolution "of the automation of artificial thought, a symbiosis with machines and the mastering of communication" – even more significant than the industrial revolution because information was "the third great characteristic in addition to the basic ones: matter and energy."[16]

The "Spine", work of Graz-based architects Franz Cziharz and Herbert Missoni, was another project among those reflecting on the possibility of urban renewal on the basis of the organic merging of new technologies and the organic principles of reshaping existing environmental units. Their proposal represented a ribbed structure whose components were linked into a pliable organic shape resembling a spine. Its elastic axis formed the backbone of traffic generated by the whole of the urban spinal system, and it was meant to reintroduce the street as an integrative space that brought together various controlled functions into a unitary system. Instead of defining the directions in which traffic should move, the focus was on traffic interaction and the quality of communication. This project was of particular interest because it addressed the acute problems of traffic connections, i.e. of infrastructural planning by employing the methodology of architectural formation.

Another architect to address the issue of traffic was Heinz Frank of Vienna. His work also appropriated popular culture, making autoironic references to the mass
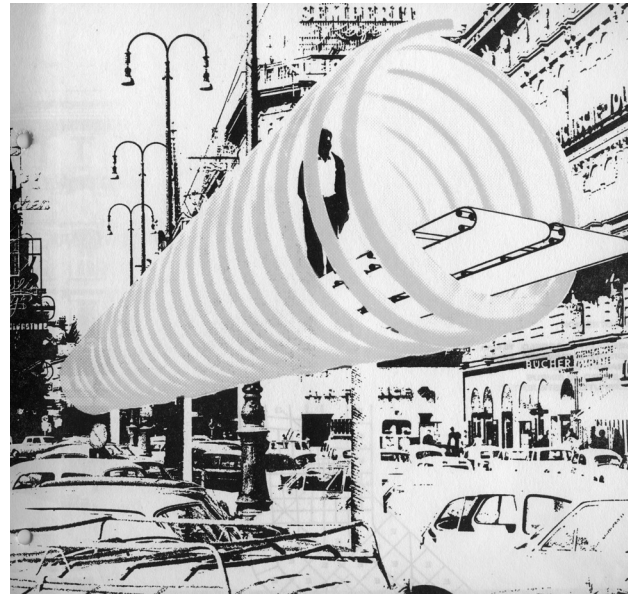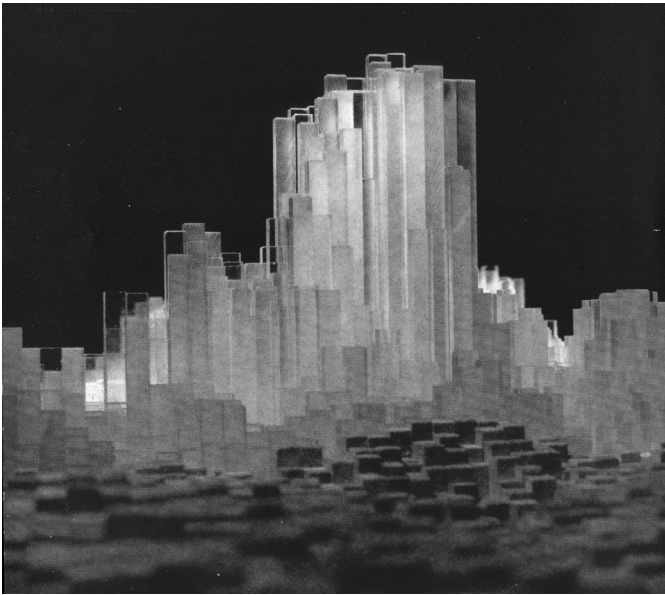
7.
Leonardo Mosso and Laura Mosso Castagno, *Exploration and the Freedom of Programming* (source: *Trigon 69* exhibition catalogue)

Leonardo Mosso i Laura Mosso Castagno, *Istraživanje i sloboda programiranja*

8.
Barna von Satory and Georg Kohlmaier, *Evolving Personalised Traffic System* (source: *Trigon 69* exhibition catalogue)

Barna von Satory i Georg Kohlmaier, *Razvoj personaliziranog prometnog sustava*

9.
Superstudio (Adolfo Natalini, Christiano Toraldo di Francia, Piero Frassinelli, and Roberto Magris), *Monumento Continuo* (*A Continuous Monument*) (source: *Trigon 69* exhibition catalogue)

Superstudio (Adolfo Natalini, Christiano Toraldo di Francia, Piero Frassinelli i Roberto Magris), *Monumento Continuo* (*Kontinuirani spomenik*)
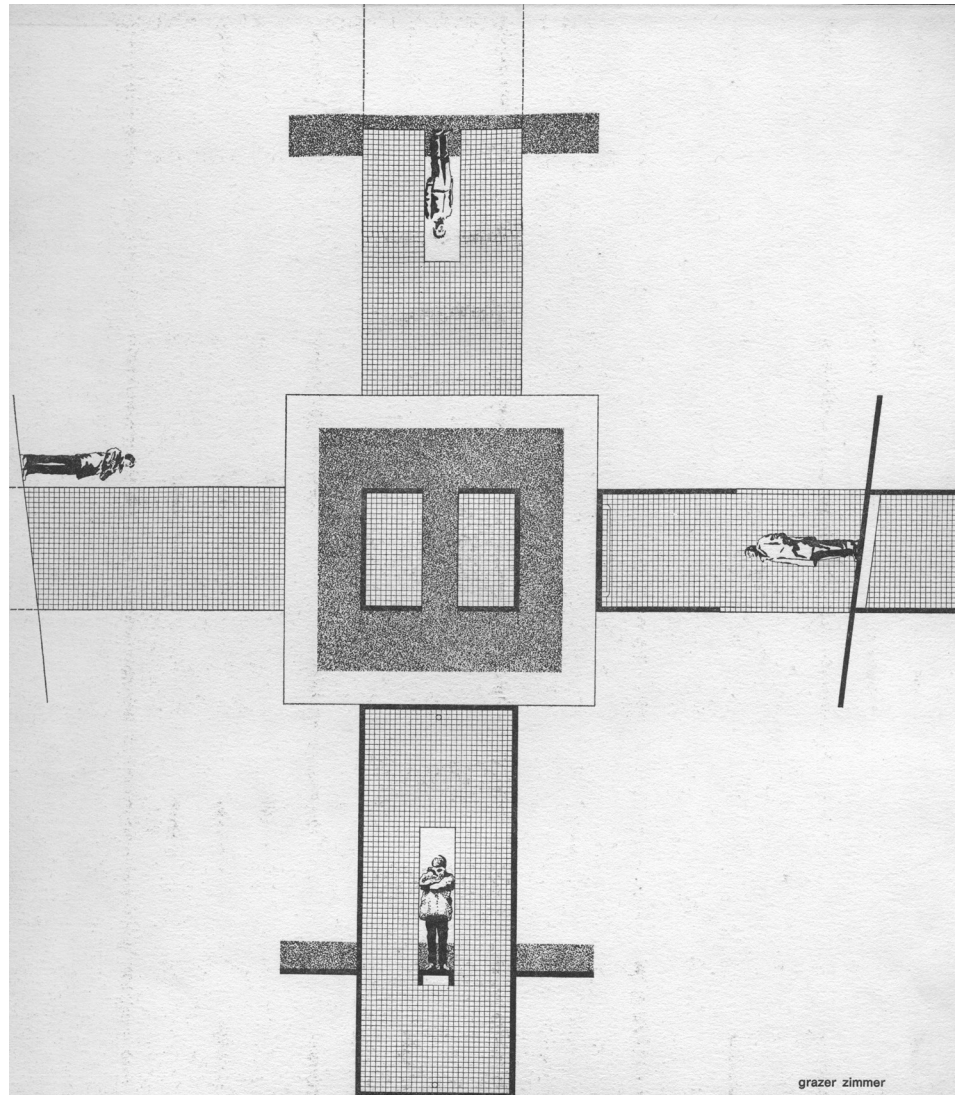
10.
Radovan Delalle in front of his
Urbarchitecture project at *Trigon
69* (source: Radovan Delalle,
personal archive)

Radovan Delalle ispred projekta
*Urbarhitektura* na izložbi *Trigon 69*

media, primarily the language of newspaper advertising. Frank proposed the acceleration of walking pace, whereby a person moving at 25 km/h would complete the length of the Viennese Ringstrasse in 5 minutes. He also explained the role of the raincoat in urban daily life in 1925 and developed the idea of its contemporary counterpart, "a mantle that is the bodywork" of modern man. A detailed description of the raincoat's accessories followed, indicating that it represented an alternative of sorts to the car. Frank's work employed the vocabulary of commercial intent – on the verge of banal propaganda – and carried a coded message about humanity. He pointed out that man had never been the benchmark against which solutions to traffic issues were devised, and argued that if traffic were reprogrammed in accordance with the way humans moved naturally, a whole host of problems might be avoided, such as gridlocks, environmental pollution, and traffic accidents.

The work of Barna von Satory and Georg Kohlmaier stood out as one of the most dynamic pieces. These two also belong to the group of authors who view architecture as a conflict between the complex and the contradictory – a combination of humanistic and technological foundations. To emphasize their starting positions, von Satory and Kohlmaier decided on an installation created in the manner of pop-art iconography and composed of highly aestheticised high-tech drawings, music, noises, car wreckage, and large pipe-like tubes through which the visitors had to crawl, stumbling along the way. Various elements of performative art were intro-

11.
Bau-Cooperative Himmelblau
(Wolf Prix, Michael Holzer, and
Helmut Swiczinsky), *Soul Flipper*
(source: *Trigon 69* exhibition
catalogue)

Bau-Cooperative Himmelblau (Wolf
Prix, Michael Holzer i Helmut
Swiczinsky), *Soul Flipper*
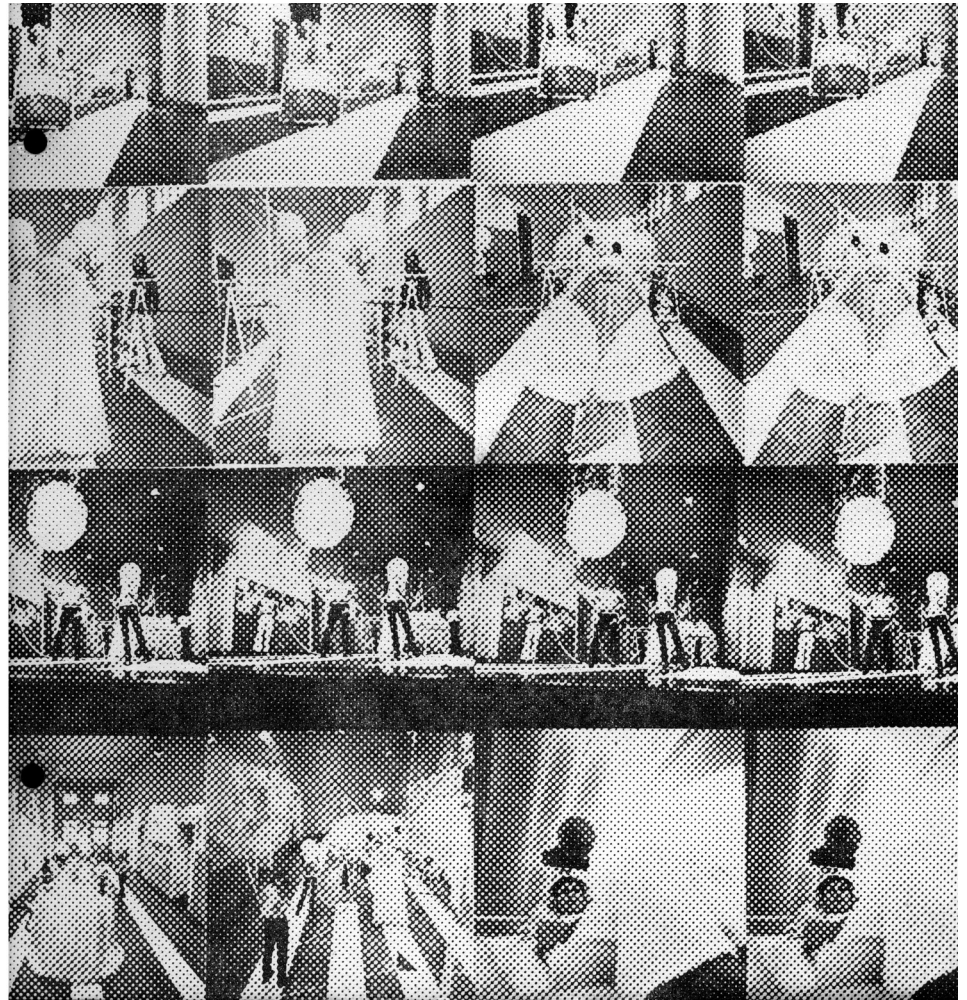
duced to emphasize the negative aspects of traffic which lead to chaos in the contemporary world: a space where visitors could sit on sacks of grain strewn about at random, amidst car wreckage and long pipes, watching flickering lights and projections displaying gruesome scenes of traffic accidents. Allusions to the repeated references to death in Andy Warhol's work of the 1960s are more than obvious. All this cacophony raised awareness of inadequate traffic conditions, but it was also a dramatic stage where alternative solutions were proposed. The authors suggested that transport should evolve in the form of endless conveyor belts that would be housed in a system of pipes for both pedestrians and vehicles, moving around the city at different heights and in all directions. The system would be entirely automatised and computerised, while directions would be chosen at stations similar to intersections. The authors demonstrated their futuristic vision using the specific examples of Vienna and Berlin, and they also showed how this would function at a trans-regional level. Of course, to operationalise this idea, the entire city structure would need to be modified and decentralised, and the relationship between the city centre and the surrounding area would need to be redefined. The project was devised at a time when public transport that included electrically-powered minibuses was considered science fiction; however, 50 years later this has become an everyday occurrence. This raises the issue of a paradoxical reversal in which the conceptual projection of the future has become a reality.

As was expected, the Trigon 69 laureates included Superstudio, an Italian architecture and design firm (Adolfo Natalini, Christiano Toraldo di Francia, Piero Frassinelli, and Roberto Magris). Their project was a continuous monument (*Monumento Continuo*) of crystalline form covering the entire globe. The installation was a prism-like and not overly large pavilion (the Graz Room), tilted at a twelve-degree angle and covered with plastic tiles 5x5 cm in size. Its open interior evoked the dystopian "emptiness" of the ultimatum presented by the rational conception of total space.[17] The rationalisation of the project took on the form of a manifesto characteristic of the most radical forms of historical avantgarde. The way it was formulated recalled the militant tones of futuristic proclamations and called on the visitors to exclude all "mirages": spontaneous, fantastic, biological, and that of architecture without architects. Instead, the authors offered a vision of an endless cinematic wall-monument,[18] a concept of architecture as machine, based on an analysis of the heritage of construction ranging from Stonehenge and the meteors which struck the Earth, the pyramids, Roman aqueducts and viaducts, and the Great Wall of China all the way to the motorways, latitudes, and longitudes. Le Corbusier's ideas from the 1920s[19] inspired them to champion the creation of urban metaphors, symbols of universal symbolic meaning which define the total environment, where "architecture is a symbol that powers the machine". This, however, raised a series of questions with no clear answers. Should the continuous monument be taken as a critique of the implicitly totalitarian character of every utopia founded on great gestures? What was the stance of the Superstudio collective towards utopian architectural visions present in the history of architecture? What was their stance towards Le Corbusier's ambivalent plans for Algiers, which represented the culmination of his reflections on the subject of the Ville Radieuse of the 1920s? Aspiring towards a total environment also carried a negative connotation, shifting absolute freedom into the zone of totalitarian ideology. Manfredo Tafuri has discovered its origins in the political and economic circumstances of postwar Italy: "All the intellectual anti-consumption utopias that seek to redress the ethical 'distortions' of the technological world by modifying the system of production or the channels of distribution only reveal the complete inadequacy of their theories, in the face of the actual structure of the capitalist economic cycle."[20]

Radovan Delalle developed the concept of *urbarchitecture* in an attempt to redefine the position and significance of architecture with regard to the urban context. His critical reflections focused on the continuity of the urban form, as opposed to isolated objects of modern architecture as generators of alienation.[21] Thus the concept of *urbarchitecture* envisaged the gradual development of an urbarchitectural core (a megastructure of sorts) within the wider city boundaries. Delalle also wanted the inhabitants to be involved in further development decisions. The project presented ambient public spaces as separate from the traffic, while primary schools and childcare institutions were to make a return to the urban structure, which also housed "clean" manufacturing industries. Delalle's urbarchitecture was that of "critical regionalism,"[22] which was always to take a different shape in view of its setting, the time when it was built, and the people for whom it was constructed. Bringing various public services within the city together underneath terrace-like residential structures, as well as dividing the megastructure into a series of smaller interstices and interrelationships did not constitute a complete process. Such megastructures also indicated the need for a new and different type of city planner, who would keep in mind the future users and the fact that they would be able to alter the space in line with their needs. Moreover, participatory tendencies were in accordance with the basic values of the self-governed society, in which the citizens were those who directed the way the city developed.

The work of the Bau-Cooperative Himmelblau, represented by Wolf Prix, Michael Holzer, and Helmut Swiczinsky, was one of the most provocative in the entire exhibition. Their installation was composed of three communication devices that formed "dwelling units" called Villa Rosa. These included the Info Noise, the Astro Balloon, and the Soul Flipper, simultaneously futuristically practicable and a critique of the unsatisfactory contemporary state of the architecture of "concrete boxes." At the same time, they were an (auto)ironic, programmatic expression of the tendency to view architecture as a fascinating, dynamic, and evolving process. It was the feedback that played a key formative role in this. The visitors would sit on a plastic chair and wear a transparent plastic helmet, whilst a series of feelers would emit sounds and lights across their faces. With the help of sensors, the visitors' reactions would be instantly rendered on a screen. The authors emphasized that their aim was to integrate the progressive tendencies in contemporary art, culture, and society into architecture, because they believed architecture to be a fascinating dynamic process, not simply projects on a piece of paper.

Radical or not at all?[23]

These experimental and radical thoughts and activities in architecture and urbanism are hardly surprising; they were indicators of upheavals which characterised many creative fields at the time. Elements of a flexible society were reflected in these non-static structures and dynamic spatial concepts. Nevertheless, their greatest value lay in the human dimension of spatial organisation. Interest in space – in how it could be used in the public sphere and in the problems posed by the discrepancy between a politically proclaimed intention to shape a more humane environment and the anonymity of new urban zones – incorporated an undeniable ethical dimension. The political climate in the late 60s and the early 70s, with its frequent public gatherings and protests, meant that the use of public space had become a more complex and contradictory issue.

Therefore Trigon can be seen as a chapter contributing to exploring and writing exhibition histories in the framework of current revised views of the art historiographical canon, as the interest in the history of exhibitions and the contextualization of curatorial practices is becoming increasingly present in historiographical research.

Taking an analysis of Trigon 69 as a case study, the aim has been to explore how documentary sources (exhibition catalogues, architectural drawings, photography) and models of representation (particularly the wide range of installation techniques) in a dialogue with the personal archives of the participants (architects, critics, and curators) could be used in re-framing the narrative of conceptualising architecture from a cultural and societal perspective. In the context of re-inventing the Avant-Garde during the 1960s, Trigon 69 was a turning point for the curatorial practices at architecture exhibitions. Bringing together experimental architectural practices based in Austria, Italy, and Yugoslavia, it showed how breakthroughs in the mediatisation of architecture enabled the architects to re-imagine their field and take part in the contemporary cultural production.

NOTES

1 For an overview of Trigon's history, see: GERNOT RABL, *Trigon. Idee und Geschichte eines trinationalen Ausstellungskonzepts* (Saarbrücken: Südwestdeutscher Verlag für Hochschulschriften, 2009).

2 PAULA BURLEIGH, "Exhibitions Against Architecture: The Trigon Biennale in 1967 and 1969," in *Exhibiting Architecture: A Paradox?*, ed. EEVA-LIISA PELKONEN, CARSON CHAN and DAVID ANDREW TASMAN (New Haven, CO: Yale School of Architecture, 2015), pp. 63-71.

3 EMILIO AMBASZ (ed.), *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape. Achievements and Problems of Italian Design* (New York: MOMA and Florence: Centro Di, 1972).

4 BORIS GROYS, "Politics of Installation," *E-flux Journal #02* (January 2009), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/02/68504/politics-of-installation/.

5 The most influential daily newspaper *Kleine Zeitung* had the most powerful impact on public perception. The newspaper published a statement by the mayor of Graz, Alexander Götz, dismissing the claims that the exhibition was a pinnacle of intellectual achievement as mere provocation. ALEXANDER GÖTZ, "Eine einmalige Provokation!," *Kleine Zeitung* (September 16, 1967), p. 11. Instead of commenting on this, the Trigon 69 catalogue printed the words *Kleine Zeitung* in gothic lettering along an empty page. This was meant to symbolise bourgeois culture with its opposition to all that was new.

6 WILFRIED SKREINER, "Biennale Trigon: Geschichte eines Ausstellungskonzepts," in *8 x 2 aus 7*, exhibition catalogue, *steirischer herbst 1991*, no 1 (1991), pp. 123-146.

7 The exhibition was held at the Künstlerhaus in Graz from 4 October to 15 November 1969. The catalogue contains 30 features, which include short biographies and portrait photographs of the authors printed in varying techniques on different types of paper, ranging from 2 to 24 pages in length. In addition, the catalogue is visually impressive due to highlights in multicolor print on plastic foil and the graphically well-considered placement of visual features.

8 The term implies Rosalind Krauss's redefinition of the medium, using the example of the sculpture titled "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October*, no. 8 (Spring 1979), pp. 30-44.

9 HANS HOLLEIN, "Alles ist Architektur," *Bau*, no. 1-2 (1968), pp. 1-28. A more detailed explication of Hollein's concept can be found in: HANS HOLLEIN, "Everything is Architecture," in *Architecture Culture: 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology*, ed. JOAN OCKMAN and EDWARD EIGEN (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 238; LIANE LEFAIVRE, "Everything is Architecture: Multiple Hans Hollein and the Art of Crossing Over," *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 18 (Spring 2003), pp. 65-68; CRAIG BUCKLEY, "From Absolute to Everything: Taking Possesion in 'Alles ist Architektur'," *Grey Room*, no. 28 (Summer 2007), pp. 108-122.

10 PREDRAG RISTIĆ, "Trigon 1969: Arhitecture and Freedom," *Arhitektura*, no. 105 (1970), pp. 43-45. In addition to this article, another text was published on the projects by the two Yugoslav artists who took part in the exhibition, Radovan Delalle and Predrag Ristić (pp. 46-47). See also: ANTOANETA PASINOVIĆ, "Arhitektura in svoboda," *Sinteza*, no. 17 (June 1970), pp. 51-53.

11 REYNER BANHAM, "A Home is Not a House," *Art in America*, no. 2 (1965), pp. 70-79.

12 MARSHALL MCLUHAN, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

13 UMBERTO ECO, *Opera aperta. Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* (Milan: Casa Editrice Valentino Bompiani, 1962).

14 http://radical-pedagogies.com/search-cases/i09-leonardo-mosso-laura-castagno-politecnico-torino/ (last accessed on April 26, 2018).

15 MARGIT ROSEN (ed.), *A Little Known Story about a Movement, a Magazine, and the Computer's Arrival in Art: New Tendencies and Bit International 1961-1973* (Karlsruhe: ZKM and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 427-431.

16 ABRAHAM A. MOLES, "Opening Address at the 'Computers and Visual Research' Colloquium," *Bit International*, no. 3 (1968), pp. 3-10.

17 "Lettera da Graz," *Domus*, no. 481 (December 1969), pp. 49-54.

18 SUPERSTUDIO, "Il monumento Continuo, Storyboard per un Film," *Casabella*, no. 358 (November 1971), pp. 9-22 and SUPERSTUDIO, "Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas," *Architectural Design*, no. 12 (1971), pp. 737-742 and 785.

19 They quoted an article in *L'Esprit Nouveau* (1924).

20 MANFREDO TAFURI, "Design and Technological Utopia," in *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* (as in n. 3), p. 397.

21 RADOVAN DELALLE, *Traganje za identitetom grada [Seeking the Identity of the City]* (Rijeka: Izdavački centar Rijeka, 1997).

22 See KENNETH FRAMPTON, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in *Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. HAL FOSTER (Seattle, CA: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 16-30.

23 Citation of the motto from the cover of the magazine *Youth Weekly*, published in Zagreb in 1968.